

## The Level of Readiness of Trainee Teachers for The Implementation of Inclusive Education in Primary Schools

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**Abstract:** *The Inclusive Education Programme is an effort by the government in promoting education for students with special education needs especially in Malaysia. The implementation of the Inclusive Education Programme puts great pressure on mainstream teachers to prepare themselves to teach students with special educational needs. This study aims to identify the knowledge, skills and attitudes of trainee teachers towards the implementation of the Inclusive Education Programme in primary schools. The respondents were 59 trainee teachers who were pursuing study at the Institute of Teachers' Education Special Knowledge Campus. This survey study uses a quantitative approach through questionnaire instruments. The data obtained is analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for The Social Sciences) version 29 software. Researchers used the Theory of Constructivism and the Theory of Behaviorism in this study. The overall findings showed that the level of readiness of trainee teachers towards the implementation of inclusive education in primary schools in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes is at a satisfactory level (mean 3.25;  $sp=1.14$ ). This study has had implications for policymakers, trainee teachers and college training institutes. Among the recommendations of researchers in increasing the level of readiness of trainee teachers for the implementation of inclusive education is that by increasing their knowledge, skills and self-attitude in implementing inclusive education, policymakers in education should further diversify the teacher's professional development program on inclusive education to trainee teachers such as courses, workshops and training programs and the trainee teachers themselves need to increase their self-sufficiency in implementing inclusive education in elementary school.*

**Keywords:** *Readiness Level, Inclusive Education Program, Knowledge, Skills, Attitude.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Inclusive Education Program refers to an educational program that provides opportunities for students with special educational needs to follow the full learning in mainstream classes with students of the first generation (Saiful Azam, 2017). This Inclusive Education Program approach coincides with the desired government enshrined in the Malaysian Education Development Plan (PPPM) 2013-2025, which intends to increase students with special educational needs enrollment in the Inclusive Education Program.

The implementation of this Inclusive Education Program obligation is marked by the existence of the disabilities act which is OKU Act 2008 which has to ensure that students have the same educational opportunities as a normal human being. On the other hand, a letter from Ministry of Education (Moe) with KPMSP reference number 100-6/1/25 Vol.3 (98) dated 11 May 2016 on the implementation of Inclusive Education Program also stated that all institutions of higher education should strive to school even in the keynote speech of the Minister of Education of Malaysia, YB Fadhlina Sidek The Opening Ceremony of the Seminar on developing Malaysia MADANI : the role of the sector.

The minister said that she is committed to ensuring that the students with special educational needs and special education teachers will be given due attention by the MOE. He also stressed in his speech that the level of readiness of teachers in implementing Inclusive Education Program, especially primary teachers, is the main indicator to determine success in Inclusive Education Program implementation. Therefore, this study was conducted to identify the level of preparedness of the trainee teacher in implementing the Inclusive Education Program in elementary school.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The study focused on three main areas to identify knowledge, skills and attitudes of trainee teachers against the implementation of inclusive education in primary schools. The first aspect is knowledge that carries the intent of the information stored in memory a person's mental state about something. Level of knowledge of the English language in the education of students plays an important role in carrying out this program. This is because in the previous study a teacher with a high level of knowledge and understanding on PPI, had a positive view and attitude towards MBPK. On the other hand, teachers who lack knowledge and experience also have negative perceptions of PPI and also MBPK students (Bornman & Donohue, 2013). Therefore, this study will assess the extent to which the level of knowledge of the trainee teacher in general against this PPI in elementary school.

The second aspect is the skill that refers to the ability of a person to carry out an activity effectively. This aspect can be obtained through training and experience that is formed in a certain period. It takes a lot of time to develop these skills in terms of teaching, practice, and in order to ensure that the skills that are developed are holistic and effective when applied in real-world situations in the classroom. Skill is the backbone key in implementing a program to achieve the goal. Therefore, these skills need to be given full attention to ensure that the trainer has a strong influence in implementing PPI in elementary school. In addition, there are various aspects skills that need to be given attention in this PPI such as pedagogical skills, BBM and class control to ensure that PPI produces positive results for MBPK. This statement is also supported by Bi Ying Hu (2010) who stated a teacher's skills are a key indicator of success in educational programs.

The last aspect is the attitude of the teacher who means a tendency of behavior, temperament and morals consistently that provide the response to an object whether it is pleasant or not pleasant (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1970). This attitude will give a direct impression of the action of someone doing something. So, in the context study, a positive attitude will have an impact on positive action in the event of a negative impact on the MBPK, a negative impact on the contrary. This scenario illustrates the attitude of the teacher is an element important in the implementation of PPI. In addition, the teacher's attitude is about the teacher's attitude and actions in the classroom. For example, a positive attitude of the teacher will create a teaching practice that is true even if the teacher's attitude negatively affects the learning process. In fact, this attitude starts from oneself because this attitude is more difficult to form and apply in a human being than the application of knowledge and skills. Therefore, the assessment of this attitude will determine whether the PPI is capable of achieving its objectives targeted or not.

### **3. METHODS**

The design of the study refers to a procedure of data processing collected based on specific and systematic planning of the concept formation of a network of relationships between the variables involved in some studies (Kerlinger, 1970). In general, the study design is a key element in a study. This is because the design of this study will serve as a guide for researchers to ensure that each objective of the study was completed at once to answer every question in this study. Therefore, the researcher has chosen a quantitative approach as the design in this study. The method chosen is a survey method using questionnaires to collect data on the construct of knowledge, skills and attitudes of teachers trainers on PPI in primary school. Wiersma (1995) describes the method of survey as the most appropriate method and it has been widely used in most educational research. It is thus because, descriptive analysis in this survey study can be related to the findings mean value, frequency, percentage and also the standard deviation used by the researcher to interpret the data.

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The researchers collected data on the demographics of the respondents; the first is part A in the questionnaire instrument. Background information collected are gender, age and race.

**Table 1 : Distribution Of Respondents By Gender**

Gender	Frequency	Percent (%)
Male	24	40.7
Female	35	59.3
Total	59	100

Table 1 displays total and percentage totals the subjects of this study were 59 people by gender. Then, based on the table, according to the gender distribution, the number of male subjects is as much as 24 people (40.7%) while female subjects are as many as 35 people (59.3%). This percentage indicates a greater number of female subjects compared to the male theme.

**Table 2 : Distribution Of Respondents By Race**

Race	Frequency	Percent (%)
Malay	45	76.3
Chinese	14	23.7
Indian	0	0
Others	0	0
Total	59	100

The results of the survey in Table 2 found that the Malays are the largest number of people who fill out this form as many as 45 people (76.3%) while the Chinese are a race the second largest after the Malays, which is 14 people (23.7%). In other words, people who have the lowest percentage of this study of the Indian and other races when there is no India and other races involved in the study. That's because no Indian and other ethnic groups in this country consists of trainee teachers at Institute of Teachers' Education Special Knowledge Campus. Distribution it has been shown that the Malays are the most Chinese and the Indians and others race in this study.

Table 3 : Distribution Of Respondents By Age

Age	Frequency	Percent (%)
20 years old	1	1.7
21 years old	8	13.6
22 years old	48	81.4
23 years old	2	3.4
Total	59	100

Distribution of respondents in Table 3 by age divided into 4 groups from 20 years to 23 years. The findings of the questionnaire found that respondents aged 22 years and the most respondents were 48 people (81.4%). The second highest number of respondents were 21-year-olds, a total of 8 people (13.6%). The 23-year-old respondent in turn consists of 2 people (3.4%). Finally, respondents aged 20 this year, the lowest percentage of participants in the survey, only 1 (1.7%). The results of this survey showed that respondents the 22-year-old is the most followed respondents aged 21 years, 23 years and the lowest was 20 years old respondents.

Table 4 : Analysis of the knowledge of trainee teachers on the implementation of inclusive education programs in primary schools.

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level
I have deep enough knowledge teaching students with special needs in primary school.	3.57	1.33	High
I have a clear understanding of each learning topic to educate pupils with special needs in primary school.	3.07	1.60	Satisfactory
I have knowledge of self-management with students with special needs in primary school.	2.39	1.33	Low
I've got knowledge in producing teaching aids for teaching and learning sessions for special needs students in primary school.	4.43	0.82	Very High
I can make observations of students with special needs in primary school.	2.34	1.36	Low
Total	3.16	1.29	Low

Table 4 shows the mean score for the level of readiness of trainee teachers on knowledge in practice PPI in elementary school. Researchers have also referred to the scale of measurement according to The Division of Planning, Research and Education Policy (2006) to interpret the data obtained. Getting from the data in Table 4 shows the highest mean for the level of knowledge of teachers trainer on PPI implementation in schools the bottom line is that the 4th item is “I have knowledge in produce teaching aids for teaching sessions and learning students with special needs in primary school” with min 4.43 and a standard deviation of 0.82. This Item can be interpreted as very high. Next, the item that has the second highest mean of this construct the first is “I know enough in teaching pupils with special needs in primary schools” with a mean of 3.57 and standard deviation 1.33.

Not only that, there is an item in this construct that is categorized as satisfactory which is on the 2nd item with a mean of 3.07 and the standard deviation of 1.60 which is “I have a clear understanding of each learning topic to convey the knowledge of students with special needs in primary school”. Finally, there are two items in that are placed on low category which is 3rd item with mean 2.39 and standard deviation 1.33 which is “I have the knowledge of appropriate self-management with special needs students in elementary school ” and the 5th item is “I can be used for special needs students in school low” with a mean of 2.34 and a standard deviation of 1.36. These two points are noted as the lowest level of knowledge compared to other items in this construct. In this way, overall, the item for the construct of the level of knowledge of the trainee teacher on PPI implementation in primary schools are at a satisfactory level with the total mean recorded is 3.16 and the standard deviation is 1.29.

Therefore, based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the level of knowledge of the Tamil language on the implementation of PPI in primary schools are at a level satisfying. This indicates that the training institute provides exposure through PPI programs and courses. However, the number of PPI related disclosures has not yet reached the level this is especially true when the number and frequency of the program is still small and not widespread yet. Not only that, the study of Zarina Abdul Rashid (2016) the promotion of special education is limited to the college training institute that offers special education alone. This gives a significant impression to other teachers who coach there is no mention of special education. This statement is consistent with the view of Faiza Abbas et al. (2016) found that those less likely to be involved in training or special education have a low knowledge value and have not been prepared to teach MBPK effectively.

Not only that, their satisfactory level of knowledge is also driven by the process of exchange of information and ideas that exist among mainstream trainee teachers with special education trainee teachers through the Professional Learning Community (PLC) (Roslizam Hassan et al.,2018). However, the problem arises when the majority of students do not have access to formal education when it's just a matter of focusing on the big picture and forgetting it is important to have a special education teacher training program. This situation causes a large literacy gap between trainee teacher's special education, as well as the primary teacher training it is only given to special education teachers. In addition to this, it also gives the impression to the teacher of the importance of being an inclusive student and why they are excluded. However, they do have a certain level of knowledge about their own role in the success of PPI in schools, especially in the lower class.

Table 5 : Analysis of the skills of trainee teachers on the implementation of inclusive education programs in primary schools.

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level
I have the ability to manage students with special needs during the teaching and learning sessions in primary school.	1.66	0.87	Very Low
I am able to determine the appropriate pedagogy according to the needs of students with special needs in primary school.	3.07	1.60	Satisfactory
I was able to assess the level of ability and development of students with special needs in primary school.	2.22	1.25	Low
I am capable of handling the behaviour of students with special needs in primary school	2.29	1.22	Low
I am able to provide appropriate teaching aids according to the needs of students with special needs in primary school.	3.57	1.33	Satisfactory
Total	2.56	1.25	Low

Table 5 shows the mean score and standard deviation for the level of teacher readiness of the student's language skills in their implementation of PPI in elementary school. Based on the data in Table 5 shows the highest mean for the skill construct is in the 5th item, namely "I am able to provide appropriate teaching aids according to the needs of students with special needs in primary school " with min 3.57 and standard deviation 1.33.

Second highest Min followed by 2nd item with min 3.07 and standard deviation 1.60 i.e. "I am capable of determining pedagogy appropriate according to the needs of pupils with special needs in primary school". Both of these items are placed in the satisfactory category. Next, there are two items placed in the lower category when each recorded a mean below 2.69, namely in the 3rd item "I am able to assess the level of ability and development of pupils with special educational needs in primary schools " with a mean of 2.22 and a standard deviation of 1.25 and the 4th item "I am able special needs in primary school" with a mean of 2.29 and a standard deviation of 1.22.

The findings also showed that the lowest mean for this construct was for the first item "I am able to manage students with special needs during teaching and learning sessions in primary schools" when only recorded a mean of 1.66 and a standard deviation of 0.87. This first Item is placed in the very low category. Therefore, the overall construct of the skill level of trainee teachers on the implementation of PPI in primary schools is at a low level with a mean number of the total recorded was 2.56 and the standard deviation was 1.25. Therefore, the summary of the findings of this study illustrates that the skills of prospective mainstream teachers are still low in the implementation of PPI in primary schools.

The Item that received the highest mean in this construct was the skill of prospective teachers in preparing BBM for MBPK while in an inclusive class. This is driven by the knowledge of trainers who have high knowledge for the inclusive class. This construct is a critical construct when there are two items at a low level and one item at a very low level.

This is because of the current trend of trainee teachers who are less exposed to the skills in handling MBPK because most trainee teachers conduct practice in ordinary classes that do not have MBPK students. Therefore, to improve the skills of trainee teachers in the implementation of PPI in low schools, the strengthening and training must be increased. The situation is parallel with the theory of Constructivism that states strong skills must be infused with knowledge and reinforcement from time to time.



Table 6 : Analysis of the skills of trainee teachers on the implementation of inclusive education programs in primary schools.

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level
I have a positive attitude towards teaching pupils with special educational needs in primary schools.	4.63	0.65	Very High
I am willing to teach primary school special needs students even though I have no specific training in inclusive education.	2.27	1.32	Low
My attitude encourages other teachers to have a positive attitude towards students with special needs in primary school.	4.20	0.93	High
I encourage students with special needs to participate in all activities conducted in the classroom in primary school.	4.47	0.78	Very High
I encourage students with special needs to participate in all activities conducted in the classroom in primary school.	4.57	0.73	Very High
Total	4.03	0.88	High

Table 4.6 shows the mean score for the readiness level of trainee teachers on their attitude in implementing PPI in primary schools. The findings from the data in Table 5 show that item 2 of this attitude construct recorded the lowest mean at 2.27 and the standard deviation of 1.32 which is “I am willing to teach special needs students in primary schools even though I do not have specific training in inclusive education” which is categorized as low. Next, the 3rd item, " my attitude encourages other teachers to have a positive attitude towards pupils with special needs in primary schools” was placed in the high category when recording a mean of 4.20 and a standard deviation of 0.97.

In addition, there are three items placed in the same category which is very high when recording a mean value of more than 4.30. The first Item that recorded a very high value was the 4th item, namely “I encourage pupils with special needs to participate in all activities carried out in the classroom in primary school” with a mean value of 4.47 and a standard deviation of 0.78. Next, the 5th item with a mean value of 4.57 and a standard deviation of 0.73 is “I encourage students with special needs to participate in all activities carried out in the classroom in elementary school” and finally the first item is “I have a positive attitude to teach students with special needs in elementary school” with a mean value of 4.63 and a standard deviation of 0.65.

Overall, the attitude construct is at a high level with an overall mean recorded of 4.03 and a standard deviation of 0.88. In other words, the results of this study describing the attitude of prospective mainstream teachers is at a high level in implementing PPI in primary schools. This shows that most of the teachers of the Malay language specialization have an attitude which is positive for MBPK which is in an inclusive class. This attitude is said to be fundamental in something. If a person's attitude is positive then, the individual will continue to strive in a positive direction, but if a person is negative, then the opposite will happen. This is in line with the theory of behaviorism chosen in this study, namely the actions or behavior of a person whether good or otherwise will affect the PdP process (EE Ah Meng, 1994). However, the findings of Table 5 also show that most mainstream trainee teachers are not willing to teach MBPK if they do not have specific training in PPI. This is consistent with the theory of Constructivism, namely training and the key to success is something.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Overall, from the findings and discussions, the researchers were able to conclude that the level of readiness of trainee teachers towards the implementation of PPI in primary schools in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes is at a satisfactory level with an average overall mean of 3.25 and a standard deviation of 1.14. The willingness of teachers in implementing inclusive education is very important, especially teacher trainers who need to be more willing and prepared with science, skills and experience before becoming a teacher. Therefore, the researcher also makes conclusions on the findings of each contract that has been analyzed.

The results of this study showed that the level of the readiness of trainee teachers towards inclusive education in primary schools in terms of overall knowledge is at a satisfactory level with an overall mean value of 3.16 and a standard deviation of 1.29. This finding shows that trainee teachers already have exposure to trainee teachers on the science of inclusive education. However, there are some trainee teachers who are still not proficient in mastering knowledge regarding the implementation of inclusive education in primary schools.

The findings of this study have shown that the level of readiness of trainee teachers towards inclusive education in primary schools in terms of skills as a whole is at a low level with an overall mean value of 2.56 and a standard deviation of 1.25. This finding shows that most trainee teachers still do not have sufficient skills in handling MBPK while in the inclusive education classroom. This is due to most teachers who have only theoretical knowledge but have low practical skills.

The findings of this study have shown that the level of readiness of trainee teachers towards inclusive education in primary schools in terms of knowledge as a whole is at a high level with the overall mean value recorded is as much as 4.03 and a standard deviation of 0.88. This finding shows that most trainee teachers have a positive attitude towards the implementation of inclusive education in primary school.

## **LIMITATION**

Like other research papers, this study is also imperfect and has some limitations. Among the limitations that need to be paid attention to in order to produce better studies in the future are the respondents of more extensive studies. This is because, given that this study assesses the level of readiness of the trainer teacher. Thus, the respondents of this study must cover all teacher education institutes that exist throughout Malaysia and not only focus on one campus.

In addition, among other limitations is that this study is limited to a small specialization that is limited to the subject of language alone while students with special educational needs is also widespread and covers a wide range of subjects. It is only natural that this study should be expanded. This is important in order to obtain more satisfactory results and high impact on the issues raised in the study.

Not only that, the entities involved in this study are also relatively small because they only involve trainee teachers while many others are involved in developing and successfully implementing inclusive education programs such as policy makers, special education divisions, teachers, state education departments, teacher training institutions and many others. Accordingly, these entities should also be involved in the study so that the study produced is more comprehensive to provide an overview of the current situation of inclusive education programs in Malaysia.

Limitations in a study are common and often occur in any study conducted in this study. Therefore, this limitation should be given focus and attention in the production of studies in the future.

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