

Factors for the Task Load of Special Education Integration Program (PPKI) Teachers in Johor

Mohd Norazmi bin Nordin



Abstract: Teachers' task load has become a chronic issue. This issue involves teachers in various fields, including special education teachers in the Special Education Integration Program (PPKI). They are burdened with a variety of tasks whether they involve special education or normal students. As we know, the real focus for teachers at PPKI is for students with special needs (MBK) who are full of challenges as MBK is came up of various categories. When their focus is directed to tasks other than those involving MBK, their work will increase and stress them. These full qualitative study was conducted to identify factors affecting the task load of teachers in PPKI. After interviews with the 11 PPKI coordinators of each district in Johor, interview transcripts were constructed and analyzed. Through thematic analysis, the findings indicate that there is three factors contributing to the task load of PPKI teachers' namely students, facilities and leadership. This finding can serve as a guide for headmasters to manage PPKI in schools.

Keywords : PPKI, special education, task load

I. INTRODUCTION

This task load occurs when teachers are directed to perform extra tasks and extend their task loads on a regular basis or at high rates [1]. [2] found that high task load was able to exert pressure and stress on teachers, including teachers at PPKI. Managing tasks at the PPKI for a teacher not only involves the learning process as it is, but it also involves the management of students' behavior [3]. This kind of student situation requires teachers to stay focused and cannot leave the MBK in a state of neglect as they need to be monitored and managed at all times [4]. Majority researchers like [5], [6] and [7] agree that teachers in PPKI are burdened with a variety of tasks and therefore have to be forced to work extra time and contributes to stress among PPKI teachers.

II. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

There is evidence on this issue through several studies, including the study of [4], which found that the task load are closely related to the stress level of special education teachers. This task load is also the highest factor that has put pressure on special education teachers. The study of [8] found that majority of respondents agreed that special education teachers were burdened with a variety

of school assignments, which would ultimately affect the quality of the teaching process and job satisfaction of the teachers involved. Study by [1] states that special education teachers not only need to carry out the teaching process in the classroom, but are also involved in administrative work, discipline management, alternate teachers and many other tasks.

Studies by [2], [3], [6] and [7] concludes that high task load among PPKI teachers exists because they have to deal with mainstream student-related tasks at the same time they need to focus their attention on PPKI. [9] explains the convergence of two streams of students at a time that increases a number of assignments. [10] also found that the focus on non-essential work such as PPKI teachers towards MBK, became the norm of task load. [11] stated that special education teachers are given tasks that are inadequate to them such as administrative tasks and non-essential tasks such as replacing absent staff. At the same time, they also have to adhere to their true duties. Meanwhile, [3] stated that there is situations where special education teachers are not given enough time to complete a task assigned. The time interval between a task to a new task either involves the MBK or does not correspond to the intensity of work that needs to be completed [10]. These conditions can actually have a detrimental impact on health and work performance, if health is declining and concentration is impaired, the quality of work and job satisfaction will also be impaired [11].

A. Research objective

- i. Explore factors that led to the rise of the task load of PPKI teachers in Johor.

B. Research questions

- ii. What are the factors that led to the rise of the task load of PPKI teachers in Johor?

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

[12] in their study found that there was a significant relationship between leadership with increasing the task load of special education teachers and increasing levels of teacher effectiveness. This study confirms that the leadership practiced by the headmaster has an impact on the tasks that teachers in PPKI will carry. The findings study by [11] show that special education teachers suffer from high burns out due to the increased task load and stressful leadership. [13] reviews the retention of teachers in the special education stream. The study examines the impact of teacher burden on addressing these issues.

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A study involving special education teachers in the state of Minnesota found that the percentage of special education teachers fluctuating or ceasing to increase over the years was a major factor in the situation as the task load was very high with regard to credit and outside assignments.

A study by [1] found similar results. Through qualitative approach using observation and interviews, the study found that, recently, special education teachers are challenged with a lot of tasks. The study also found that the problem of allocating to PPKI was that there was no recognition by the administrators in line with the efforts of the teachers and also the problem of providing complete special education facilities. [14] study identified five thematic categories that needed to be addressed to reduce the task load of teachers namely, learning processes, collaboration, data analysis, service delivery planning and implementation, and personnel development.

[15] in their study showed that headmasters need to have sufficient knowledge of special education in order for the leadership style to be practiced avoiding the burden of high task load on PPKI teachers. A study by [10] examines the determinants of special education teachers in the Heartland School District quitting special education teachers, switching to mainstream education or continuing to become teachers. Text analysis, content analysis, and pattern matching were done in analyzing the data collected and the results showed that four important factors contributing to special education teachers quit serving were that administrators were less responsive to their needs, high task load, policies nationally related to education and the constraints of various student handles.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Researcher uses interview methods to collect qualitative data. These interviews were conducted individually to enable the researcher to focus on the issues being discussed [16]. For this study, the researchers interviewed 11 PPKI coordinators in Johor because according to [17], the appropriate number was eight to 12 respondents. However, according to [18], the number of respondents was not rigid, depending on the purpose of the interview. The selection of PPKI coordinators is because they are individuals who manage PPKI among PPKI teachers. They are also part of the PPKI teachers' enrollment. All assignments from the headmaster will go through the coordinator before being accepted by the PPKI teachers. Each district of Johor is represented by a coordinator as respondent. There were 11 respondents involved in Segamat, Muar, Tangkak, Batu Pahat, Mersing, Kulai, Kota Tinggi, Johor Bahru, Kluang, Pontian and Pasir Gudang. The preferred interview method is a semi-structured interview that includes some key questions and some additional questions. This method was chosen to facilitate researchers to control data acquisition [19]. Transcripts were generated at the end of the interview session and then subjected to thematic analysis to obtain answers to the research questions. Thematic analysis was carried out in accordance with the recommendations of [20] as shown in the Fig. 1.

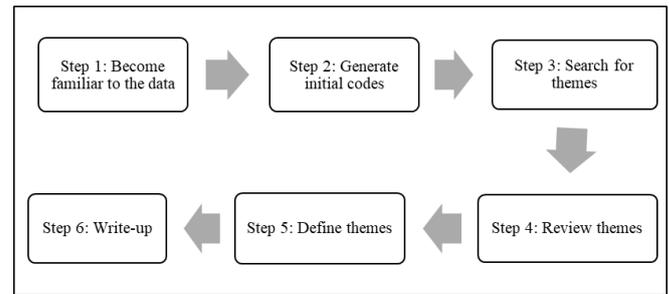


Fig. 1: Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework for doing a thematic analysis

V. FINDINGS

Through thematic analysis, there are three factors contributing to the task load of the PPKI teachers in Johor namely students, facilities and leadership as shown in Table .

Table-I: Factors of PPKI Teacher Task Load in Johor

Themes / Factors	R T 1	R T 2	R T 3	R T 4	R T 5	R T 6	R T 7	R T 8	R T 9	R T 10	R T 11
Student	/	-	-	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	-
Facility	/	/	/	/	/	-	/	/	/	/	/
Leadership	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/

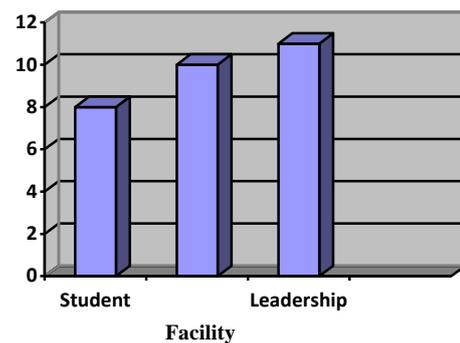


Fig. 2: Factors of PPKI Teacher Task Load in Johor

VI. DISCUSSION

The respondents generally agreed that the PPKI teachers in Johor were very burdened with the task they were facing in school. Through thematic analysis of interview transcripts, there are three factors that make PPKI teachers in Johor feel burdened with their task, namely student factors, facilities and leadership. Eight respondents agreed that pupils were a factor for the task load of PPKI teachers in Johor. The statement was made based on the category of special needs students (MBK) in the school. Some of the MBKs are in the severe disability category, unable to manage themselves and having various combinations of problems at one time. This situation requires teachers to focus more on preparing students for learning. Behavior management and self-management need to be taken into account before formal teaching begins [3]. This situation is faced by most PPKI teachers because MBK placement is not based on categories in the classroom. This MBK is set up of many categories of disabilities.

Respondents also stated that their involvement in activities involving normal students also contributed to their increased task load. Basically, these PPKI teachers should be involved if the activity involves MBK. If so, the teachers would have to leave their respective classes and MBKs to do the work with the students in the mainstream. Meanwhile, 10 out of 11 respondents said the facility was a factor in the rise of the PPKI teacher's task load. Lack of basic facilities as well as appropriate teaching aids make teachers need to think the ways to provide the material for their teaching. The material also needs to meet the student's ability level. All the necessary materials as stated are difficult to obtain. Therefore, teachers themselves need to provide the material. Respondents also stated that the basic facilities for the MBK and the disabled were still not enough. There are even those with no such facilities. This has led to certain activities being carried out outside of the school area, especially those with facilities that are disabled and MBK friendly. The third factor that all respondents agree to is the school leadership factor. They said that the school and administration had given the work to the teachers of PPKI regardless of the burden of the task. Most of the assignments are not involving MBK. Basically, the administration sees PPKI teachers as teachers who do not do much work. They think that managing and teaching the MBK can be done with ease and without difficulty. This kind of attitude makes the teachers of PPKI assigned to other tasks that involve normal students. There are also those who are forced to replace the mainstream teachers who do not attend their classes. The same is true of the situation where they are directed to replace the mainstream teachers and teachers involved in examination classes such as UPSR especially for meetings or special events. This situation forced the PPKI teachers to leave the MBK class to carry out other tasks.

VII. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the findings of this study, it is very appropriate for headmasters to re-evaluate the style of leadership they practice in schools against PPKI. [3] state that the role of the headmaster influences the overall management of the school including PPKI. [13] suggests that teachers who are involved in management related to special education require the right knowledge and attitude towards special education in order for school management. All of the factors identified in this study are in line with the reality of PPKI. The next study to be carried out is on the effect of headmaster leadership on the task load of PPKI teachers.

VIII. CLOSING

The level of responsibility of a PPKI teacher is crucial in securing their commitment in PPKI. In dealing with the various categories of MBK, it is very challenging for teachers in PPKI. Therefore, burdening PPKI teachers with the task of forcing them to leave their classroom will lead to many other problems. It is the responsibility of the school administration to revisit the scope of the work of the PPKI teachers so that they are not burdened with unnecessary tasks. This is none other than guaranteeing the safety, security and success of MBK.

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