

School administrators' willingness to receive inclusive education

La disposición de los administradores escolares de recibir educación inclusiva

Mohd Hanafi Mohd Yasin*

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia - Malaysia

mhmy6365@ukm.edu.my

Rabaishah Azirun**

Institut Pendidikan Guru Kampus Pendidikan Islam - Malaysia

baie1526@gmail.com

Rozita Zaratang**

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia - Malaysia

mhmy6365@ukm.edu.my

ABSTRACT

First objective is to investigate school administrators' readiness to accept inclusive education. Besides that, this research is also to identify the relation between teaching experience duration in school with integration program and the administrators' readiness in accepting inclusive education. This research is using quantitative design and analysed descriptively using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 22. Questionnaire has been distributed to school administrators (n=130) which consist of Principal, Headmaster, Senior Assistants, Special Education Coordinator, Head of Department and Head of Panel. There are seven schools (primary and secondary) with integration program involved. The result shows that the school administrators show a moderate readiness in accepting inclusive education. While based on the Pearson Correlation, there is no significant relation between teaching experience duration in school with integration program and the administrators' readiness on inclusive education [$r = 0.57$, $n = 130$, $p > 0.05$]. Even though the administrators believe in the special pupil's ability but they do not have the confidence in managing those special pupils in inclusive setting. The duration of experience being in the school that has integration program does not influence their readiness.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, School Administrators' readiness.

RESUMEN

El primer objetivo es investigar la preparación de los administradores escolares para aceptar la educación inclusiva. Además de eso, esta investigación también identifica la relación entre la duración de la experiencia docente en la escuela con el programa de integración y la preparación de los administradores para aceptar la educación inclusiva. Esta investigación utiliza un diseño cuantitativo y se analiza de manera descriptiva utilizando el Paquete Estadístico para Ciencias Sociales (SPSS) Versión 22. El cuestionario se ha distribuido a los administradores escolares ($n = 130$) que consta de Director, Director, Asistentes Senior, Coordinador de Educación Especial, Jefe de Departamento y Jefe de Panel. Hay siete escuelas (primaria y secundaria) con un programa de integración involucrado. El resultado muestra que los administradores escolares muestran una moderada disposición para aceptar la educación inclusiva. Si bien se basa en la Correlación de Pearson, no existe una relación significativa entre la duración de la experiencia docente en la escuela con el programa de integración y la preparación de los administradores para la educación inclusiva [$r = 0.57$, $n = 130$, $p > 0.05$]. A pesar de que los administradores creen en la capacidad del alumno especial, no tienen la confianza necesaria para administrar a esos alumnos especiales en un entorno inclusivo. La duración de la experiencia de estar en la escuela que tiene un programa de integración no influye en su preparación.

Palabras clave: Educación inclusiva, preparación de los administradores escolares.

*Corresponding author. Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia

** Institut Pendidikan Guru Kampus Pendidikan Islam, 43650 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Inclusive Education Program involves special needs students (SEN) in primary school alongside other typical students either in government schools or government aid schools (Ministry of Education Malaysia 2015; Ogelmen & Secer 2012; Manisah, Ramlee & Zalizan, 2006). SEN students is no longer strictly in a separate or integrated class despite being certified by a specialist and being a cardholder of the Disabled.

Before inclusive education gained serious attention in the education system, the Integrated Education Program (IEP) was an effort to provide equal educational opportunities to the disabled. The holistic development of individuals in physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual and social terms as embodied in the National Philosophy of Education demonstrates that social is a very important aspect of communication. The isolation of SEN students through special education schools and integration programs is a social discrimination although it was originally an attempt to provide services in line with the social and intellectual capacity of the SEN students. The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education in 1994 stated that ordinary schools with an inclusive education orientation were a way of avoiding discrimination. In World Report on Disability, countries that focus on interactive approaches and focus on inclusive school environments are increasingly favored by medically-based models that were previously popular because of the nature of education that provides services based on individual health and disability (WHO, 2011). The main focus is on an interactive approach to inclusive culture at The school is to foster a community that supports the disabled and MBK to gain access to education without being isolated. Hodkinson & Vickerman (2009) state that most facilities are built only for the normal. The disabled or SEN students do not benefit from the provision of this facility. In schools, school administrators have the right to fight for the rights of minority groups, the SEN students so that they also have the same facilities so that they also have the same access to other normal income.

2. STATEMENT OF PROBLEMS AND OBJECTIVES

More recently, inclusive education has begun to gain attention in the education system (Foreman 2008), a system that prioritizes the equality of all members of the community to participate and access to education (Armstrong 2011; Salend 2011). However, it should be noted that in most developing countries such as Asia, inclusive education has not received serious attention. According to Desai and Mitchell (2009) only one percent of children with special needs have access to education in Asia and between these countries, Vietnam is identified as one of the countries that represents the most significant developmental process of inclusive education. Another scenario of inclusive education in Senegal, West Africa, which is a non-state-developed country, has become aware of the importance of inclusive education and is committed to increasing inclusive education in 2015. This raises the question of whether Malaysia is also ready for an inclusive education. take this for granted.

Many studies have been conducted on inclusive education, especially in regard to teachers' perceptions and attitudes. There are two possible findings: positive or negative attitude. In a separate study, Ramlee and Zalizan (2006) found that in Malaysia, teachers have a positive attitude towards inclusive education and they also believe that inclusive education can help MBK and prime students to interact and indirectly reduce stereotypes of prime students towards SEN students. Inclusive education as one of the branches of education adds to the need to focus on the skills that teachers need in order to meet the needs of the SEN students which are unique but at the same time must be fought for equal rights (Jones & Vail 2013). Therefore, school administrators' knowledge of inclusive education that considers their readiness to receive SEN students in inclusive education is extremely important. School administrators are the main drivers of education policy because they make important decisions in assisting the policy-making group of teachers. It is also intended to encourage collaboration between ordinary teachers and special education teachers thus enhancing professional skills and development (Foreman, 2008).

Inclusive education, which still shows less progressive growth in Asia as stated by Desai and Mitchell (2009), has also led to the inclusion of Asian education as much as it refers to the international practice of multinationals, most of which are now led by advanced countries in the field education (Armstrong 2011). In addition, Armstrong also mentions that economic factors, logistics, teachers' attitudes and skills, parental and cultural attitudes have contributed to the existence of a gap between the theory and practice of inclusive education in Asia. For example, according to Hill and Sasipin (2013) in Thailand, teachers involved in inclusive education have less knowledge of special education in general and lack sufficient skills and training to teach SEN students. In this regard, school administrators play an important role in helping teachers cultivate an inclusive environment in the school. In Tuaran District, inclusive education is already in progress in schools with (IEP). However, there are still few studies conducted specifically to study matters related to inclusive education in terms of teachers, students, infrastructure, implementation and so on. Therefore, this study was conducted to obtain information on inclusive education in Tuaran District with the following research objectives:

- i. Identify the willingness of school administrators to receive inclusive education.
- ii. identify the relationship between the duration of teaching experience in schools with IEP and the readiness of administrators to receive inclusive education

3. METHODOLOGY

This study used quantitative design and was descriptively analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 22. Application form was distributed to respondents (n = 130) who were school administrators consisting of principals, teachers, senior assistants, education coordinators special, field chair and committee chair. The schools involved are seven primary and secondary schools with an integrated Special Education Program in Tuaran District, Sabah. A pilot

study was conducted in the Ranau District and a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.91 was obtained. A continuum of models has been the basis of this study, which is a combination of related models. Hodkinson and Vickerman (2009) highlight two key models that illustrate how ideological and inclusive education are viewed from various perspectives as can be seen in Figure 1.

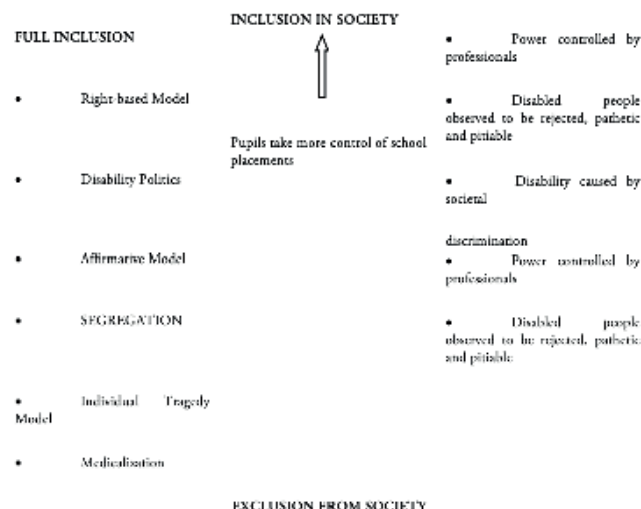


Figure 1. From segregation to inclusion: a continuum of models

This model shows the true direction of inclusive education, which is the transition from SEN students isolation from mainstream to single learning in one classroom. While in exile, the SEN students seemed to be treated, provided with services as their disability required. This led them to be controlled by professionals and regarded as those who needed sympathy. Therefore, what they will learn is under the control of those who have the right to decide. However, in inclusive education, SEN students is entitled to bertanggungjawab terhadap pendidikan masing-masing, mempelajari bidang yang mereka minati. Mereka juga boleh bersosial with other ordinary students and are viewed as capable individuals and can progress in their areas of interest even though they have disabilities in other areas such as learning or physical.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Respondent Demographic Information

This section will discuss the background of the respondents based on four aspects namely gender, academic level, duration of teaching experience in schools with PPKI and positions. The results of the data analysis are presented in the form of frequencies and percentages. Table 1 shows the demographic information.

Table 1: Response profiles by gender

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	41	31.5
Female	89	68.5
Total	130	100
Academic qualifications		
Certificate	2	1.5
Diploma	12	9.2
Bachelor	97	74.6
Scholar	18	13.8
Doctor of Philosophy	1	0.8
Total	130	100
Period (year)		
<1	4	3.1
1&2	6	9.2
3&4	12	9.2
>5	108	83.1
Total	130	100
Position		
Principal	2	1.5
Headmaster	2	1.5
Senior Assistant	23	17.7
Head of Field	14	10.8
Chairman of the committee	81	62.3
Coordinator	8	6.2
Total	130	100

4.2 Identify the willingness of school administrators to receive inclusive education.

Studies show some things about administrators' readiness to accept special needs (SEN) students. Of the 78.4% administrators who believe that SEN students are capable, 43.1% believe that SEN students can compete in the mainstream, 85% believe SEN students need social learning in the mainstream. More than 50% of administrators have never taken courses related to SEN. And only 13.1% agree and 5.4% strongly agree that they can easily manage SEN students.

Table 2: The readiness of administrators to receive inclusive education

SEN (Special Needs)

No	Items	1 Strongly disagree	2 Do not agree	3 Not sure	4 I agree	5 Strongly agree
1	I believe in the ability of SEN students	2.3% (3)	0.8% (1)	18.5% (24)	53.8% (70)	24.6% (32)
2	I have attended courses related to SEN.	38.5% (50)	17.7% (23)	12.3% (16)	17.7% (23)	13.8% (18)
3	I take care of SEN students easily	15.4% (20)	23.1% (30)	43.1% (56)	13.1% (17)	5.4% (7)
4	I'm excited for SEN students	4.6% (6)	6.9% (9)	35.4% (46)	46.9% (61)	6.2% (8)
5	I believe in the ability of SEN students to compete in the mainstream class.	9.2% (12)	9.2% (12)	26.2% (34)	43.1% (56)	12.3% (16)
6	I believe that the academic ability of SEN students depends on the difference in the level of student learning and not the influence of teacher teaching.	2.3% (3)	9.2% (12)	22.3% (29)	53.8% (70)	12.3% (16)
7	I believe the achievement of SEN students will improve as they study with other Pupils in the mainstream.	8.5% (11)	13.1% (17)	37.7% (49)	35.4% (46)	5.4% (7)
8	I'm more confident in dealing with students with physical disabilities.	13.1% (17)	14.6% (19)	48.4% (63)	16.9% (22)	6.9% (9)
9	I'm more confident in dealing with students with low cognitive levels.	9.2% (12)	19.2% (25)	45.4% (59)	20.8% (27)	5.4% (7)
10	I am more confident in dealing with SEN students with moderate behavior.	6.2% (8)	16.2% (21)	41.5% (54)	30.8% (40)	5.4% (7)
11	I believe PK students need the social learning that exists in the mainstream class.	4.6% (6)	6.2% (8)	23.8% (31)	53.1% (69)	12.3% (16)
12	I believe SEN students can achieve better academic levels if they are early integrated.	4.6% (6)	13.1% (7)	26.9% (35)	40.8% (53)	14.6% (19)
13	SEN students' self-esteem will increase if they remain in the mainstream class.	7.7% (10)	22.3% (29)	36.2% (47)	26.9% (35)	6.9% (9)
14	SEN students do not interfere with the learning of mainstream students if they are inclusive.	9.2% (12)	13.1% (17)	33.8% (44)	32.3% (42)	11.5% (15)

4.3 Identify the relationship between the duration of teaching experience in schools with PPKI and the readiness of administrators to receive inclusive education

Based on the Pearson correlation, there was no significant relationship between the duration of teaching experience and the willingness of school administrators to receive inclusive education, [$r = 0.57$, $n = 130$, $p > 0.05$].

Table 3: Output for Pearson correlation analysis

Correlations			
		Experience	Readiness
Experience	Pearson Correlation	1	.050
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.575
	N	130	130
Readiness	Pearson Correlation	.050	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.575	
	N	130	130

5. DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Studies show some things about the readiness of administrators to receive SEN students. School leavers have high confidence that SEN students has their own capabilities and that they can compete in the mainstream. In addition, the Administrators also have high confidence that the social learning climate that exists in the primary classroom is very important for SEN students in their learning. However, most school administrators are not sure whether inclusive education can help improve SEN student's education and self-esteem. Although more than half of administrators agree that SEN students does not interfere with the class even though it is inclusive, almost half are also unsure about it. However, they believe that if the SEN students is integrated early, this could help improve the performance of the SEN students. The administrators have shown a lack of confidence in managing the SEN students either with physical impairments, low cognitive levels or with moderate behavior problems. However, among all the categories, school administrators are more confident in managing MBKs with physical disabilities than the other two. This may be because more than half of school administrators have never attended courses related to special visitors, let alone those specifically related to inclusive education. This study shows little difference from the study conducted by Manisah, Ramlee and Zalizan (2006) on primary teachers in Malaysia. 66% of respondents agreed that SEN students should be taught along with other ordinary students in inclusive classes. After 10 years, school administrators showed a better acceptance of up to 85% agreeing to this. This shows better development as time goes on. It is also an indication that inclusive education may have a brighter future if more educators are aware of the importance of inclusive education in education.

The findings of this study also indicate that the duration of teaching experience in schools with PPKI does not help administrators improve their readiness for inclusive education. Time and experience have no direct impact on admin readiness. They need something to help them understand and are then ready to receive inclusive education. On the whole, school administrators have a modest willingness to receive inclusive education.

5.1 Implications of the study

School administrators are the ones who have the implications of this study. They need help to increase their readiness for inclusive education as more than half of school administrators have never attended any special education-related courses. Through courses, seminars or workshops, school administrators can be exposed to the essence of inclusive education and emphasize on the equality of rights to access to education so that they are prepared to meet the goals of Malaysia Education Plan with 75% of MBK enrolled in inclusive education menjelang 2025.

This study also provides the favorable implications for mainstream teachers who teach in inclusive classes. Salend (2011) states that mainstream teachers can increase their confidence in teaching effectiveness and better attitude towards SEN students. Like ordinary students, many mainstream teachers are also not exposed to the needs of special education students. It is only when dealing with MBK in the real teaching that the mainstream teacher is able to grasp the real differences that exist between the average student and the SEN students. Therefore, teachers proactively set the example for ordinary students to respect diversity in inclusive classes. Foreman (2008) also associates teaching experiences in inclusive classroom with professional development of teachers. Through discussions and collaborations with special education teachers, mainstream teachers can learn a variety of new teaching techniques and may differ from what is implemented in the regular classroom. In addition to the following courses and seminars, many tips, suggestions and sharing about the SEN student's world and their needs. This, of course, promotes the teaching of professionalism as well as gaining new knowledge and contributing ideas to others. Planners of inclusive education strategic plans will also get the impression that school administrators cannot wait to receive inclusive education over time. More effort should be made to realize 75% of SEN students are enrolled in inclusive education by 2025 compared to only 30% by 2015. In the past 10 years, school administrators need to be assisted to enable them to mobilize the implementing group of teachers in the school to begin to inculcate school culture are inclusive. It should be noted that school administrators still have a modest degree of readiness in expressing some uncertainty in the various aspects of MBK management in inclusive education as well as their knowledge of special education in general.

CONCLUSION

The readiness of administrators to receive inclusive education is a major factor in determining the success of inclusive education in schools. School administrators are those who form between policy makers and policy makers. The Ministry of Education has developed a well-planned, strategic and thoughtful education policy that will respond to the challenge of disregarding the right of everyone to get an equal education. However, without the willingness and willingness of all school administrators, inclusive education is difficult to run according to plan. This, of course, has a more significant impact on the implementation level of mainstream teachers and special education. Despite the positive attitude towards inclusive education, without the support and good understanding of the school administrators, teachers cannot do anything. Without the development of conducive infrastructure and facilities, inclusive education is not easy to implement. Therefore, teachers are not only the main focus in the implementation of inclusive education but also the school administrators to ensure that the quality of inclusive education is truly quality and not merely to meet the demands of education policy.

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