

Implementation of Career Transition Programme in Vocational Skills for Students with Learning Disabilities

Mohamad Fitri Tordin, Mohd Mokhtar Tahar

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Selangor, Malaysia

E-mail: p103096@siswa.ukm.edu.my

Abstract: The aim of this research is to investigate the implementation programme from three (3) objectives namely identifying the parents' (family) level of cooperation and the level of cooperation given by employers (industry) also the relationship between the two parties. A quantitative method based on Ecological Theory and Taxonomy for Transition Programming Model. In ensuring validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by an expert who is a university lecturer and also well-versed in the Special Education field. In terms of reliability, all of the items have the Cronbach Alpha coefficient of (> 0.65). Purposive sampling was used where 40 participants were included. Descriptive statistics was used to identify the percentage (%) and frequency (f) of respondents' and inferential statistics well as Spearman Correlation Test were used to explain and test the hypothesis. The findings show that the mean scores for both the level of cooperation given by parents (family) and the level of cooperation given by employers (industry) are very high. However, there is no linear relationship (low level) between the cooperation given by parents (family) and employers (industry). In conclusion, this programme should be implemented in government and non-government school especially schools with Special Education Integration Programme with the cooperation from all parties.

Keywords: Career Transition Programme, Vocational Skills, Special Education Students

INTRODUCTION

Vocational Education Transformation Programme is one of the agendas highlighted in the Tenth Malaysian Plan (RMK-10). It aims to integrate Technical Education and Vocational Training into mainstream education. According to Daros, Nordin, & Saud (2012), people with learning disabilities has the physical ability that can be trained through vocational education so that the ability can be used in certain jobs. Vocational skill education is an alternative way to support the improvements in other fields for students with special needs. In the Career Transition Programme, they are exposed to the reality of their lives after they finished their studies in school (KPM, 2012).

Besides that, the Career Transition Programme is a combination of activities based on students' individual needs, taking into account their interest and preference as well as the job market (Polloway, Patton & Serna, 2001). According to Madinah, Yusof, & Yasin, (2014), transition programme, according to The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), is defined as a service that is provided to help prepare students for career life, education after school or living independently. As a result, students can participate in social activities in the community, become law abiding citizen and fulfill their tasks in their respective careers (Taylor, 2012).

In light of all this, the number one issue that is being emphasized is the lack of support given by parents. According to Abdullah, & Yasin (2015), the majority of parents whose children are in the vocational education for students with special needs show little interest in joining the activities organized by the school. A number of initiatives have been carried out, however, without commitment, interest and cooperation of the family, it makes it difficult to implement the programme effectively. Previous findings related to parents' awareness show that they are not ready to get involved in the transition programme and only act as a passive observer to their children's learning experience (Ishak, Alias, Shah, & Rahim, 2018). Collaboration with industry is also an issue because there are still some of the employers who do not know that this programme can help students with special needs to adapt to the career life. They also think that students with special needs can only do simple tasks (Rahim, Alias, Shah, & Ishak, 2018). A study by Azlan & Alias (2016) also show that employers cannot accept trainees with disabilities into their workforce because they know very little about students with special needs and career transition programme.

The Malaysian Education Development Plan (PPPM) 2013-2025 has put an emphasis on the need to implement the Career Transition Programme for students with special needs.

Table 1. Group statistic for parents' (family cooperation)

Parents' (Family) Cooperation		
N	Frequency	20
Level of mean score		Very high
Mean		4.3995
Standard deviation		.23496

Table 2. Group statistic for employers' (industry cooperation)

Employers' (Industry) Cooperation		
N	Frequency	20
Level of mean score		Very high
Mean		4.5170
Standard deviation		.24134

Therefore, the cooperation between school administrators, teachers, parents, government and private agencies as well as the community is very important in ensuring the success of the Career Transition Programme (Abdullah & Yasin, 2015; Abdullah, Yasin, Deli, & Abdullah, 2015).

Consequently, the rationale of carrying out this study is to investigate deeply the level of cooperation given by parents (family) and industry in implementing the Career Transition Programme. This is because there are still a lot of people who do not understand their roles in making the program a success especially in terms of vocational skill. The finding is supported by theory and related models while giving a positive impact to the policymakers and practitioners. The items listed in the recommendation as well as the proposed future research can be used as a reference and guideline by the readers in order to improve the implementation of the programs.

METHOD

This study deploys the quantitative method. A questionnaire adapted from Team Planning Tools for Improving Transition Education and Services by Kohler & Field (2003) was used. The purposive sampling method was used. The research design is structured into three (3) phases namely phases 1 (construction of research instrument, research validity and reliability), phase 2 (data collection and analysis) and phase 3 (Test-Confirm Correspondence Analysis and research analysis).

The instrument had gone through three (3) stages of instrument construction namely stage 1 (identifying main constructs), stage 2 (item development in each

construct) and stage 3 (carrying out the research). The instrument had also gone through the validity and reliability processes. The questionnaire was reviewed by an expert who is a university lecturer with more than 10 years of teaching experience and also well-versed in the special education field. All of the items in the three (3) main section have the Cronbach Alpha coefficient of (>0.65) as well as have been referred to the percentage of experts in the acceptance of the items used in the study. This questionnaire has closed ended question, three (3) main parts and 36 items.

The research population of this study consists of 45 people which includes the parents of students with special needs and representatives from industry. A total of 40 people became the respondents in accordance to the sample size determination table by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Data collection was done online by sending the Google Form link to the respondents and the data was analyzed by using the SPSS software version 25. In section A of the questionnaire, descriptive analysis was carried out in order to get the frequency (f), mean and percentage (%) for each of the demographic item which include the roles, profession, gender, age, total years of service as a teacher or employer (industry), highest education level, education background and whether or not they have attended a course in Career Transition Program (Yes/No). The Spearman correlation test was used to investigate the relationship between two (2) dependent variables which are the level of cooperation given by parents (family) and the level of cooperation given by employers (industry). After that, the value of mean score by both dependent variables is examined based on the mean score interpretation (range and level of mean score) to identify the level whether it is very low, low, moderate, high or even very high (Kassim & Ahmad, 2009).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Finding(s)

In table 1 shows, To What Extent Do Parents (Family) Give Their Cooperation In The Implementation Of The Career Transition Programme For Students With Learning Disabilities ?

In table 2 shows, To What Extent Do Employers (Industry) Give Their Cooperation In The Implementation Of The Career Transition Programme For Students With Learning Disability?

In table 3 shows, To What Extent Is The Relationship Between Parents' (Family) Cooperation And Employers' (Industry) Cooperation In The Implementation Of The Career Transition Programme For Students With Learning Disability?

Table 3. Group statistic relationship between two (2) parties

Spearman		(A)	(B)
(A) Parents' (Family) Cooperation	Correlation	1.000	0.389
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.090
	N	20	20
	Mean	4.41	4.44
	Std. Deviation	0.20	0.34
(B) Employers' (Industry) Cooperation	Correlation	0.389	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.090	
	N	20	20
	Mean	4.44	4.41
	Std. Deviation	0.34	0.20

Discussion(s)

Table 1. shows that the level of cooperation given by parents (family) in the implementation of the Career Transition Programme for students with learning disability is very high (Kassim & Ahmad, 2009). According to Nor and Yasin (2019), there are six (6) items in the Epstein Model of Parental Involvement which are (Learning at home: Mean = 3,77, std dev = 0.543), (Collaborating with community: mean = 3.71, std dev = 0.583) and (Decision making: mean = 4.20, std dev = 0.788). Parents' (family) rights to make decisions and give their opinions and ideas have the highest mean score among the three (3) other models. Besides that, parents' cooperation is identified as an important element in improving students' excellence in terms of social, emotional and physical aspects as well as academics and improving the skills required in the profession (Abdullah, Yasin, Deli, & Abdullah, 2015).

Table 2 shows that the level of cooperation given by employers (industry) in the implementation of the Career Transition Programme for students with learning disability is very high (Kassim & Ahmad, 2009). A study by Nassir & Hasyim (2015) shows that students who went through the career transition training program at schools and received the certificates issued by their schools could get a job. With the certificates, the students are accepted into the workforce and acknowledged by the employers (industry). According to Devileger & Trach (1999), the support and collaboration given by employers (industry) to students and their family is an important factor in achieving the objective of the transition program. The Community Team Transition Program Model is central in making the transition better for students (Benz, Lindstrom & Halpern, 1995).

Table 3. shows the findings that there is no linear relationship between the level of cooperation given by parents (family) and level of cooperation given by employers (industry) [$r(38) = 0.389, p > 0.05$]. The weak linear relationship ($r = 0.389$) (Salkind,

2007) between the two variables can be the result of coincidence or error. According to Abdullah, Yasin, Deli, & Abdullah (2015), the majority of parents involved in the vocational education of students with special needs show little interest in participating the activities organized by the school even though a lot of collaborative initiatives have been done. Moreover, there are employers who do not know about how the Career Transition Programme can actually help students with special needs to adapt to working life and only think that they can only carry out simple tasks (Rahayu, 2019). Azlan & Alias (2016) states that employers cannot accept trainees with disabilities as their employees due to the fact that the employers have little knowledge on students with special needs and the Career Transition Programme.

CONCLUSION

The Career Transition Programme should be implemented in government and non-government schools especially schools with Special Education Integration Program. The cooperation from all parties is very important in planning the implementation of the Career Transition Program in order for it to be effective. This initiative is very much in line with the practices within the concept of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and fulfils the need of students moving forward. All in all, the level of cooperation given by parents (family) and employers (industry) is very high and will indirectly strengthen the implementation of the Career Transition Program from time to time. In addition, there is no linear relationship between the two. That being said, it does not mean that there is zero collaboration between parents and employers. It may have been due to factors such as the sample itself or low numbers of respondents. "Together We Shine The Special One."

To obtain maximum results, parents (family) should be continuously become the individuals who give reassurance, advice, guidance and support to their children as well as to encourage them to explore vocational skills in school or in any other institutions and employers (industry) becoming a group that gives input, promotion, job advertisements, job posts and also to increase the collaboration with schools and the community. Employers have the responsibility of offering suitable positions to students in accordance to their skills. Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) should formulate a guideline on the implementation of the Career Transition Programme and ensure that it is improved from time to time in order to fulfils the needs of students. Skill-based training programs should also be continued especially for special education teachers who will be teaching vocational skills in schools. Initiative and collaboration among teachers in improving the teacher's knowledge, attitude and skill as well as being

resourceful and creative in unlocking students' talents and potential so that it can be used to compete in the job market in the future. In addition, using qualitative research in analyzing the factors or issues related to the Career Transition Programme in greater depth and detail. Then, applying research designs such as interviews and observations so that more information could be gained from the implementation of the Career Transition Programme in vocational skills for students with Learning Disabilities.

REFERENCES

- Abdullah, N. & Mohd Yasin, M. H. (2015). Implementation of the Inter-Agency Collaboration in Vocational Education of Students with Learning Disabilities towards Preparation of Career Experience. *Asian Social Science*. 11(18), 183-192.
- Abdullah, N., Mohd Yasin, M. H., Deli, A. A. A., & Abdullah, N. A. (2015). Vocational education as a career pathway for students with learning disabilities: Issues and obstacles in the implementation. *International Journal of Education and Social Science*, 2(3), 98-104.
- Devileger, P. & Trach, J. (1999). Meditation as a transition process: The impact on postschool employment outcomes. *Exceptional Children*. 65, 507-523.
- Ishak, N., H., Alias, A., Shah, S., M., J., & Rahim, N., R., (2018). Ibu bapa dan program transisi kerjaya pelajar berkeperluan khas. *International Conference On Special Education In Southeast Asia Region 8th Series 2018*.
- Kassim, J., & Ahmad, J. (2009). Kualiti Kepimpinan Pengetua Sekolah-sekolah Menengah Zon Selatan, Malaysia [Leadership Quality of Principals of Southern Zone Secondary Schools, Malaysia]. In *Seminar Nasional Pengurusan dan Kepimpinan Pendidikan Ke-16 pada* (pp. 21-24).
- Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia (KPM). (2012). *Laporan Awal Pelan Pembangunan Pendidikan Malaysia 2013-2025 [Preliminary Report of the Malaysia Education Development Plan 2013-2025]*. Putrajaya, Kuala Lumpur.
- Kohler, P. D. & Field, S. (2003). Transition-Focused Education: Foundation for the Future. *The Journal of Special Education*, 37(3), 174 - 183.
- Krejcie, R. V., & Morgan, D. W. (1970). Determining sample size for research activities. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 30, 607-610.
- Madinah, Mohd Yusof, M. & Mohd Yasin, M. H. (2014). Pelaksanaan Program Transisi Kerjaya Pendidikan Khas Bermasalah Pendengaran [Implementation of the Special Education Career Transition Program for the Hearing Impaired]. Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia: Tesis PhD. "Tidak diterbitkan".
- Daros, M. Nordin, M. S & Saud, M. S. (2012). Pelajar Berkeperluan Khas dan Bermasalah Pembelajaran Dari Sekolah Ke Kerjaya. *Journal of Social Science*. 5(1), 42-46.
- Azlan, N., M., & Alias, A. (2016). Persepsi majikan terhadap pelatih pendidikan khas dalam program transisi. *International Conference On Learning Innovation and Quality Education 1st Series 2016*.
- Nassir, S., N., I., M., & Hasyim, M., H., M. (2015). Pelaksanaan program transisi bagi mempersiapkan murid berkeperluan pendidikan khas masalah pembelajaran (BPKMP) kealam kerjaya [Implementation of a transition program to prepare students with special educational needs for learning disabilities (BPKMP) for a career]. Proceeding of the 3rd Global Summit on Education GSE 2015, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. 9-10 Mac. 672-683. Retrieved from <http://WorldConference.net>.
- Nor, N., M., & Mohd Yasin, M., H. (2019). Tahap penglibatan ibu bapa dalam pelaksanaan program transisi kerjaya murid berkeperluan khas pembelajaran [The level of parental involvement in the implementation of career transition programs for students with special learning needs]. *Malaysian Thesis Online*.
- Polloway, E. A., Patton, J. R. & Serna, L. (2001). *Strategies for Teaching Learners with Special Needs*. 7th ed. Upper Saddle Rivr, N.J: Merrill / Prentice Hall.
- Rahayu, T. (2019). *Upaya Guru dalam Pembinaan Sikap Sosial pada Siswa Berkebutuhan Khusus di SLB Negeri 01 Kota Bengkulu [Teacher's Efforts in Fostering Social Attitudes for Students with Special Needs at SLB Negeri 01 Bengkulu City]* (Doctoral Dissertation, Iain Bengkulu).
- Rahim, N., R., Alias, A., Shah, S., M., J., & Nor Ishak, N., H. (2018). Penerimaan majikan terhadap pelaksanaan program transisi kerjaya murid berkeperluan khas masalah pembelajaran [Employers' acceptance of the implementation of career transition programs for students with special learning needs]. *International Conference On Special Education In Southeast Asia Region 8th Series 2018*.

- Salkind, N., J., (2007). *Guidelines for interpreting strength of correlation from Statistic for People Who (Think They) Hate Statistics: Excel 2007 Edition*.
- Taylor. (2012). An examination of secondary special education teachers' self-reported efficacy and performance through the use of case study methodology (PhD dissertation). Retrieved from *University Auburn, Alabama*.
- Benz, M. R., Lindstrom, L. E., & Halpern, A. S. (1995). Mobilizing local communities to improve transition services. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 18(1), 21-32.