

Elements of Work Environment In The Construct Of Special Education Teacher Workload In Malaysia

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Abstract: Work environment can be defined as an environmental condition within the scope of one's task performance. For a teacher, the work environment is a situation in which the teachers perform their duties in a school organization. While for the scope of special education, the work environment is the state of work and the relationship between teachers, staff, students, administrators and parents. A harmonious and conducive work environment can help the execution of tasks in an orderly and perfect manner. A harmonious work environment is also able to build a good and excellent school. Therefore, this brief study was conducted to explore in more detail the elements of the work environment in providing a good commitment to the school. This qualitative study involved 11 coordinators in the state of Johor, Malaysia. It is hoped that these findings will be able to give a good impact to the next researcher in explaining about this issue.

Keywords: work environment, special education, teacher workload

INTRODUCTION

Performing assignments in a special education environment is very challenging. It does not come from students with special needs (MBK) alone, but it also depends on parents, school staff, school leadership and learning resources (Norazmi et al., 2019; Fauziyana et al., 2020; Norazmi, 2020; Zaid et al., 2020; Zaid et al., 2021). In all the available factors, the teacher workload factor severely constrains teacher productivity. Among the key elements in discussing the workload of teachers is the element of work environment. The work environment element is an element that is strongly and primarily related to teacher job satisfaction (Mohd Norazmi et al., 2021; Rosnee et al., 2021; Roszi et al., 2021; Nik Nurhalida et al., 2021; Een et al., 2021; Yusaini et al., 2021). In several previous studies, work atmosphere was in the first position and was significantly related to teacher job satisfaction.

This statement is supported by Aminah et al. (2021), Azlisham et al. (2021), Saadiah et al. (2021), Firkhan et al. (2021), Ishak et al. (2021), Ashari et al. (2021) who stated that the work environment is an important element in task management that impacts teacher job satisfaction. This statement is also in line with a study by Norazmi et al. (2019) who showed that teacher job satisfaction can be enjoyed if the teacher's work environment is in a conducive state. In addition, Henri Fayol's Management Theory also emphasizes that a comfortable and fair work environment can help teachers achieve their job satisfaction. Therefore, the headmasters who lead in schools with special education integration programs (PPKI) should pay attention to efforts to create a conducive work environment so that teachers can carry out their duties in a satisfactory manner.

Taylor's Theory of Scientific Management (1911)

This classical management theory that has been introduced over the past 100 years has successfully influenced the world about how management interacts with their subordinates (Norazmi, 2020). Fauziyana et al. (2021) state that the introduction of ideas in this theory is related to the main purpose of producing productive employees. In realizing that goal, this theory has analyzed and synthesized the work procedures of management and employees (Zaid et al., 2020). Zaid et al. (2021) emphasize that management needs to be prudent in placing where an employee should be, the type of tasks that are appropriate for the employee and the needs that need to be met. Norazmi et al. (2020) explained that this theory does not fully burden employees in the production of productivity because they are entitled to be rewarded commensurate with their work, a balanced division of tasks and get the right to scheduled rest while working.

In the context of teacher employment, administrators should understand this theory by emphasizing the stated principles of time and movement in order to avoid the workload of teachers as well as make them satisfied in work (Mohd Norazmi et al., 2021). Firkhan et al. (2021) states that in the pursuit of productivity or results, burdens can be avoided and job satisfaction can be achieved if management adopts the scientific management methods proposed in this theory.

In designing quality management while looking after the welfare of employees, this theory emphasizes on three aspects namely quality, flexible time and also motivation. Aminah et al. (2021) states that proper quality and training are capable of realizing this goal. However, another aspect that needs to be considered is the balanced division of tasks between employees and appropriate rewards. Taylor (1911) in his study found some weaknesses in management that need to be improved namely lack of knowledge about management responsibilities, lack of effective standard work, failure to plan job scope, unscientific management decisions and lack of research on balanced division of tasks.

In understanding these indicators, Azlisham et al. (2021) has put forward the basic principles in this theory namely reward to employees, scientific management and employee motivation. Looking at the context of teachers, Ashari et al. (2021) sees the application of this theory to some extent can help increase productivity and realize self -potential because Taylor (1911) emphasized six basics in management namely movement determination, job specialization, careful planning and scheduling, selection and recruitment and corresponding wages. In caring for the welfare of teachers, this theory according to Ishak et al. (2021) suggests the need for headmasters to provide appropriate rewards so that they feel satisfied in performing their work and reduce their workload.

However, there is also a critique of this theory where Richard Een et al. (2021) disagrees with monetary rewards simply because a person’s needs as well as job satisfaction do not only depend on money, but many other needs. He also argues that the separation between planning by the head teacher, and execution by the teacher can result in boredom. Similarly, the view by Rosnee et al. (2021) who stated that employees often do not feel satisfied in their jobs because management is very concerned about quality to cause a pile of work. They also argue that money -only incentives make employees work only to receive remuneration not with the belief that their potential can be developed.

METHODOLOGY

The elements of each construct were explored by conducting interviews. This qualitative approach was carried out by interviewing 11 coordinators for the PPKI program throughout the state of Johor. A total of 11 respondents involved are a coordinator for each district in the state of Johor. Each element is explored for each construct in this study. The results of the interviews were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis methods. Each element obtained through the thematic analysis was included as a dimension in the construction of the questionnaire set. As a result of the interviews, five elements were found for the headmaster leadership construct and teacher workload, while six elements were found for the teacher job satisfaction construct.

FINDINGS

Through the coding process, elements of the work environment result from nine statements, namely various tasks, postponement of teaching in PPKI and replacing mainstream teachers (open coding), which forms a chaotic code (axial coding), relationship with administrators, fair and mutual distribution of tasks help (open coding) form a code of cooperation (axial coding), as well as good relationships between teachers, sensitive headmasters and headmasters who understand (open coding) that form a code of understanding (axial coding). The three statements on the axial coding, are summarized as elements of the work environment in the selective coding process as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Thematic Analysis Process For Work Environment Elements

<i>Open Coding</i>	<i>Axial Coding</i>	<i>Selective Coding</i>
Various tasks	Hectic	Work Environment
Postponement of teaching at PPKI		
Replacing mainstream teachers		
Relationship with administrator	Cooperation	
Assignment of tasks		
Help each other		
Good relationship between teachers	Understanding	
Sensitive headmaster		
A headmaster who understands		

A summary of the thematic analysis of this work environment element is as detailed in Table 2.

Table 2: Elements of Work Environment Agreed by Respondents

Theme	Respondent	Interview Excerpts
Work Environment	RT2	Until I told my teachers, PPM class, to bathe the slaves first.
	RT3	One more thing, if I have to replace the first teacher for courses and workshops, meetings ... I want to teach delayed. Pity the boys.
	RT4	On behalf of the headmaster, I think he needs for distributed work to be balanced, to encourage collaboration, for group work. If there is a problem, invite them to discuss, accept open criticism and also give us guidance and support to do a job.
	RT5	But he's less down. If he looks, he sees, but maybe he understands, empathy is difficult.
	RT6	Misunderstanding with administrator. The professor bullied the teacher of PPKI.
	RT7	Another instruct us to do extra academics for level two students, materials, worksheets, books all have to be bought by ourselves.
	RT8	Headmasters want to get the popularity and views of outsiders, so many projects and activities are carried out.
	RT9	Apart from that, we teachers also have no disclosure about any assignment related to this prime.
	RT10	work that has nothing to do with our own work that we have to do so that we ignore the real and there is a decrease in motivation to teach at PPKI.
	RT11	So some of them need to be completed after official school hours.

DISCUSSION

Details of the results of the analysis also show that 10 out of 11 respondents stated that the work environment is an important element in influencing the workload of PPKI teachers. Respondents RT2, RT4 and RT9 stated that the less conducive work environment and lack of support made the task too difficult to complete. When asked to attend a course or workshop that was previously the assignment of another teacher, no support materials were provided. Apart from that, the headmaster also did not provide moral and material support for the efforts of PPKI teachers in achieving special education in schools.

The work environment that lacks cooperation between teachers and teachers as well as teachers and administrators makes a burden on teachers, including in PPKI. Respondents RT3, RT6, RT7 and RT10 stated that the negative perception of mainstream teachers towards PPKI teachers related to the scope of work made the relationship cold. This poor relationship also triggers the problem of cooperation between teachers. Worse when the headmaster also has the same perception and in turn makes his relationship with PPKI also less good. As a result, most of the assignments in the mainstream are handed over to PPKI teachers.

RT5 respondents provided views on mentoring and monitoring. For him, the work environment at PPKI seems unmanageable and there is no clear direction. This is because the headmaster does not carry out monitoring at PPKI, and there are no mentoring sessions in some assignment -related matters. This situation makes many tasks are done in the wrong way and there are also tasks that are delayed. In contrast to the views by RT8 and RT11, which stated that the work environment at PPKI is always under stress. For head teachers in pursuit of recognition and popularity, there is definitely a lot of work to be done. There are even assignments that need to be prepared outside of school hours and days. This situation leads to a high workload for teachers.

CONCLUSION

A total of 10 respondents agreed that the work environment in the school makes PPKI teachers burdened with their tasks. They stated that, mainstream teachers always give assignments to them without going through head teachers or administrators. Respondents also stated that, the difficulty in getting input from other teachers made their assignments increase. Respondents also agreed that, the cold attitude of mainstream teachers and administrators in knowledge sharing as well as other assistance to carry out tasks outside special education also makes PPKI teachers burdened with tasks.

In addition, respondents also stated that the culture of doing work alone makes the problem more complicated. These findings support the opinion by Norazmi et al. (2019) who stated that the work

environment is an important element in task management. The use of the work environment element as an important element in the workload of teachers is agreed by Norazmi (2020). Similarly, Fauziyana et al. (2021) who apply the work environment element as an important element in the management of teacher workload. The findings of this study are also in line with the opinion by Roszi et al. (2021) that the elements of work environment give influence to high workload.

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