Knowledge and Readiness of Preschool Teachers in Accepting Special Needs Children

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Abstract: This research is conducted to observe the level of knowledge and readiness faced by kindergarten educators in accepting special needs children. This research aims to study the relationship between knowledge and readiness of kindergarten teachers towards their acceptance of students with special needs education. A quantitative approach was used by utilising observation method with non-random sampling in order to select the respondents. n=77 kindergarten teachers who are currently teaching children around the age of five to six at a preschool or kindergarten, regardless of whether it is a private or government school, were identified. The descriptive analysis presented that the mean value is high for every variable of readiness and knowledge of teachers in accepting children who require special education at their kindergartens. The Pearson correlation test was used to describe the relationship between the variables of readiness and knowledge. The result showed that there was a significant relationship between readiness, knowledge, and teachers’ acceptance towards children who require special education. The implication of this study hoped that every private and government kindergarten is able to fully accept special education children without any biases in order achieve the objective of Malaysia’s National Education Blueprint (MNEB). This is to ensure that inclusive education in early childhood education in Malaysia can be accomplished.

Keywords: Special education children, preschool teacher, knowledge, readiness

1. Introduction

According to Zulfija, Indira and Elmira (2013), the key to success for inclusive education depends on the competency of teachers in working with special education children. Teachers’ competency is a vital attribute to predict the quality of teaching, cognitive level and educational support (Ekstam, Korboren, Linnmäki & Aunio, 2017). This is also supported by Rakap, Cig and Parlak-Rakap (2015) whereby the authors stated that the execution of successful inclusive practices depends on the attitude and readiness of teachers in teaching special education children in the classroom. The role, competency, and attitude of teachers are the major elements to ensure that every child receives education, especially the ones who require special education, and accepted by the society.

According to De Boer A., Pijl and Minnaert (2011), the studies conducted on readiness of teachers in teaching special education children are limited. In addition, the results that were obtained also showed that teachers’ acceptance towards inclusive education is negative due to the lack of knowledge and training provided for them. It is supported by Lopes and Crenitte (2013) whereby teachers who possess limited knowledge regarding children’s learning problems do not know the further actions that should be taken when facing these problems. Hence, they are prone to be biased in their evaluation. Other than that, the lack of exposure among teachers in certain matters will result in less knowledge and skills obtained, and disrupt the children in achieving their objectives (Nurul Farahah Derapa & Suziyani Mohamed, 2018). The result in a study conducted by Sukbunpant, Arthur-Kelly and Dempsey (2013) presented that most teachers in preschools still lack the knowledge and skills in special education. Furthermore, the teachers stated that the provided exercises were not practical to be conducted in a preschool.

For the researcher, the aspect of readiness and knowledge of preschool teachers in accepting special education children is an interesting topic to be studied. Hence, the researcher is compelled to conduct a study on the readiness of kindergarten teachers in accepting special education children as well as their knowledge in implementing inclusive education. Besides that, the researcher also aims to observe whether any limitations are present in teachers’ acceptance towards special education children. This is because, for the researcher himself, educating and nurturing special education children is not an easy task.

2. Literature Review
Readiness and its principles

Regarding teachers’ readiness, Noor Shamshinar, Zetty Nuzuliana and Mohd Kamal (2014) stated that it refers to the level of mastery and obstacles faced by the teachers that consisted of their level of knowledge and ability. As for Norasmah Othman and Rofilah Md. Said (2013), they stated that teachers’ readiness is about the leadership of teachers that will be provided in the first instance before facing the children. Therefore, this study is conducted to examine teachers’ readiness in the aspect of knowledge and skills as these aspects are very important for a teacher in accepting special education children in a preschool.

Readiness is one of the important aspects for a teacher to anticipate who, what, and how to teach their students. According to Hay, Smith dan Paulsen (2001), the concept of readiness shows that teachers are prepared in facing something that is about to occur. The readiness of teachers can be influenced by past experience from another teacher. For example, the intrinsic readiness of the teacher is also related to the quality of education provided at the schools (Mariyam Shareefa, 2016, Mohd Sainan et, al. 2020).

Numerous studies conducted in the past targeted the readiness and implementation of inclusive education in early childhood education. Other studies also stated the factors of teachers’ readiness in inclusive education depend on their perception as some teachers consider it to be a burden at their workplace (Kofidou & Mantzikos, 2018). Klimov (2002) considered that readiness for professional activities is closely related to motivation. According to Klimov, when someone successfully completed his duty professionally, uses his knowledge accurately, possesses experience, has a great personality, able to control himself, and overcome challenges, it psychologically forms readiness.

Kariyev, Turganbayeva, Slambekova, Zheldybayeva, Kabdualiyeva, (2015) identified the principles that contribute to the formation of readiness for teachers. The first principle is professional orientation. It is considered as the main motive of pedagogical orientation based on teachers’ interest towards the contents of pedagogical activity and the formation of professional thinking culture. Secondly, the principle of motivation that covers the educational process. The necessity of forming students’ motivation is based on professional knowledge and pedagogy, solving problems professionally, and learning activities. The third principle is humanistic orientation in the process of pedagogy. For instance, stating the needs to form the future of teachers in understanding the importance of combining the goals of society and individuals, and provides meaning towards human values in the modern world.

Knowledge and its dimension

A teacher must possess a high level of knowledge especially in the field of early childhood education. Not only the teachers must know the lesson and teaching preparation, they must also know how to identify children who are facing difficulty in learning. According to Noor Rohana Mansor (2009), one’s level of knowledge includes the ability to scan something that has occurred as well as remembering it generally or specifically by the methods of processing and restructuring of information. In this study, the focus of knowledge is on kindergarten teachers’ knowledge regarding the field of inclusive education.

Bloom’s Taxonomy was introduced by Benjamin Bloom in 1956. This taxonomy helps fellow teachers to create teaching, learning, and assessment objects. Bloom’s Taxonomy is a set of three hierarchical models used to classify the objectives of educational learning to the level of complexity and specificity which are cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. In the beginning, the cognitive domain is divided into six level which are knowledge, application understanding, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. However, in the year 2001, Anderson dan Krathwohl conducted a recheck on Bloom’s Taxonomy and added a slight improvement in the aspect of terminology. The changes in terminology introduced by Anderson et al. were from noun to verb, beginning from the level of remembering, understanding, applying, analysing, evaluating, and creating (Anderson, Krathwohl, Airasian, Cruikshank, Mayer, Pintrich, Raths & Wittrock, 2001).

Based on the above dimension of knowledge, it can be related with the knowledge of kindergarten teachers in executing inclusive education at kindergarten. Inclusive education is a part of special education. Teachers who graduated with a diploma or bachelor’s degree in their studies are introduced to special education. This is because, for any colleges or universities that prepared a diploma or degree in education, some of the requirements by the accreditation agency are preparing related subjects in special education. Hence, teachers obtain knowledge regarding special education, inclusive education, children who require special education, teaching technique, and many more through those subjects even though it is not practical.
3. Methodology

Research Design

In this quantitative study, the research questions were created and used to find out the readiness, knowledge, and limitation of kindergarten teachers in accepting special education children which is pointed towards the objective of this study. Hence, the research questions that need to be answered in this study comprise of these aspects:

i. What is the readiness level of kindergarten teachers in accepting special education children?

ii. What is the knowledge level of kindergarten teachers in accepting special education children?

iii. Is there any relationship between the readiness and knowledge level of kindergarten teachers regarding special education children?

Sample of study

In this study, the sample is kindergarten teachers responsible for teaching 4-6 years old children whereby the kindergarten or preschool is government or private. 77 kindergarten teachers were chosen as the respondents for this study. The kindergarten teachers who answered the questionnaire were former students, acquaintances, and the researcher’s colleagues who work at a kindergarten and preschool.

Instruments

This study utilized questionnaire in order to obtain the results. The questionnaire was made by the researcher himself based on the readiness and knowledge faced by the kindergarten teachers in accepting special education children at their kindergartens.

This questionnaire was divided into three parts which were A, B, and C. Part A consisted of the background of the respondents. Nine items were drafted by the researcher to find out the background of the respondents. The questions for items in part A consisted of gender, age, race, highest academic achievement, teaching experience, total number of children in their class, total number of special education children in their class, and types of kindergarten.

Part B is the questionnaire for readiness of kindergarten teachers in accepting special education children. 11 items were drafted in order to obtain the information regarding teachers’ readiness in accepting special education children and executing inclusive education at their kindergarten.

Next, part C is the questionnaire for knowledge of kindergarten teachers in accepting special education children. 12 items were drafted to gain information regarding the knowledge level of kindergarten teachers about special education children.

Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire

Cronbach’s Alpha was used through an application, SPSS version 22, to estimate the reliability of the items in the questionnaire. Below is the reliability analysis for items in part B and C.

Based on the findings and feedbacks from the pioneers of this study, the researcher amended and reconstructed a few items in the questionnaire form. In part B, 11 items were removed. If the items were removed, the value for the Cronbach’s alpha would be higher, \( \alpha = 0.909 \). Hence, the items were erased and replaced by other items that were more related with the construct of readiness. On the other hand, for part c, no changes were made as the value of the Cronbach’s alpha did not affect the overall items of this part even if removed.

The result analysis in table 1.0 presented that the Cronbach’s alpha for reliability for the whole data of this study was high at \( \alpha = 0.873 \), hence, the item statement was accepted and could be used in the real sample study after a few items had gone through the correction process.

| Table 1.0, Reliability for Item in part B and C |
|---|---|---|---|
| Part | Total Item | Cronbach’s alpha value \((\alpha)\) for each part | Cronbach’s alpha value \((\alpha)\) for all parts |
| B (Kesediaan guru tadika) | 11 | 0.877 | 0.873 |
4. Data Analysis

The Readiness of Kindergarten Teachers in Accepting Special Education Children

The questionnaire for Part B identified the readiness of kindergarten teachers in accepting special education children. The findings for this part were analysed by using frequency, percentage, mean, mean score, and standard deviation. The respondents’ answers were analysed from 5-point Likert scale.

Table 2.0 showed the mean score for readiness of kindergarten teachers in accepting special education children. Based on table 2.0, the highest mean for readiness of kindergarten teachers in accepting special education children were for the item “I would like to see special education children succeed like the rest of the children” with the mean $\bar{x}=4.64$ and standard deviation $sp=0.532$ at the highest mean score. The lowest mean score was for the item “I am prepared to accept special education children in my class” and had an average mean score which was $\bar{x}=3.05$ and standard deviation $sp=1.104$. Overall, the item for readiness of kindergarten teachers in accepting special education children was high with the total mean of $\bar{x}=3.77$ and standard deviation $sp=0.904$.

Table 2.0. Frequency Distribution, Percentage, Mean and Standard Deviation of Readiness Level of Kindergarten Teachers in Accepting Special Education Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>STS</th>
<th>TS</th>
<th>TP</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I am prepared to accept special education children in my class.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I am prepared to teach special education children.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I am prepared to cooperate with the special education children’s parents.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I am ready to gain more knowledge on special education from time to time.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>.739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I am willing to be the source of reference for my colleagues as well as the parents of the special education children.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>.992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I am ready to cooperate with my colleagues and professionals in order to take care and educate special education children.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>.916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I will give my full attention to the special education children during teaching and learning process.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>.893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I am ready to accept the responsibilities of taking care and educating special education children without any prejudices.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>1.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I am confident that I am able to take care and educate special education children.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>.836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I am willing to conduct inclusive programme for special education children.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>.909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I want special education children to succeed like the other children.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>.532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>77</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>0.904</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The overview, based on Table 2 above, can be concluded that kindergarten teachers were willing to accept special education children at their kindergarten. Besides that, they were also willing to cooperate with parents, colleagues, as well as professionals in taking care and education these children. The acceptance of special education children by kindergarten teachers indirectly resulted in the execution of inclusive education at their kindergarten.

The Knowledge of Kindergarten Teachers in Accepting Special Education Children

The questionnaire in Part C identified the knowledge level of kindergarten teachers in accepting special education children. The findings in this part were analysed by using frequency, percentage, mean, mean score, and standard deviation. The respondents’ answers were analysed from 5-point Likert scale. Table 3.0 presented the mean score for knowledge level of kindergarten teachers in accepting special education children. Based on table 4.10, the highest mean for knowledge level of kindergarten teachers was for the item “I know that every child deserves an education no matter their condition” with a mean value of $\bar{x}=4.62$ and standard deviation of $sp=0.707$. The item for the lowest mean was “I attended special education class/workshop/forum” with a mean of $\bar{x}=3.06$ and standard deviation of $sp=1.389$ on an average level. From the obtained findings, the knowledge level of kindergarten teachers in accepting special education children was high with a total mean of $\bar{x}=3.65$ and standard deviation of $sp=0.993$.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>STS</th>
<th>TS</th>
<th>TP</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I attended special education class/workshop/forum.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>1.389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I know the meaning of children with special education.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>.942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I know the concept of special education. Example: Inclusive Programme, Early Intervention and others.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>1.126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I know how to identify children with special education.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>.897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I know how to use standardised assessment as an instrument to identify special education children.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>.989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I refer to individuals who are more knowledgeable about special education in order to help me in obtaining accurate information.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>.779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I know how to change my teaching and learning process if special education children are present in my class.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>1.077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I know that therapeutic activities can be integrated into my teaching and learning process in the class.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>.985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The learning approach that I use in the class is suitable for every child including the special education children.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>1.071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I use Individual Education Planning (IEP) if special education children are present in my class.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>1.021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on Table 3, it can be concluded that the respondents have a knowledge level related with special education. Other than attending related workshop or class, they also referred to individuals who are more knowledgeable about special education to help them in obtaining information. Next, using the obtained knowledge, they were able to act accordingly by using IEP in their class, as well as approaches that were suitable for every child.

The Relationship Between Readiness Level and Knowledge Level of Kindergarten Teachers on Special Education Children

Based on Table 4.0 below, Pearson correlation coefficient used to analyse the findings showed that there was a significant relationship between readiness, \( r=0.580, \text{sig}=0.00 \) \((p<0.01)\), and knowledge of kindergarten teachers. Therefore, the data provided the evidence to conclude that there was a significant relationship between readiness and knowledge of kindergarten teachers. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 4.0. Correlation Test Between Readiness and Knowledge of Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Readiness of Teachers</th>
<th>Knowledge of Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>0.580**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of Teachers</td>
<td>0.580**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Signifikan pada aras 0.01

5. Discussion

Readiness Level of Kindergarten Teachers in Accepting Children with Special Education

The result from the study analysis of kindergarten teachers’ readiness showed that every item questioned had a high overall mean score of \( \bar{x}=3.77 \). Hence, it can be concluded that most of the respondents were ready to be responsible in educating, accepting children who require special education, cooperating with parents, colleagues, and professionals such as therapists, doctors, and counsellors, as well as conducting inclusive education at their kindergarten.

These findings were also supported by Kariyev et al., (2015) whereby he stated that teachers who are prepared in the basis of learning can improve the students’ ability to be creative. Based on this statement, it can be concluded that teacher’s preparation in knowledge and action will influence their motivation and students’ skills. For Mariyam Shareefa (2016), teachers who are always ready can benefit the students and give a positive impact towards the school system. Furthermore, according to Nurul Farahah Derapa and Suziyani Mohamed (2018), teachers’ preparation consists of level of mastery, faced challenges, and involve knowledge and skills of teachers.

Teachers’ readiness to work in an inclusive education is decided by the needs of social development and importance of teachers’ role in including special education children in the education development and activities (Zulfija et al., 2013). Many studies showed that children who require special education will succeed after joining a quality early education programme. This success can be achieved by collaborating among professionals and
families, believing in one’s self, knowing where and how to access resources, and possessing strong support (Brillate, 2017).

**Knowledge Level of Kindergarten Teachers Regarding Children with Special Education**

Next, the analysis for the aspect of teachers’ knowledge showed a high mean score of $\bar{x} = 3.65$. For the aspect of knowledge of kindergarten teachers, the items presented were related with the components in special education such as did or did not attend special education classes or workshops, teaching approach and special education curriculum, utilisation of individual education planning, inclusive education, as well as attributes in identifying children with special education.

According to Smith and Smith (2014), usually, teachers are the main individuals in identifying children who require special education. Hence, their knowledge is important in the process of identifying the actual learning problems faced by the children (Shari & Vranda, 2015). However, if the teachers are less knowledgeable and possess inappropriate attitude, it will have a significant impact on the children experiencing trouble in learning, whereas if the teachers give encouragement, the children will be more confident to learn (Ghanizadeh, Fallahi, & Akhondzadeh, 2009).

Children who are sent to the kindergarten and have good relationship with the teachers will ease the duty of the teachers in identifying the children’s development problem and refer them to a special centre (Khademi et al., 2016). Besides that, other than referring them to a special centre, the teachers must also know how to conduct an early intervention at the kindergarten.

According to Lam et al., (2019), even though early intervention for children is important, it is not easy to execute especially for most pre-schoolers who experience developmental delay and require special education. This might be caused by teachers who possess no skills or having no intervention equipment at their kindergarten. A study conducted by Zhang (2011) found that numerous kindergarten teachers lack training, less efficient, and less knowledgeable to teach children who require special education.

On the contrary, Mariyam Shareefa (2016) stated that there are few teachers who lack training to teach but possess little knowledge and skills to teach children with special education. This might be influenced by the experience of the teachers themselves.

**The Relationship Between Readiness Level and Knowledge Level of Kindergarten Teachers on Children with Special Education**

The analysis by using Pearson correlation coefficient showed that there was a significant relationship between readiness, $r=0.580$, $\text{sig}=0.00$ ($p<0.01$), and knowledge of kindergarten teachers. The readiness of teachers depended on the knowledge of teachers. Teachers who possessed knowledge are more prepared in facing challenges in the future.

According to Nurul Farahah Derapa and Suziyani Mohamed (2018), the readiness of teachers in the aspect of knowledge and skills are important. Teachers need to be prepared with knowledge in special education as these components are important to determine the readiness level of teachers in the execution of inclusive education (Safani Bari et al., 2014). Habib Mat Somand Syed Kamaruzaman Syed Ali (2011) also stated that there are three main factors which provide a significant impact towards teachers’ readiness. These factors are motivation, attitude, and skills and knowledge of teachers. Based on the past studies, it can be concluded that readiness will also influenced the knowledge of teachers. The best teachers are those who are always ready, knowledgeable, and positive.

A study conducted by Hay, Smith and Paulsen (2001) showed that teachers lacked the necessary knowledge regarding related issues for inclusive education, and teachers responsible in taking care of special education children must be provided with the proper training. Besides that, the teachers also felt that they were not ready to teach integrated class due to the lack of training, time, space, facilities, and experience. However, the teachers stated that they were ready to learn more about special education, regardless whether it was a diploma or certificate.
Implication of Study

In UNCRPD, Article 8 which is about Level of Consciousness, it is stated countries that signed the ratification must promise to effectively practice this convention such as increasing the awareness of individuals with disabilities and the irritants among their family members and the society in order to develop a sense of respect towards them. Furthermore, battling against stereotypes, prejudices, and dangerous practices related with disable individuals in all aspects of life. Our country must promote awareness about the ability and contributions of the disable individuals.

Another way to increase awareness regarding disabled individuals is through teachers as they are the main connector between students, parents, and community. Teachers play an important role in the country’s education system which aims to execute the curriculum and act as the core in deciding the standards; quality and effectiveness of an education system (Naqiah Nahar & JimmaIn Safar, 2016). Besides that, teachers are also transforming agents as they constantly need to prepare themselves with knowledge and skills, acquiring positive attitude, high level of motivation in order to help students who require special education through the effective modification process of behaviour (Noor Aini Ahmad & Norhafizah Abu Hanifah, 2015).

6. Conclusion

In regards to the follow-up study for this research, the responsible parties such as Ministry of Education (MOE), Social Welfare Department (SWD), managers of kindergartens must conduct a discussion in order to upgrade special education in children’s early education such as conducting or obligating every teacher to attend special education courses. For instance, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) also makes it compulsory for kindergarten teachers to attend Kursus Asuhan Permata.

For the kindergarten teachers, it is highly encouraged for them to obtain knowledge and conduct special education at their kindergartens, such as the ability to identify children who require special education, conducting early intervention and therapy, utilising Individual Education Plan (IEP), working together with parents and professionals in order to form a team from all branches of discipline. The role of parents is an important aspect in the execution of inclusive education (Nutbrown, Clough, & Atherton, 2013). If special education begins at an early stage of children’s education, many benefits will be acquired by these special education children and simultaneously, special education will have a better quality and not considered as frivolous in the eyes of the society.

References