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Implementation of Inclusive Education For Special Needs Learners with Learning Disabilities

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Abstract

Conducting interviews is a very important qualitative research technique that helps researchers obtains answers from respondents by exploring their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation. In this study, the researchers would like to explore the implementation of inclusive education in Special Education Program Integration with Learning Disabilities in primary school. Specifically, this study aims to identify the form of implementation of the program, the form of collaboration and adaptation performed by the subject teacher and resource teacher. To achieve the purpose of the study, the researcher designed structured interview questions for the principal, senior assistant special education teachers, subject teachers and resource teacher. Interview questions were then pilot tested in a primary school in the state of Malacca. Two administrators and two teachers who were involved in the Inclusive Education Program have been selected to be interviewed in this pilot test. Structured interview data were analyzed. Based on the interview, 68 units of themes have been established. These analyzed data were given to three experts to evaluate. Cohen's Kappa index for the validity and reliability of the interview questions were used and Cohen's Kappa coefficient of agreement at 0.7 was obtained. Thus, the set of interview questions is found to be suitable for this study. In addition to this structured interview, the study will also be supported through other findings such as observations and document analysis.

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Keywords: Qualitative research, Structured Intervie, Inclusive Education Program, Cohen's Kappa Index

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1. Introduction

Inclusive Education Program in Malaysia began in 1962, 1988 and 1999. These differences in years are based on the type of target students with special needs. In 1962, the Inclusive Education Program was implemented for visually impaired students (Tambi, 1997). In 1988, the program was implemented in Special Education Integration Program with Learning Disabilities (Bosi, 2004). This program is the largest contributor to increase enrollment in Inclusive Education Program now. In 1999, Inclusive Education Programs was implemented in technical schools (Shaari, 2005). In Malaysia, the Inclusive Education Program is an education program for students with special needs who are educated in a regular class at government schools or non-government schools for nearly all of the day, or at least for more than half of the day (Malaysia, 2013).

Studies related to the Inclusive Education Program in Malaysia are not new. Several researchers in previous studies have conducted it with a different focus. Some of the studies include, “The Perceptions of Inclusive Practices in Malaysia” (Jelas, 2000); “Malaysian Preschool Children with ADHD in Inclusive Setting” (Saad, 2003); “Pilot Study Implementation of Inclusive Education in Malaysia (Bosi, 2004); “Pilot Study on the Commitment and The Role of Teachers in The Implementation of the Approach to Inclusive Education in Malaysia (Saad, 2005); “The Management of Inclusive Education Program in Technical and Secondary Day School” (Shaari, 2005); and “A case Study on Inclusive Education Program Implementation for Autistic Pupils at a Primary School” (Muhammad & Mahmud., 2010).

In 2013, a guideline was issued by the Ministry of Education. This guideline briefly describes the procedure for placing pupils in inclusive classes, the age of pupils involved, the typical ratio of pupils and students with learning disabilities in the inclusive classroom, and the responsibilities of relevant parties (in school) in the implementation of Inclusive Education Program. This study will use this guideline to explore the implementation of Inclusive Education Program in Malaysia. This study will only focus on Special Education Integration Program with Learning Disabilities in primary schools. Since most of the research on Inclusive Education program uses quantitative research and/ or mixed methods research, the researchers felt the need to conduct a full qualitative research. This is because in qualitative research, there are various forms of interview design that can be developed to obtain thick, rich data utilizing a qualitative investigational perspective (Creswell, 2007).

In this study, the researchers will design a set of interview questions to obtain information from the respondents. Through the interviews, the researchers will have in-depth information relating to the experiences and views respondents by exploring their perspectives on the implementation of inclusive education in Special Education Program Integration with Learning Disabilities in the primary school. The interview was conducted as a pilot study to test the validity of a set of questions developed by the researchers. The pilot study was conducted at School A, Merlimau, Malacca.

The interviews became a key instrument in the study of the implementation of Inclusive Education in Special Education Integration Program with Learning Disabilities. Thus, the set of questions must be valid and reliable in order to answer the research objectives effectively. Other than testing the validity of the questions by verifying them through the agreements of experts, themes from the findings in interviews were also established.

2. Purpose and objectives

The purpose and the objectives of the study is as follows.

2.1 Purpose of study

The purpose of this study is to design a set of interview questions for qualitative research. The set of questionnaires will be validated in a pilot study. This validated interview questions will be used in the study to explore the implementation of Inclusive Education Program in Malaysia. Among the questions posed in this study are:

- i) How do teachers implement the Inclusive Education Program?
- ii) What forms of collaboration can occur in the implementation of the Inclusive Education Program?

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