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Zero Reject Policy: Mainstream School Readiness

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Abstract

Zero Reject Policy (ZRP) is a policy that strengthened and highlighted by the Ministry of Education (MoE). Through this policy, the educational aspirations of Special Education Students (SES) can be met and achieved more comprehensively. The main objective of this study is to look on the readiness of mainstream schools in line with the policies implemented. This study covered readiness among mainstream teachers, OKU-friendly infrastructure preparation and the readiness of mainstream students. It is a quantitative survey design form of data collection through Google Form. A total of 50 administrators were selected as respondents from mainstream schools in Selangor. Data analyzed using the Statistical Package of The Social Science (SPSS V21 for Windows). The findings of the study were formulated by descriptive analysis using mean reading distribution, frequency and percentage. At the end of the study, the result can be used as a benchmark and guidance to PPD, JPN and MoE in providing and fulfill the needs to ensure the readiness in mainstream school is in tandem with the implementation objectives of ZRP.

Keywords: Zero Reject Policy, Mainstream Schools, Special Educations Students.

Introduction

The Framework for Action on Special Need Education or Salamanca Statement 1994, certified and acknowledged opportunities and rights for children with special needs that need to be gives an appropriate education. In fact, it is a guidance of policies, acts and practices of Special Education. It is very much in line with the concept of 'Education for All' by MoE and agreed by (Azam, 2020).

Same goes with the Zero Reject Policy (ZRP) which was refined by the MoE in 2019. The implementation of the policy has become an educational access to Special Education Student (SES) in Malaysia. Certainly, it provides a great opportunity for them to obtain the best and optimal education. In general, ZRP means no more rejection of SES school applications. Particularly, it is a new point of view of dimension to SES in the education world, and at the same time able to deal with SES dropout issues. Therefore, a proper and accurate readiness factor has become a priority requirement in mainstream school without Intergrated Special Education Program (ISEP).

Malaysian government through Moe, more careful and looking forward seriously, the needs and interest of education which enhancing without excluded SES. MoE through Special Needs

Unit (BPK, 2018) expected that there will be an increase in percentage of SES in mainstream class in year 2023. Hence, proper preparation is very crucial to attain educational needs for SES in futures.

Generally, mainstream schools completed and prepared with educational expertise such as well educate teachers, latest infrastructure and facilities besides good school communities. It is too much different when it comes to special education. A huge gap needs to be addressed well. For that reason, various aspects needs to be reviewed, especially the readiness of mainstream schools without ISEP.

There are three main elements of school readiness that need to be considered:

a) Teacher

The ability and readiness of a teacher to teach can be seen through his knowledge, training and handling the pupils (Nur Amelia, 2019). (Manimeegalai, 2018) stated, it is true, that most mainstream teachers proven skilled only in certain aspect. Absolutely it will be different for mainstream teachers who have to teach SES.

(Norramlah & Nurfaradilla, 2021) agreed that mainstreams teachers are lack of knowledge and training related to SES. (Mohd & Farhana, 2019) in the same line, stated that mainstream teachers are less exposed to SES when it related to training. While (Siti Fatimah & Mustafa, 2018) also proved that certain study previously found that most mainstream teachers were detected have not enough exposure to teach SES.

Due to the lack of SES exposure, knowledge and training, various precise preparations could not be done well. (Hazlin & Hairul, 2021) mentioned the same thing as preparation related to the SES needs will contradict with teacher 'teaching practices'. Even (Peder, 2017) emphasizes that there is an imbalance in ensuring teacher formulation in tandem of education to SES.

In addition, (Hazira & Masayu, 2020) found that teachers who highly exposure, skills and expert toward SES can be count. And absolutely because only a few of them, educational needs for SES failed to be implemented well and effectively. There are needs on exposure and well preparation for teachers to delve in detail and skill full in helping mainstream student as well as SES to master in their education.

b) Infrastructure

Among the essential need in a circle of focus and taken into account is infrastructure facilities. According to (Safura, 2018), availabilities of OKU-friendly infrastructure in school such as ramps, rails, lifts and toilets definitely make thing easier for SES to move. Agreed by (Hazlin & Safura, 2017) that mentioned percentages of academic achievement increase and comfort the SES were also affected by good infrastructure and facilities.

In the other hands, Nandinie and Tajul (2020) found that the accessibility and conducive facilities of infrastructure provided are still unchanged, not friendly and no improvement. Razimi (2020) added that only basic facilities are available in almost

most of existing schools. (Ezrina & Alice, 2020) also enhanced that much more disabled – friendly and friendly infrastructure facilities should be provided as everyone can use it comfortably.

Even more dejected, referring to (Nurhafiz, 2017), the awareness to provide OKU-friendly access and infrastructure among schools administrator still lower than expected. Lack of allocation and funds to provide convenience infrastructure become a huge problem for school Razimi (2020) mentioned. It is a major obstacle that constrains learning effectiveness as the infrastructures is a necessity by (Aminah & Crispina, 2020).

A conflict view between needs, awareness and resources should not occur an indeed it is really worrying. Moreover, according to Faizul & Norizan (2017) infrastructure and facilities should be provided as early as possible to avoid learning sessions from being disrupted. As a consequence, the readiness of school infrastructure needs to be reviewed and refined so that the disruption of SES education process is lower in the future.

c) School Community (Mainstream Students)

Last element of this research is school community, the readiness of mainstream students to accept SES. Which, SES will be in the same environment as mainstream students throughout the duration of the school session. Exactly the findings of Nuradilla (2020) study that positive attitudes among mainstream students and SES can be created throughout the same atmosphere and environment.

However, (Ghaleb, 2021), said that most mainstream students tend to choose their acquaintances over SES as their friends. (Sussane, 2018) stated the same thing mentioning, from previous study found that mainstream students still decide to make friends with non-SES peers. Sussane add in the same finding that mainstream students SES is less sociable and has limitations to interact with them.

As a result, exposure and acceptance in socializing is narrowing smaller and declining the potential of SES to be chosen among them. It is reinforced by the findings of (Schwab, 2017) who agreed that mainstream students will take on peers among non-SES if there are assignments assigned to them.

Although there is a possibility that mainstream students accept and SES, but through (Petry, 2018) such as small potential SES will be not accepted after they know the inability of SES itself. (Grzegorz, 2020) also agreed that it is common for mainstream students to develop negative attitudes when interacting with SES and use a variety of body sign language. Surely it will affect future interactions between them.

(Marwin, 2021) viewed differently and mentioned if mainstream students are exposed to SES, they definitely will be much more positive and can accept SES. Is it true that mainstream students are willing to accept SES to work together in the same educational atmosphere? If it is true, SES gain the opportunity to hone their potential

and talents as well as enjoy comprehensive educational services tandemly with the objectives of ZRP implementation.

Pursuant to the objectives which to identify and review the readiness of mainstream schools. It encompasses all three factors of readiness that is indeed important to ensure the implementation of the ZRP can be realized. In other words, it also provides an opportunity for SES to obtain the best education services exquisite as well as efforts to optimize the education needs of SES successfully achieved in futures.

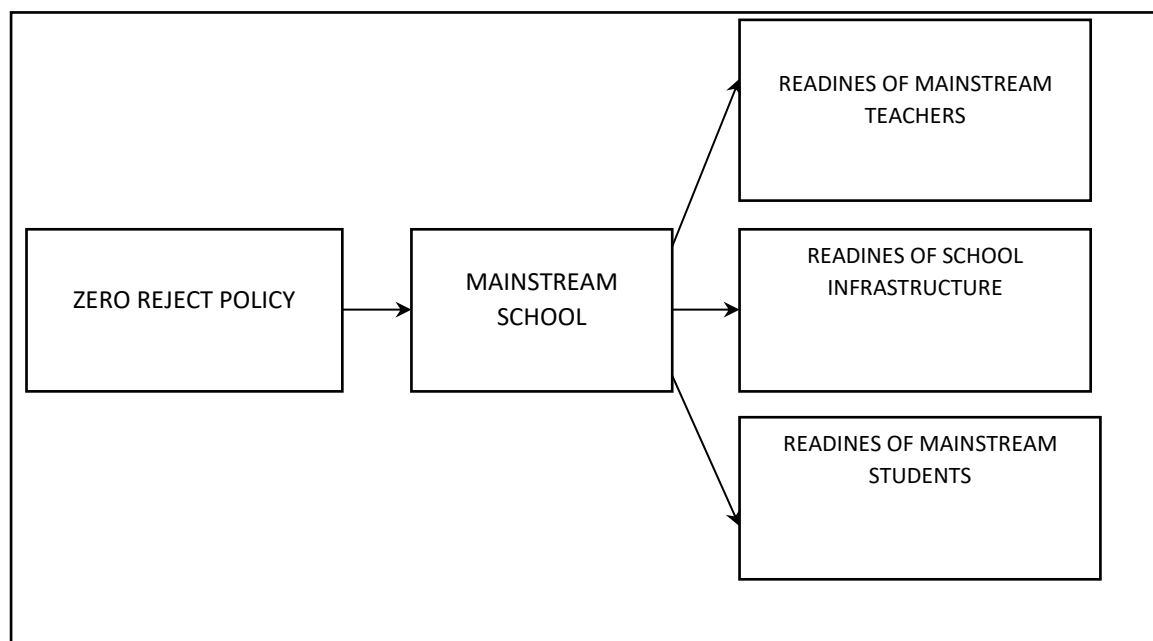


Figure 1.0 Conceptual Framework of the Study (Adapted and modified from the theory of Rosenberg and Hovland, 1960)

Research Methodology

This is a survey study which data were collected through a Google Form questionnaire. Quantitative methods used as the research approach. (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006) stated that by survey, categories or characteristics of similarities and differences of individuals or groups can be formulated according to the needs of the study. Hence, it is proper and suit for research purposes in addition to clarifying the current situation.

The study conducted on selected of 50 mainstream schools from a population of 104 schools in Selangor. 50 sample from mainstream school administrators who are potentially knowledgeable and skilled were chosen. Sample sizes in the study met the requirements of formula standards and sample size determination tables recommended by Krejcie and Morgan in (Gar & Airasian, 2000).

Online Google Form (GF) questionnaire used as an instrument that match to current situation of Covid 19 Pandemic. In addition, the usage of GF questionnaire found to be low risk, safe and friendly to respondent. Suit and modified to the study through (Nur Fishah, 2018) previous research. Referring to (Creswell, 2005), a questionnaire stated as a survey medium that requires participants to complete all questions and return a feedback form to the

researcher. Najib (1994), questionnaires are more effective and practical toward large population. For (Mohamed, 2001), each study has its own way of governance and management. Therefore, GF online questionnaires are cost saving, highly recommended and reduces face-to-face encounters.

The questionnaire contains sections: Section A (Demographics), Section B (Readiness of Teacher: i-Understanding ii-SES Knowledge and training), Section C (Infrastructure Readiness in School) and Section D (School Community Readiness: Mainstream Student). Simple Question in forms of 5-point Likert scale for participants to answer. Strongly disagree, disagree, not sure, agree and strongly agree were used as an option to answer.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the questions, an expert officer from District Education Office (PPD) and a teacher with more than 15 years of teaching experience was firstly tested the questionnaire. Both are from special education unit which one of them graduated and gained his Master in Education as well.

The information collected and analyzed by Statistical Package for The Social Science (SPSS V21) to values total frequency, percentage, mode, median and mean. Data cleaning are carried out to reduce errors during key in process in SPSS program. The description of the findings analyzed by descriptive statistics. It focuses on percentage, frequency and mean distribution.

Findings

A total of 50 administrators answered the survey questionnaire online. The sample consisted of 25 male administrators and 25 female administrators. While mainstream schools with urban status without SES up to 40 schools which is 80.0% and remaining 10 rural mainstream schools was 20.0%. Mainstream schools (SK) without Integration Special Education Program (ISEP) are much higher at 32 (64.0%) compared to SMK schools (36.0%).

Table 1
Frequency and Percentage of Teaching Experience

Years of services		
Year	Frequency	Percentage %
1-5 years	0	0.0%
6-10 years	6	12.0%
11-15years	9	18.0%
16-20 years	12	24.0%
above 21 years	23	46.0%

Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage based on respondent years of service.

Respondents who served more than 21 years are the highest group of 46.0% with a frequency of 23 people, followed by the second group of respondents, 16-20 years of 12 people (24.0%). While 9 people (18.0%) for respondents' years of service 11-15 years and final group of 6 people (12.0%) for respondents 6-10 years serviced.

Data information on years of service is relevant to ensure the knowledge and quality of credibility each of respondents as well as suit to this research. No respondents with years of service below five were involved.

Table 2

Teacher Disclosure and Understanding (Teacher Readiness: i)

No	Item	SDA%	DA %	NS %	A %	SA %	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	SES are exposed toward teacher	1 2.0%	4 8.0%	6 12.0%	27 54.0%	12 24.0%	3.90	.931
2	Exposure and training SES for teacher	3 6.0%	4 8.0%	23 46.0%	11 22.0%	9 18.0%	3.38	1.067
3	Knowledge to control emotion and SES behaviour	2 4.0%	5 10.0%	28 56.0%	7 14.0%	8 16.0%	3.28	.991
4	Teacher readiness to control SES behaviour without training exposure	3 6.0%	3 6.0%	20 40.0%	15 30.0%	9 18.0%	3.48	1.054
5	Teacher abilities to control SES behaviour without training exposure	3 6.0%	2 4.0%	22 44.0%	16 32.0%	7 14.0%	3.44	.993

SES exposure to mainstream teachers is highly important which teachers can be motivated to prepare and provide the best education input. Based on table 2, 39 respondents (78.0%) agreed that teachers are essential to be exposed to SES. Then, 12 respondents (24.0%) were unsure while 5 respondents (10.0%) did not agree that SES should be exposure to teachers.

Second item, an exposure on training related to SES for teachers. Findings found that majorities of 23 (46.0%) respondents were not sure. Followed by 7 (14.0%) who disagreed that mainstream teachers crucially need an exposure to relevant training. However, 20 respondents (40.0%) agreed that teachers need to be exposed to SES training.

Referring to the respondents' answered for item three, a total of 28 respondents (56.0%) were not sure whether the teachers had attended any education training related to SES. Teachers attended the training on their own initiative had high potential to control behavior and emotions of SES as agreed by 15 respondents (30.0%). Nevertheless, a total of 7 people (14.0%) still disagreed to be exposed and attend SES training.

Item four and five, readiness and ability of teachers to provide educational services to SES without gained any training or exposure. Respondents were identified as not sure whether they are ready or not (40.0%) or able (44.0%) to give the best and comprehensive service to SES. Probabilities without proper exposure and training made up a few respondents still and keep choosing to disagree up to 10 percent for item four and 12 percent for item five.

Table 3

Teacher readiness with exposure and training (Teacher Readiness: ii)

No	Item	SDA%	DA %	NS %	A %	SA %	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Teachers readiness for SES training	1 2.0%	3 6.0%	5 10.0%	29 58.0%	12 24.0%	3.96	.880
2	Willingness to provide excellent services by teacher with SES exposed and training	1 2.0%	-	2 4.0%	24 48.0%	23 46.0%	4.36	.749
3	Abilities to provide excellent services by teacher with SES exposed and training	-	2 4.0%	8 16.0%	27 54.0%	15 30.0%	4.10	.763
4	Teachers understanding and willingness are important	2 4.0%	1 2.0%	5 10.0%	27 54.0%	15 30.0%	4.04	.925
5	Teachers with SES knowledge and readiness play an importance role.	1 2.0%	1 2.0%	4 8.0%	17 34.0%	27 54.0%	4.36	.875

Disclosure, training and knowledge related to SES education should be a priority and need for mainstream teachers. Especially to meet the aspirations of education in line with objectives of ZRP implementation and readiness to meet the needs of SES in the future.

Table 3 for item one, 41 people (82.0%), item two 47 people (94.0%) and item three 42 people (84.0%) agree and strongly agree for the respondents were stated as very high percentage. Most respondents agreed that the exposure and training given to teachers was a thoughtful endeavor. In fact, 42 respondents (84.0%) for item four agreed that the preparation, understanding and knowledge of teachers related to SES education is important. In fact, it also plays a big role in delivering the best educational services to SES are parallel with the views and consent of 44 people (88.0%) respondents found in item five.

Table 4

Infrastructure availability

No	Item	SDA%	DA %	NS %	A %	SA %	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Accessible location	1 2.0%	3 6.0%	8 16.0%	27 54.0%	11 22.0%	3.88	.895
2	OKU -friendly infrastructure facilities	6 12.0%	5 10.0%	23 46.0%	9 18.0%	7 14.0%	3.12	1.154
3	Readiness in providing the best infrastructure facilities (Educational services)	2 4.0%	6 12.0%	10 20.0%	21 42.0%	11 22.0%	3.66	1.081
4	Readiness in providing the best infrastructure facilities with fund allocation	1 2.0%	4 8.0%	7 14.0%	14 28.0%	24 48.0%	4.12	1.062
5	Infrastructure readiness an important element in ZRP implementation	1 2.0%	2 2.0%	4 8.0%	11 22.0%	32 64.0%	4.42	.950

Respondents' feedback for table 4 shown that most mainstream schools are in accessible location. A total of 38 people (76.0%) agreed that location of the schools is important in corroborated with the readiness of mainstream schools to entertain SES as announced in ZRP. A total of 12 people (24.0%) consisting of uncertain, disagree and strongly disagree that their school location was difficult to access. In addition, majorities of respondents consisted of 34 people (68.0%) were unsure and did not agree to state that OKU -friendly infrastructure facilities were available in their school. Number of schools with OKU -friendly infrastructure facilities is 16 people (32.0%) compared to the total of 50 schools surveyed. Indeed, it is a matter that needs to be emphasized as soon as possible. Besides, to make sure that there are no school dropouts among SES in mainstream schools due to infrastructure problems. Yet, with adequate funding, disabled -friendly infrastructure facilities can be developed. A total of 38 people (76.0%) agreed and were ready to provide the best infrastructure facilities that are appropriate and conducive to SES. Assuredly the allocation of funds for infrastructure development will change the views of 12 (24.0%) respondents who are uncertain and do not agree in the future. The assumption of many OKU-friendly infrastructure developments in future coincides with the results of 43 (86.0%) respondents who agreed that the infrastructure readiness were important. A huge number of SES will enjoy comprehensive educational facilities by 2023.

Table 5

School Community Readiness (mainstream students)

No	Item	SDA%	DA %	NS %	A %	SA %	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Mainstream pupils know SES	1 2.0%	1 2.0%	7 14.0%	31 62.0%	10 20.0%	3.96	.781
2	Mainstream pupils expose to SES	1 2.0%	3 6.0%	19 38.0%	20 40.0%	7 14.0%	3.58	.883
3	Mainstream pupil readines in accepting SES under one atmosphere	1 2.0%	2 4.0%	24 48.0%	15 30.0%	8 16.0%	3.54	.885
4	Mainstream pupils readiness toward SES as companion	1 2.0%	1 2.0%	14 28.0%	21 42.0%	13 26.0%	3.88	.895
5	Mainstream pupil readines toward SES in helping them successfully	1 2.0%	2 4.0%	4 8.0%	14 28.0%	29 58.0%	4.36	.942

Based on findings, respondents agreed on item one , 41 people (82.0%) and remains 9 people (18.0%) were unsure and disagreed that mainstream students knew SES in general. Even so, almost half of the respondents, 24 people (48.0%) are not sure and do not agree students who know SES were exposed to them as well as 26 people (52.0%) respondents. In reality, there are 27 respondents (54.0%) mentioned that mainstream students are not certain in accepting SES.

In spite of that, there are some possibilities which SES is accepted with positive exposure and knowledge received by mainstream students. 34 respondents (68.0%) agreed with a positive view compared to 16 (32.0%) respondents who were unsure and disagreed with the others. It is suit that readiness of mainstream students able to help SES to successfully manifest their abilities in the future. 43 people (86.0%) agreed that mainstream students can help SES to successfully develop their potential in line with the ZRP implemented.

Discussion and Contribution

The findings obtained can be conclude that the disclosure of knowledge related to SES are difficult to obtain and is less known by the public generally. Therefore, it is appropriate that all parties should play their role in providing exposure and disseminating knowledge related to the readiness educational needs of SES. Referring to the statement of (Hazli, 2015) with the information on PWDs disclosed, more and more knowledge received by the public.

Even (Hazlin, 2017) stated that, the biggest and influential role of disseminating information is through the media. Media groups potentially able to control, shape or assist community members in understanding the situation, knowing the needs and readiness of the environment as well as being the executor to socialize the policies implemented. It can of course contribute to overcoming the problem of lack of information related to the needs and readiness of SES and produce community members such as teachers, students (peers) and

school staff who should more sensitive and knowledgeable about issues in education involving SES.

The fertility theory by (George, 1946), confirmed that society would be affected as a whole by information obtained from the media. (Severin & Tankard, 2001), the concept of fertilization is a formation to what is seen in the environment, values and laws in general. It is interconnected between the media and the community as well as having a comprehensive dissemination to every layer of the existing community group to provide, prepare and ready the appropriate needs to SES in Education.

Conclusion

The conclusions that can be drawn through the findings of this study clearly prove that efforts to ensure the readiness of mainstream schools in line with the zero-rejection policy should be given more in -depth attention and emphasis. There are various needs that need to be emphasized so that the distribution of educational services to MPK is coordinated and improved.

Although still in the early stages, efforts to provide exposure and knowledge to teachers and mainstream students need to be enhanced. This is because with the exposure and deeper knowledge, it is certain that the aspirations of MPK in education can be realized very well and comprehensively. All parties should play their role in providing exposure and disseminating knowledge related to MPK to all.

This study was conducted based on the set requirements. The study also focuses on the readiness of mainstream schools within teachers, infrastructure and mainstream students. There are still many shortcomings to ensure the readiness of mainstream schools in providing the educational services required by MPK. Therefore, a more in -depth study needs to be done by future researchers to look back at this readiness factor in order to be consistent with the implementation and policies carried out.

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