

COMMUNICATION LEVEL OF TRAINEE TEACHERS FROM INSTITUT PENDIDIKAN GURU KAMPUS PENDIDIKAN TEKNIK WITH AUTISTIC CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

This concept paper describes a study which will be conducted to identify the level of communication among trainee teachers at the Institut Pendidikan Guru Kampus Pendidikan Teknik (IPGKPT) with autistic children. A simple random sample selection will be implemented and 52 trainee teachers will be selected. This study will also use a quantitative method by using a questionnaire instrument. This method is the easiest way to obtain data to determine the level of communication of trainee teachers IPGKPT with autistic children. Researchers will use descriptive statistical methods to analyze the data collected with the help of Social Science Statistics Package (SPSS) programming software where it can help researchers to produce accurate calculations. Accordingly, the data analysis that will be done will also involve calculations using medians, percentages, mean scores and standard deviations for the variables involved. In fact, the data will also be translated in the form of graphs, tables or charts so that it is easier to understand. This study is anticipated to inform about the level of communication the teacher trainees have with the autistic children.

1. Introduction

The teaching profession is not just teaching or imparting knowledge, but teachers also need to educate someone's attitudes, values and morals. The efforts to enhance the prestige of the teaching profession must be implemented in an orderly and systematic manner. This is because the role of teachers is very important to achieve the objectives of national education that have been set. Therefore, the interpersonal communication skills among the trainee teachers should be trained well so that we can produce teachers who are knowledgeable and able to communicate effectively in the future (Ab. Hamid et, al., 2017). Communication in the teaching

profession is very important aspect because through communication, knowledge and information can be conveyed to students.

According to Nor Afiah & Muhammad Talhah (2020), Autism Perspective Disorder (ASD) consists of neurological disorder which affects an individual to have difficulties to interact socially with other individuals. In addition, autism is also interference in neural development that can cause individuals abilities in performing certain things including repetitive communication, behavior, speech and skills (Rea, LaMotte, & Burrell, 2019) to be limited. As a teacher, we need to be prepared to manage the students with autism. This is because trainee teachers do not know which school they will be placed after they are graudated and there are possibilities that will require trainee teachers to deal with autistic children in the primary class.

2. Problem Statement

Teaching practice or better known as practicum is one of the mandatory components in the teacher education program that needs to be followed to help trainee teachers in applying the theories and models learned in real situations in school. The involvement of trainee teachers in teaching practice or any external program can help trainee teachers in communication skills. This is because as a prospective teacher, they need to have good interpersonal communication skills. According to Raudah (2017), interpersonal communication is a two -way interaction between two or more individuals that is carried out to obtain information, understand the surrounding and to adapt in the communities. As a trainee teacher, they need to have good communication skills because it will help them in the teaching and learning process in the classroom and help them to establish good relationships or interactions with students, especially for autistic children. Through interpersonal communication, they can establish a friendly relationship and can change the atmosphere in the classroom thus can help students in their learning.

Referring to a study conducted by Tay Mey Guat (2013) and Khalip & Hariza (2015) found that the interpersonal communication skills of trainee teachers are still at a moderate level. Therefore, the responsible parties must ensure that interpersonal communication skills among trainee teachers can be improved and enhanced from time to time. According to Fatin Sophia (2021), children with autism have a limited imagination which causes their interest in something is also limited and they also often do the same and repetitive behaviors. Therefore, as trainee teachers, we need to be prepared to handle and know the appropriate ways or steps to communicate with autistic children. This is because children with autism are usually unable to engage in communication skills and find it difficult to interact with others. Therefore, the study that will be implemented is very important in helping the parties involved to help trainee teachers in improving communication skills to deal with students with autism in school. For this research, data will be collected through a quantitative approach where a questionnaire will be distributed to trainee teachers from the IPGKPT. Each item in the questionnaire will be verified by the experts involved.

3. Objective

The objective of this study is to:

1. Identify the level of mastery in interpersonal communication among IPGKPT's trainee teachers with autistic children.

4. Research Questions

To achieve the set objectives, there is a research question which is:

1. What is the level of mastery in interpersonal communication among IPGKPT trainee teachers with autistic children?

5. Literature Review

Past studies that have been refer emphasize the relationship of teachers' interpersonal communication skills. Through these previous studies, it will help researchers in the implementation of the study that will be done where it can be used as a reference source. For example, in 2017, Tay Meng Guat noted that interpersonal communication skills by trainee teachers were at a moderate level. This is supported by several other studies such as Mohd Faez et, al., (2016). However, these studies are denied by the study of Irene Priskila Sareong & Tri Supartini (2020) where researchers stated that teachers' interpersonal communication is at a high level of 80%. However, this study was conducted in Indonesia. So, the study that will be conducted by the researcher will determine and provide the latest results whether the interpersonal communication skills of the trainee teachers are still at a moderate level or the results will increase, especially with autistic children.

In addition, researchers found that previous studies focused on the interpersonal relationship with student performance in school. According to a study conducted by Widya P. Pontoh (2013), Nurudin (2019), Tri Nuria (2020) and Irene Priskila & Tri Supartini (2020) who stated that teacher interpersonal communication affects student achievement and activity in the classroom. This is because through interpersonal communication skills, teachers and students can establish a good relationship and it can also help students if they have problems. However, all these studies were conducted and proven in Indonesia. For this study, the researcher will take respondents from students of the IPGKPT, Malaysia. Most likely the findings that will be obtain are not the same as the findings from Indonesian researchers. However, in the Malaysian Education Development Plan (PPPM) 2013 - 2015 there are six important elements in Student Aspirations that need to be develop in students or students namely Knowledge, Thinking Skills, Leadership Skills, Bilingual Skills, Ethics and Spirituality and National Identity. (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013).

Widya P. Pontoh (2013) explained that the proper use of language in communication can help students in understanding the content of learning. This is in line with PPPM 2013 - 2015 which is to produce students who are bilingual. Through the proper use of language in teaching can encourage students to use the language. For this study, the researcher can encourage trainee teachers to build interpersonal relationships with autistic children through proper communication techniques in order to build a good relationship between trainee teachers and autistic children. If a close relationship is formed, a cheerful learning environment can be produced and it can also prevent students from being stressed while communicating with others.

In this regard, the findings of a previous study from Aziz & Siti Sumaziana (2017) found that trainee teachers need to have the interest and skills to teach students in schools, especially with special needs students such as autism students. This is because if the trainee teachers are not interested in socializing and building relationships with autistic children, it will create more problems. For example, students can not learn well because the teacher does not has the

encouragement to teach and use teaching aids that are less interesting. One of the skills that trainee teachers need to master is communication skills. This is because, through communication, trainee teachers can establish good relationships with students especially with autistic children so that they can interact and cooperate with each other (Raudah, 2017). In fact, trainee teachers are also able to solve various problems well if they have good communication skills (Ljubica, Jasmina & Anamarija, 2015). Where, Rochmad (2020) argues, through interpersonal communication skills, teachers can also motivate and encourage students to express their feelings to help in solving problems faced.

For autistic children, it is quite difficult to interact due to their solitary nature. However, teachers should work hard and be creative to establish a good relationship with them. The aspect of communication that needs to be emphasized by the trainee teachers is that we need to use the correct terminology with standard language that is easily understood by the students. In addition, the trainee teacher also needs to use a clear and strong voice so that students can understand learning. This is because, a slow voice can cause children to pay less attention, especially autistic children. (Aziz & Siti Sumaziana, 2017).

In this regard, the study made by Fajri Agustin & Hamdani (2017), trainee teachers need to have characteristics such as openness, empathy and positive thinking to help them in establishing good relationships and be able to communicate with autistic children. Moreover, the content of the messages conveyed need to be equivalent with the language they use (Yunita, 2021). If teachers use poetic language, it will be difficult for autistic children to understand the message. In fact, the study also emphasizes teachers to use a material as a support tool when communicating with autistic children. This is because through the material, these children are more interested in listening and communicating with us. In addition, Kuntjoro (2017) said, to build a good relationship with autistic children, teachers should have a good relationship with their parents. This is because, through this relationship, it can help teachers find ideas to help children with autism communicate.

6. Research Design

According to Mahaya (2016), study design is a way for researchers to implement a study by determining the use of methods or techniques to answer the questions. For the research to be implemented, the researcher chose to use a descriptive quantitative study design through survey method. This design is used because it can help researchers to survey the level of communication of trainee teachers in IPGKPT with autistic children. Lee Keok Cheong et, al., (2018) stated that the survey method is an appropriate method used to describe an ongoing phenomenon. The appropriate data collection method used in this survey research is through data collection from questionnaires because it can provide information, data or findings from respondents clearly to the researcher (Norhayati & Aida, 2018). Therefore, the researcher will prepare a set of questionnaire forms to be answered by the selected respondents.

7. Instrument

Research instrument is a tool used to obtain data and information related to a research that will be implemented. This research instrument will also be used by the researcher to achieve the set objectives and questions (Norliza et. Al, 2020). There are various methods that can be used by researchers to conduct this study. Researcher will use quantitative methods. 60 trainee

teachers will be selected randomly to participate in this study. For this study, the researcher will use a questionnaire instrument where this method is the easiest way to obtain data to determine the level of communication of IPGKPT trainee teachers with autistic children, by using a Likert scale. According to Salwati (2013), the questionnaire constructed should be relevant to the purpose and objectives of the study stated by the researcher so that the questionnaires do not deviate to other things. This is because it will cause problems in the data analysis that will be implemented if the distributed questions are different from the main purpose of the study implemented. Items used in the questionnaire will be refer from and improved from previous studies. In addition, the questions provided should also be clear so that respondents are not confused and make it difficult for them to answer the questionnaire. Data collection is done by distributing online questionnaires to the 60 respondents. Data analysis will be carried out using the SPSS program to generate the frequency, the percentage and the mean. The teacher trainees' level of mastery in interpersonal communication will be determined by the mean score.

8. Conclusion

This study is hoped to inform about the teacher trainees' level of mastery in interpersonal communication with autistic students in the inclusive classroom. As these trainees have undergone courses about special needs students including the autistic students, it would be enlightening to see how these trainees perceive their level of communication with regard to autistic students.

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