

## **Exploring the Role of Job Coaches in Career Transition Programme for Students with Special Needs**

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**To Link this Article:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v13-i12/20234> DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v13-i12/20234

**Published Date:** 29 December 2023

### **Abstract**

This study aims to explore, identify and explain the support service that is Job Coach in the implementation of the Career Transition Programme for students with special needs. The career transition programme is a systematic programme to help students with special needs transition from school to work. This study was conducted using a qualitative approach methodology using a research design to various places. The research strategy of this study is through data collection methods using triangulation which is interviews as the main data, physical observation and document analysis. Data analysis using Nvivo 7 software to obtain consistent themes to answer the research questions. This survey involved 6 respondents, 3 students with special needs and 3 Job Coaches who have a basic certificate issued by the community welfare department. Two of the respondents are students with special needs in the autism and slow learner categories, while another student is in the moderate hearing category. The selection of these respondents is to obtain data and information to see the extent to which the Job Coach role is implemented in 3 different locations around the Klang Valley zone. The findings of the study of 3 students with special needs who used the Job Coach service in the career transition program got permanent job opportunities where the transition programme was conducted. In addition, the findings of the study found that students with special needs can improve their interpersonal skills, self-advocacy and exposure at work with the support of a Job Coach. The findings from this study are expected to expand the role of the Job Coach to society and the privileges of working disabled people as well as employers where disabled people work.

**Keywords:** Job Coach, Career Transition Programme, Students with Special Needs, Interpersonal Skills, Self-advocacy.

**Introduction**

In 1959, the United Nations (UN) declared the Rights of the Child worldwide where they are entitled to special care and guidance according to their disabilities and opportunities to be normal children. Countries in the world, including in Asia, have started Special Education Programs based on the recommendations and insistence of several declarations at the international level. Among the declarations that form the basis of special education in Malaysia are the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the Blueprint for Special Needs Education (Salamanca Statement, 1994). Both of these frameworks are important to the rights and opportunities of children with special needs to receive education and have the opportunity to achieve and maintain the level of learning received. Career transition is an opportunity for students with special needs to be exposed to the world of work until they are accepted to work permanently in the selected agencies.

The concept of transition was first introduced by Madeline Will from the Federal Office of Rehabilitation and Special Education (OSERS) in 1983 in Washington, United States (Madinah, 2014). OSERS emphasizes the needs of students with special needs by encouraging them to make a change from school life to the community either to continue their education or work. The focus on career transition programs has begun to gain attention, especially in the United States after the introduction of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, 2004 IDEA (2004) which is a law enacted to see and maintain the well-being of students with special needs, especially in the transition to employment. IDEA 2004 defines transition as a set of coordinated result-oriented activities for students with special needs to achieve progress that further helps the transition from school to the world after school, including job transition. As a result, students are able to engage in social activities in the community, obey the rules and complete tasks in the field of work they are engaged in (Taylor, 2012).

In Malaysia, the government department responsible for the affairs of the disabled is the Department of Social Welfare of Malaysia under the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development Statistics for the Registration of Persons with Disabilities until January 31, 2023 is 637,537 people (Department of Social Welfare, 2023). For the state of Selangor, the highest number of registered disabled people was recorded as of March 2023, which is 111,108 people (Employment & Labor Statistics Data Series 35 Bill. 1/2023) compared to other states where the number of physically disabled people recorded the largest number is 39,711. Youth statistics for disabled people aged 22-35 years are recorded as 123,816. Comparatively, the number of unemployed men with disabilities is more than that of women in this country (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2023). This proves that the issue of the unemployment rate of people with disabilities is still at a worrying level in this country with an increase in registered disabled people every year (Disabled Registration Statistics, 2023).

The issue of the unemployment rate and the criteria for a transition has been discussed for more than three decades, but there is still no solution (Curry & Jones, 2014). Next, the difficulty of people with special needs to get a job is an issue that needs to be given serious attention (Abdullah & Yasin, 2015). Therefore, since 1988 the government has issued a Public Service Circular to increase the participation of the disabled in the public sector by one percent (PP 10/1988). The One Percent Quota Policy provides employment opportunities in public service to the group of people with disabilities, stipulating that each agency must

ensure that the recruitment of people with disabilities is made at least one percent of the total number of officers in the agency.

Compared to Australia, the employment quota policy for the disabled has exceeded 3% on average and aims to reach 6 percent in 2025 (Public Service Disability Employment Strategy, 2016-2019). Next, the United Kingdom recorded a percentage of employment of Disabled People at a level of 3.6% in mid-2018 and has set a target of 6 percent to be achieved in 2020 and further up to 12% in 2025 (Employment of Disabled People UK, 2022). This shows that the employment policy of the disabled in our country is still far behind compared to other countries. However, continuous efforts that are more proactive from various parties need to be reviewed and increased from time to time to provide employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Employment opportunities for people with disabilities start from high school through the career transition program. Therefore, the involvement of the support service that is Job Coach needs to play a role in helping students with special needs to become a link between employers and students with special needs. However, information related to the role of Job Coach in the public sector is not widespread (Asri et al., 2020). Job Coaches are individuals who are experienced and trained in providing support to People with Disabilities who have attended the Job Coach Basic Course under the Social Welfare Department. In addition, the Job Coach's role is a liaison between students with special needs and employers throughout the career transition program. The concept of Job Coach originated in the United States through the enactment of the Rehabilitation and employment support act after the Rehabilitation Act was instituted. In Malaysia, Job Coach services are managed by the Social Welfare Department and the Disability Development Department funded by the Employment Rehabilitation Savings Fund.

Job Coach Network Malaysia is one of the Job Coach networks in Malaysia that was formed on 1 September 2009 as part of the Project to Support Participation of people with disabilities. It was implemented by the Social Welfare Department Project, the Ministry of Women, Family & Community Development and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). This project aims to encourage the participation and involvement of all people with disabilities, especially in the field of employment. A Job Coach is an expert who connects companies and people with disabilities by providing professional support to both parties. Until 2020, it was recorded that a total of 1397 people with disabilities found employment and 770 employers had employed people with disabilities through the Job Coach service (Department of Social Welfare, 2020). More Job Coaches will be trained and provided with professional knowledge and skills and then people with disabilities will get jobs as a result of the support of Job Coaches (Hiroshi Ogawa, 2010).

### **Job Coach**

Job Coaches are experienced and professional individuals in providing support to people with disabilities and have attended the Job Coach Basic Course. According to Siti Noraqilah & Wan Hanim 2018, coaching is one of the employee guidance methods to improve performance and help identify employee talent in an organization. Job Coach needs to play a role by giving awareness to employers to hire disabled employees (Asri et al., 2020). The Job Coach's role is to assist students with special needs and employers in making adjustments to the work environment and work area, taking into account the ability of people with disabilities so that

they can work comfortably and in a productive state. Various collaborations between government and non-government agencies, especially the industry, will provide opportunities for students with special needs to get 'hands-on' experience at the workplace through On Job Training (OJT) that can prepare students with special needs for careers and adulthood. While with the help of a Job Coach, students with special needs can adapt to the environment and demands in the workplace.

In addition, Job Coach was created under Social Welfare Department to offer employment support to people with disabilities. In order to increase the chances of getting a job, companies that intend to employ disabled people do not need to bear the cost of Job Coach services because the Job Coach service allowance is fully borne by Social Welfare Department which provides an allowance of RM 15.00 per hour to Job Coaches who provide employment support to the disabled and can reach RM900 is the maximum amount for a disabled person supported (Social Welfare Department, 2018).

### **Career Transition Programme**

Based on the Career Transition Programme Module (2019) explains the transition to career programme is built on six components, namely life skills, self-advocacy skills, skills to cultivate adult life, career skills, preparatory assessment and workplace skills (industrial training and Job Coach). These six career transition activities will help students with special needs prepare for work, family, socialization and recreation with their strengths and abilities as well as their interests and potential.

The career transition program is very important for students with special needs to live a professional life after finishing school (Shyielathy et al., 2020). The minimum duration of the career transition program is between 3 to 6 months until the career transition program ends and is accepted by the employer (Career Transition Program Module, 2019). The transition process from adolescence to adulthood is a difficult period for a person (Mohd Zulkarnain 2017). Many transition programs occur in life but the most difficult is the transition to adulthood (Heslop et al., 2002). The career transition program means the transition process of a student with special educational needs from school to the workplace (Alias, 2013; Alnahdi, 2014; Barnett & Crippen, 2014; Pandey & Agarwal, 2013).

### **Special Needs Students**

A people with a disability is someone who has a long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory deficiency that, when interacting with various barriers, can restrict their full and effective participation in society (Disability Act, 2008). While the Federal Government Gazette under the Education (Special Education) Regulations 2013 in Malaysia, a student with special needs means a student who has been certified by a medical practitioner, optician, audiologist or psychologist from a government or non-government service as a student with a visual disability, hearing disability, speech disability, physical disability, learning disability or any combination of disabilities as mentioned above.

Disability as stated above is the biggest challenge for students with special needs in this country. Efforts towards implementing a career transition for students with special needs have been stated in the Malaysian Education Development Plan 2013 - 2025 (Fitri & Mokhtar, 2021). Transformation through career transition helps in forming students who are skilled in the field that suits their ability, potential and interest. In this case, the transformation through

the transition to a career programme that was carried out proved to be successful in training them to work and get job opportunities (Norfatimah & Aliza, 2022). Therefore, Job Coach plays an important role as a link to employers and students with special needs for a smooth career transition.

Pupils with special needs who are eligible to apply for Job Coach services must be registered with the Social Welfare Department and be ready to work (Guidelines for the Job Coach Service Program, 2018). Each student with special needs under Job Coach will be given financial assistance from the Disabled Employees' Allowance of RM400 per month. The purpose is as an incentive to encourage people with disabilities to work, live independently and become a productive society. In addition, the conditions for students with special needs to qualify must be 16 years of age or older, holders of a disability card from the Social Welfare Department and have a monthly income of RM1200.00 or less.

### **Literature Review Or Research Background**

The implementation of the career transition programme is an opportunity for students with special needs to gain work experience, vocational training, skills learning, community service, independent living training and so on (Aliza, 2015; Bernaldez, 2015; Azizah, 2011; Adnie, 2021). This statement is also agreed by (Lindstrom et al., 2014; Zulkarnain et al., 2018; Adnie, 2021; Yaeda et al., 2011), when students are given the opportunity to gain experience and work skills training throughout their career transition, it will provide them with ease to adapt to a real and challenging workplace.

Career transition provides opportunities for students with special needs to get suitable job placement, providing job advice to help people with disabilities identify suitable work fields based on their strengths (Falina et al., 2015). As an extension of this policy, a Disability Studies Committee has been established in the private sector for the same purpose, which is to provide and identify suitable job opportunities for the Disabled (Norhasyikin et al., 2016). The Department of Manpower of Peninsular Malaysia also created a Code of Practice for the Study of Persons with Disabilities in the Year of the Disabled 1990. However, this initiative is considered to have failed because there are still many groups of people with disabilities who are qualified to work but are unable to find employment and are unemployed.

One of the basic unemployment efforts of people with disabilities in this country is expanded to include permanent, temporary, contract or any other effective appointment method (Service Circular Number 16 of 2010). However, it is still weak from the point of view of implementation. This is evident because the policy of one percent employment opportunities in the public service for people with disabilities has not yet been met and no action has been taken against employers or government agencies that do not employ people with disabilities. They don't know about the one percent policy petition and how to implement it. Information related to the policy of one percent of employees with disabilities is also seen to be insufficiently disseminated (Asri et al., 2020). Therefore, a special guideline related to the recruitment of disabled people as employees until the end of service needs to be established, disseminated and practiced as a minimum requirement to support the enacted one percent quota (Falina et al., 2015).

Inclusive programme at the national and global levels are important in dealing with the problems faced by the disabled. In line with this, Milestone 2 in the 12th Malaysia Plan (RMK-



12) and Goal 1 in the Incheon Strategy through the Disabled Persons Action Plan 2016-2022 strongly emphasize inclusive principles (RMK-11 Half Term Review 2018; UN ESCAP 2012; KPWK, 2016). The United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda also emphasizes economic development based on sustainable inclusive principles. One of its components is to uphold the rights of the disabled (UN, 2015). In this context, one of the best main solutions for the government, the disabled community and society as a whole in realizing these goals is the acceptance and participation of disabled people in the workforce on a larger scale. Furthermore, the non-participation of the disabled in the labor market will lead to the loss of talent in the workforce which in turn affects the country's GDP (Turcotte, 2014).

In this country, the average gross income for disabled people who work is low, amounting to RM 1,560 per month (Employment & Labor Statistics Data Series 35 Bill. 1/2023). Most of the disabled (91%) are in the B40 category, which means they earn less than RM3,860 a month. It was found that the best workplace conditions for the disabled are in the NGO sector because 88% of the disabled stated that their employers provide facilities that are very friendly to the disabled (Asri et al., 2020). In addition, the researcher pointed out that only 39% of all disabled respondents knew about the Disabled Employment Scheme or JobsMalaysia and of that number, only 16% had ever used it to apply for a job. Limited employment opportunities cause more people with disabilities to become discouraged and withdraw from the labor market (Turcotte, 2014). This factor causes people with disabilities to choose to work for themselves rather than join the labor market (Rozali et al., 2017). The Job Coach service that has been introduced in 2012 through the collaboration between the Department of Social Welfare and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is an initiative to provide employment support to people with disabilities.

In schools, Job Coach support can be provided by teachers by taking on one of the Job Coach duties as an instructor for a job (Career Transition Programme Module, 2019). However, the teacher module as Job Coach in detail has not yet been established in this country. Madinah (2014) stated that the implementation of the career transition programme depends more on the initiative of the teacher and there is indeed no specific guide that is consistent in all states for the coordinating teachers to implement the transition program. Therefore, it is appropriate if a teacher module as a Job Coach should be available to guide and facilitate all high school special education teachers across the country to better understand the career transition programme process for students with special needs.

This study aims to discuss the findings of information on the importance of the role of Job Coach and identify the reasons why Job Coach is less effective. This study is expected to be a reference for all special education teachers, students with special needs, parents, employers and communities in the implementation of career transition programs for students with special education problems.

### **Objective**

There are two main objectives in achieving this study, namely

1. Review the role of the Job Coach throughout the career transition program.
2. Identify the cause of Job Coach being less effective in this country.

### Methodology

This research was conducted using a qualitative approach in the form of case studies in various places to achieve the purpose of the research, which is to explore, identify and explain the role of a Job Coach in the implementation of a career transition program for high school students with special needs. The location of this research case was carried out in a transition center that had been selected in three different places around the Klang Valley zone. Each respondent's location consists of a Job Coach and a student with special needs. The selection of three Job Coaches is limited because not all transition places provide Job Coach services. For students with special needs, they are selected based on the consent of the parents and the selection of school teachers is based on the abilities and capabilities of the students with special needs.

The data collection process uses triangulation methods namely interviews, observations and document analysis. The main method used in this research is an unstructured interview involving six research respondents. Three students with special needs were selected between the ages of 17-19 years in the autism and slow learner categories while one student was in the medium hearing category. Next, three Job Coaches who are assigned to guide students with special needs have a basic certificate issued by the Department of Social Welfare. In order to support the data and information collected through observation methods and document analysis is also done throughout the observation, data is collected in the form of videos, photography and field notes. Documents are analyzed based on the information obtained through interviews. The experts involved in verifying the unstructured interview questions are among the lecturers in the field of special education at institutions of higher learning in this country. The findings of the study were analyzed using Nvivo7 software to obtain regular and consistent themes related to the role of the Job Coach.

### Findings Results and Discussion

Demographic Profile of Study Participants

Schedule 1

*Demographic Information of Students with Special Needs and Job Coach*

Job Coach Information	Gender	Age	Special Needs Student	Gender	Category	Age	Location	Task/Section
R1JC1	Female	36	R1SNS1	Female	Autism	17	Kajang	Fast food restaurant
R2JC2	Male	28	R2SNS2	Male	Hearing	18	Bangi	Clothing Store
R3JC3	Male	32	R3SNS3	Male	Slow Learner	19	Kuala Lumpur	Fast food restaurant

R : Respondent

JC: Job Coach

SNS : Special Needs Student

Source: Madinah and Hanafi (2014)

Based on Table 1, the demographics of the study participants consisted of three Job Coaches and three students with special needs (1 female and 2 males). The age of students with special needs is around 17 to 19 years old and work in fast food restaurants and clothing

stores around the Klang Valley zone. The category of students with special needs consists of autism, slow learner and hearing problems. Three different locations where career transitions are conducted in Kajang, Bangi and Kuala Lumpur.

The findings of this study answer and discuss the two objectives of the study as follows.

### **Discussion 1: The Role of the Job Coach Throughout the Career Transition Program**

Continuous support through Job Coach is an innovative approach as a paradigm shift in efforts to support students with special needs in the field of employment towards a new era. It provides appropriate support and services to employers and students with special needs as a way to promote the potential of people with disabilities so that they can work in an open and competitive environment that is different from the previous situation where they were isolated and placed in sheltered workshops (Ogawa, 2012).

Job Coach offers one to one support, which is a Job Coach with a student with special needs that involves a period of time of at least 3 to 6 months according to the ability level of the student with special needs. During that period, the Job Coach performs the following tasks:

**a. Assessment of students with special needs:** Make an assessment and understand the situation of students with special needs in detail based on the level of disability, intellect, attitude and behavior to plan the support needed to create a career match.

**b. Workplace Assessment:** Make an assessment of the workplace environment in terms of the physical environment, people, tasks and policies or culture at the workplace.

**c. Job Matching:** Making the best match between the abilities of students with special needs with modifications and rearranging tasks that are compatible with students with special needs with the permission of the employer.

**d. Intensive Support:** Provide support for students with special needs and employers in the workplace so that students with special needs work diligently and continuously.

**e. Natural Support:** Creating peer support for students with special needs to gradually reduce Job Coach support.

**f. Follow-up:** Regular support to keep students with special needs at work by monitoring and intervening if there are problems.

In order to increase the opportunity for employers to hire student workers with special needs, respondents suggested that Job Coach play a role in giving employers awareness about student workers with special needs. Job Coaches also need to give awareness to employers to hire student employees with special needs by providing support and assistance in the handling of student employees with special needs who are accepted for work.

### **Assessment of Students With Special Needs Using The Kirkpatrick Model (1955)**

The model used in this study is the Kirkpatrick Model. This model was developed in 1955 by Donald Kirkpatrick as a way to evaluate the effectiveness of supervisor training for students with special needs who follow a career transition programme. It is one of the most widely used methods to evaluate the effectiveness of training programme and has a review-oriented approach to evaluate what happened and what the final results of the training were. There are four levels of evaluation to evaluate an exercise through this model, namely reaction, learning, behavior and results (Watkins et al., 1998).



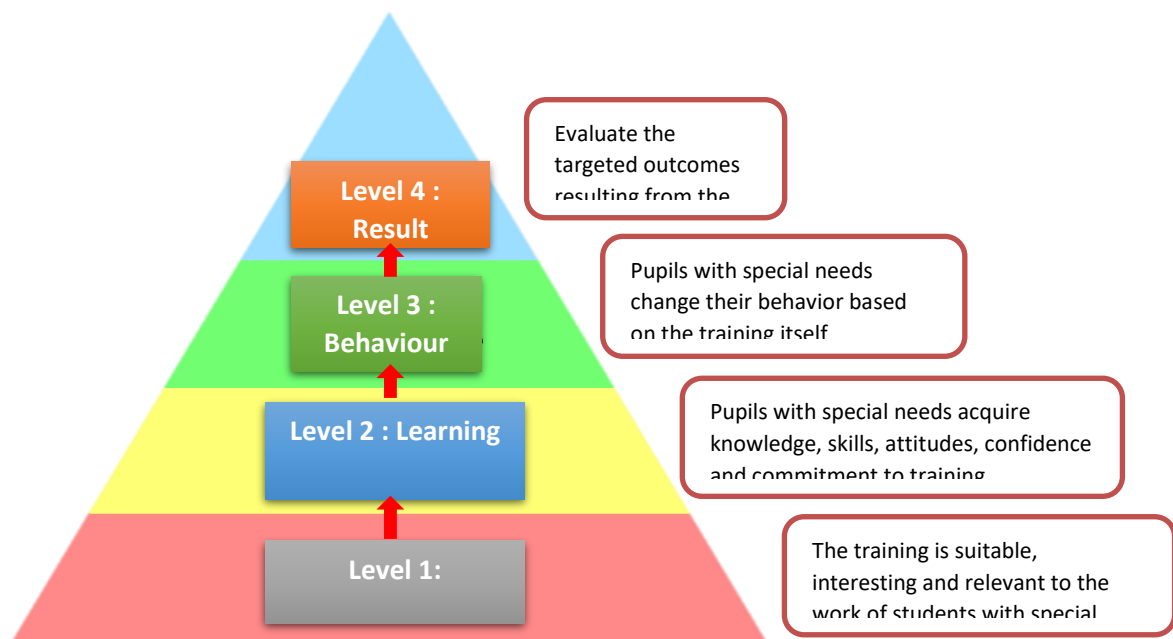


Figure 1: Kirkpatrick's Evaluation Model (1955)

Based on the Kirkpatrick Model (1955) as above, there are 4 levels of assessment that can be carried out by the Job Coach to students with special needs during the career transition programme. Level 1 is the reaction of students with special needs showing a good reaction through training that is appropriate, interesting and relevant to the ability of students with special needs in the place of transition. Next, Level 2 is the learning of students with special needs to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, confidence and commitment in training throughout the career transition. At this level, students with special needs learn various skills at work. Level 3, which is the behavior of students with special needs will change from training and learned skills to positive behavior changes. Pupils with special needs receive instructions and tasks according to the work schedule. Finally, level 4 is the result of the career transition programme that has been set by the Job Coach and the employer. This final decision determines if this student with special needs is accepted to continue working or not.

## Discussion 2: Reasons Why Job Coaches Are Less Effective In This Country

### a) Lack of Awareness of Job Coach Services

The findings of the study found that information related to Job Coach for the public and private sectors is not widespread. According to respondents, some do not know that agencies in the public and private sectors can get Job Coach services from the Social Welfare Department. Government departments can apply for Job Coach services to help people with disabilities adapt, but not many people know about the information (Asri et al., 2020). Next is the challenge of maintaining the need for job matching and job coaching in the long term. Respondents expressed challenges related to incentives for Job Coaches to continue providing services in the long term.

Next is the challenge of providing Job Coach professionals to help people with disabilities work. The process of helping students with special needs receive training and enter the world of work takes a long time, Job Coaches from non-governmental organizations (NGO) and government agencies do not have time to focus on the process. Therefore, a professional Job

Coach can help students with special needs adapt in terms of training and the world of work since the process takes time. According to Hassan (2015), it has been shown that Job Coach services play an important role among disabled employees and have been proven to achieve higher emotional intelligence, job satisfaction and organizational commitment, compared to disabled employees who are not given any support job guidance.

**b) No Policy Enforcement and Monitoring**

The public sector is seen as not earnestly implementing the policy of one percent of employees with disabilities. Respondents stated that only a few government agencies employ people with disabilities and the policy of one percent of employees with disabilities is seen as having to represent each ministry and not represent the entire public sector as it is now. The proof, based on the latest data up to 31 December 2022 (Employment & Labor Statistics Series 35 Bill. 1/2023), the units of public service organizations that have achieved the One Percent Policy which is the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development has a total of 138 people with disabilities (1.7%). However, for other units that have not yet achieved this policy and the closest which is the Ministry of Unity recorded a total of 24 people with disabilities (0.9%), the Ministry of Development of Entrepreneurs & Cooperatives a total of 14 people with disabilities (0.8%) and the Ministry of Human Resources a total of 60 people with disabilities (0.8 %). This data shows that the number of employees with disabilities is very low offered in public service. Therefore, the government needs to understand and be aware of the implications of this issue and the enforcement of the one percent policy needs to be prioritized.

The implications of the issue mentioned above cause the Job Coach's role not to be evident in the implementation of career transition because the Job Coach's role is as an employee trainer and employer liaison. Support services through Job Coach actually provide employment opportunities for the disabled and give awareness to employers to provide permanent employment opportunities to the disabled. Next, it is difficult for the private sector to achieve and implement the one percent policy if the government also does not achieve the one percent policy target through hiring disabled employees.

Next, the implementation of the policy was identified as the absence of proper enforcement and monitoring of the policy of disabled workers with disabilities (Zulazhar et al., 2018). The process of implementation and enforcement of the disability policy for employees with disabilities is seen as not strong enough and weak. This causes many government agencies to not reach the disability policy targets of employees with disabilities and not strive to achieve those targets. In addition, the disability policy of employees with disabilities is also not included in any act or law. This means that no legal action can be taken against any agency or employer that does not implement the policy. This causes many government agencies or private employers to be reluctant or desperate to implement it because they think the policy is not mandatory (Asri et al., 2020).

**c) Employer's Readiness**

Employers for the purposes of the Job Coach program are individuals or organizations that are interested in accepting people with disabilities to work by using the Job Coach service. In addition, the meaning of employer is the person with whom an employee has entered into a service or apprenticeship contract.

According to Maznah and Aliza (2016), employers do not accept Special Education trainees as their employees because employers lack knowledge about students with special needs and career transition programs. Employability skills that need to be applied to students with special needs are personal appearance, good behavior, punctuality and attendance, communication skills, work responsibility, cooperation skills and emotional management (Chu & Zang, 2015). This statement is also supported by the employer's willingness to accept and understand the situation of students with special needs to begin their duties as an employee (Fitri & Mokhtar, 2021).

All employers in Malaysia have an open attitude and are ready to accept employees with disabilities and support the government's policy of helping employees with disabilities to work. Today's employers need employees who have employability skills (Mat et al., 2015). This is because employers and the community outside have no knowledge about the career transition program, look down on the disabled (Falina et al., 2015) and even do not know about the government's policy that provides a special quota of one percent in the MyStep program for the disabled disabled.

According to the respondents of this study, employers do not know about the policy and privileges of employers employing people with disabilities. Among them are double deductions which are deductions for employing people with disabilities and deductions for training taxes approved by the government. Next, a special deduction which is the renovation of a building or the need for support equipment for the disabled. Incentive information for employers who employ people with disabilities needs to be expanded because there are still many employers who are still unaware of the incentives provided by the government to employers out there.

#### **d) Parental Involvement**

Parental involvement is the main element and pillar and contributor to the effectiveness of students with special needs (Fitri & Mokhtar, 2021; Nurulhuda & Hanafi, 2018). Parents are the main contributing factors to the successful implementation of students with special needs career transition in the context of planning and implementing students with special needs readiness for the career world. Indirectly this effort can improve students with special needs advocacy skills as well as build positive relationships between parents and the school. In addition, according to Noraini (2015); Nor (2019), parents play a role by getting involved in any activity to promote social performance and help with emotional, physical and academic aspects as well as improve job skills among students with special needs. Thus, career training at the secondary school level is an important indicator that guarantees job placement after finishing school and the involvement of parents in the transition of their children is a step that can help the successful transition of students with special needs to face the world after finishing school (Polloway et al., 2013; Medina, 2014).

#### **Main Recommendation**

Based on the findings of the study, several suggestions were put forward to strengthen the implementation of the career transition program for students with special needs, namely

1. Each school is provided with a module as well as Job Coach implementation guidelines in all special secondary schools.

2. Every school needs to appoint teachers as Job Coaches by attending a basic course to strengthen the role of Job Coach. This will make it easier for career transition programs to be implemented in high schools for students with special needs.
3. The government is requested to tighten policies related to disabled workers and impose penalties and legal action (provision act) on employers who commit offenses.
4. The government needs to empower the role of Job Coach by recognizing them as a professional career field by offering Job Coach jobs in any public sector.
5. Creating a One Stop Center for people with disabilities can be used as a place to collect all data and training for people with disabilities. Aid, allowances and grants for the disabled can also be placed at the one-stop center for the disabled.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, students with special needs can be guided to be ready to step into adulthood and get a job and independent life through various programs that are planned and implemented taking into account the level of ability, abilities and interests according to individual diversity. Various collaborations between government and non-government agencies, especially industry, will provide opportunities for students with special needs to get 'hands-on' experience at the workplace through On Job Training (OJT) to prepare students with special needs for careers and adulthood. While with the help of a Job Coach, students with special needs can adapt to the environment and demands.

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