

## Job Coach Development in Career Transition in Malaysia

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### Abstract

This study aims to explore, understand, and explain the role of Job Coach support services in the implementation of the Career Transition Program for Special Education Needs Students. The Career Transition Program is a systematic initiative designed to assist MBPK in transitioning from school to employment. This study utilizes previous literature to explore the Job Coach services available in Malaysia. An analysis of past studies revealed that there are five articles related to Job Coach research from 2018 to 2024. This indicates that research on Job Coaches is still limited in the country. Therefore, this study recommends that more research be conducted on the role and effectiveness of Job Coaches to strengthen support for Special Education Needs Students in facing the transition to the workforce. Further research should also consider more holistic and inclusive approaches to enhance employment opportunities and social integration for Special Education Needs Students in Malaysia.

**Keywords:** Job Coach, Career Transition Program For Special Education Needs Students

### Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO 2011) shows that employment rates vary across countries, the bottom line is that, all over the world, a person with a disability is less likely to be employed than a person without a disability, often much less so (Heymann, Stein, & de Elvira Moreno 2014). Even when employed, workers with disabilities are more likely than their counterparts without disabilities to report underemployment, involuntary part-time or contingent employment and lower than average salaries (Brault 2012; Konrad, Moore, Ng, Doherty, & Breward 2013; see also Baldrige, Beatty, Konrad & Moore 2016). Notwithstanding legislation specifically targeted at promoting and protecting the rights of people with disabilities (e.g., Americans with Disabilities Act [1990] of 1991), the employment

participation of people with disabilities is still lagging when compared to their able-bodied and comparably educated, counterparts (WHO 2011; see also Colella & Bruyere 2011; Kruse & Schur 2003).

In 1967, a special education teacher in Los Angeles named Marc Gold introduced a systematic training approach called "Try Another Way." This approach is based on several fundamental beliefs: everyone can learn, but we need to find the right way to teach; students with developmental disabilities have more potential than anyone realizes; and all people with disabilities should have the opportunity to decide how to live their lives. He explains the Systematic Instruction approach and describes how it can be used to counteract the low-quality assumptions people tend to make about the capabilities of individuals with intellectual disabilities. Marc Gold taught several individuals with intellectual disabilities how to assemble a bicycle brake. It's a complex task but entirely teachable with the right approach. Thus, starting in secondary school students with disabilities can actually be trained in various skills and have the opportunity to obtain employment in the open market through career transition programs.

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 Persons with Disabilities (PWD) is the Department of Social Welfare Malaysia (JKM) under the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (KPWKM). According to PWD registration statistics as of January 31, 2023, a total of 637,537 individuals have been registered under JKM, compared to only 531,962 individuals a decade ago (JKM Book 2014). For the state of Selangor, the highest number of registered PWDs was recorded as of March 2023, with a total of 111,108 individuals (Labor and Employment Statistics Series 35 No. 1/2023), compared to other states where the number of PWDs with Physical Disabilities is the highest at 39,711 individuals. In terms of comparison, the number of unemployed female PWDs is higher than that of males in the country (Department of Statistics Malaysia 2021) although the latest data shows that the male gender is increasing. This indicates that the issue of unemployment among the PWD community remains a concern in the country with alarming numbers (Jayasooria, Krishnan & Ooi 1997; Norani, Khalid & Nor Aishah 2001; Ramakrishnan 2007; Lee, Abdullah & Mey 2011; Melissa, Yen & See 2011; Othman 2013; Ta & Leng 2013; Tiun and Khoo 2013; Annuar Aswan, Mohd Faizal & Abdul Razak 2017).

Table 1

*Disabled registration statistics by category, gender and state until January 31, 2023 (JKM 2023)*

No	State	Visual	Hearing	Speech	Physical	Learning	Mental	Multiple	Total
1	Johor	5,884	4,646	417	25,806	26,823	6,948	3,394	73,918
2	Kedah	5,721	3,580	365	20,764	17,691	4,473	2,563	55,157
3	Kelantan	4,005	2,791	302	12,766	18,360	4,808	2,245	45,277
4	Melaka	2,108	2,479	132	10,896	10,295	2,080	876	28,866
5	Negeri Sembilan	2,180	1,981	106	10,885	9,724	2,320	1,373	28,569
6	Pahang	3,357	2,139	239	13,261	14,406	2,490	1,797	37,689
7	Perak	4,790	3,591	223	19,530	19,098	19,098	5,636	55,333
8	Perlis	823	435	89	2,689	3,090	931	314	8,371
9	Pulau Pinang	3,528	2,749	118	14,464	11,612	2,269	1,278	36,018
10	Sabah	3,385	2,934	368	10,498	18,718	3,157	2,469	41,529
11	Sarawak	4,780	2,799	258	11,758	16,592	4,904	1,683	42,774
12	Selangor	7,643	6,713	425	39,711	38,221	6,874	5,322	104,909
13	Terengganu	2,738	2,427	168	9,003	13,686	2,299	1,474	31,795
14	WP Kuala Lumpur	4,165	3,301	162	16,730	16,324	3,123	1,550	45,355
15	WP Pulau Labuan	133	87	25	457	1,091	100	84	1,977
	Total	55,240	42,652	3,397	219,218	235,731	52,412	28,887	637,537
No.	Sex	Visual	Hearing	Speech	Physical	Learning	Mental	Multiple	Total
1	Boy	35,169	23,240	2,191	147,353	159,576	31,603	17,572	416,704
2	Girl	20,071	19,412	1,206	71,865	76,155	20,809	11,315	220,833
	Total	55,240	42,652	3,397	219,218	235,731	52,412	28,887	637,537

The issue of unemployment rates and transition criteria has been discussed for more than three decades, yet no concrete solutions have been found (Curry & Jones, 2014). The difficulty faced by individuals with special needs in securing employment also warrants serious attention (Abdullah & Yasin 2015). Since 1988, the government has issued a Public Service Circular to increase the participation of persons with disabilities (PWD) in the public sector by one percent (PP 10/1988). This One Percent Quota Policy provides employment opportunities in the public service for persons with disabilities, stipulating that each agency must ensure that at least one percent of its total workforce consists of persons with disabilities.

Compared to Australia, the employment quota policy for persons with disabilities has averaged over 3% and aims to increase to 6% by 2025 (Public Service Disability Employment Strategy 2016-2019). In the United Kingdom, the employment rate for persons with disabilities was recorded at 3.6% in mid-2018, with a target increase to 6% by 2020 and further to 12% by 2025 (UK Disability Employment 2022). This comparison indicates that our country's employment policy for persons with disabilities is still significantly lagging behind other nations. Therefore, continuous and more proactive efforts from various parties need to be examined and enhanced over time to provide more employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Employment opportunities for persons with disabilities begin at the secondary school level through career transition programs. In this context, the involvement of support services such as Job Coaches plays a crucial role in assisting special needs students, functioning as a bridge between employers and students (Moha Asri, Ruzita Amin & Salamah Abdullah 2020). However, information regarding the role of Job Coaches in the public sector remains limited. A Job Coach is an experienced and trained individual who provides support to persons with disabilities and has completed the Basic Job Coach Course under the Department of Social Welfare. The role of a Job Coach includes serving as a liaison between special needs students and employers throughout the career transition program. The concept of Job Coaches originated in the United States through the enactment of the Rehabilitation Act and subsequent employment support after the Act's implementation. In Malaysia, Job Coach services are managed by the Department of Social Welfare and the Department of Development for Persons with Disabilities, with funding from the Employment Rehabilitation Fund.

The Job Coach Network Malaysia is one of the Job Coach networks in Malaysia, established on September 1, 2009, as part of the Supporting the Participation of Persons with Disabilities Project. This project is implemented by the Department of Social Welfare, the Ministry of Women, Family & Community Development, and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The main goal of this project is to promote the participation and involvement of persons with disabilities, particularly in the employment sector. Job Coaches are experts who connect companies with persons with disabilities, providing professional support to both parties. As of 2020, a total of 1,397 persons with disabilities have gained employment through Job Coach services, and 770 employers have hired persons with disabilities (Department of Social Welfare, 2020). In the future, more Job Coaches will be trained and equipped with professional knowledge and skills, ensuring that more persons with disabilities gain employment with their support (Ogawa, 2010).

### **Job Coach Service Program**

A Job Coach is an experienced and professional individual who provides support to persons with disabilities and has attended the Basic Job Coach Course. According to Noraqilah and Hanim (2018), coaching is a method to enhance employee performance and help identify their talents within an organization. Job Coaches play a crucial role in raising employer awareness about the needs and benefits of hiring persons with disabilities (Moha Asri et al., 2020). They assist special needs students and employers in making adjustments to the work environment, considering the capabilities of persons with disabilities to ensure they can work comfortably and productively.

Collaboration among government agencies, non-governmental organizations and industry can provide special needs students with hands-on experience in the workplace through On Job Training (OJT). This prepares special needs students to enter the career world and adulthood. With the assistance of a Job Coach, special needs students can adapt to the environment and demands of the workplace.

Additionally, the Department of Social Welfare has established the Job Coach program to provide employment support to persons with disabilities. To enhance their employment opportunities, companies wishing to hire persons with disabilities do not need to bear the cost of Job Coach services. This is because the allowance for Job Coach services is fully covered by the Department of Social Welfare, which provides an allowance of RM 15.00 per hour to Job Coaches who support persons with disabilities. The maximum allowance that can be

received by supported persons with disabilities is RM 900 (Department of Social Welfare, 2018).

**Project To Support Participation of Persons With Disabilities (Phase I)** is a collaborative project between the Department of Social Welfare (JKM) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) that began on September 1, 2009, and concluded on August 31, 2012. The memorandum of understanding for this project was signed on March 4, 2009. This phase focused on Employment Support through the "Job Coach" program and Disability Equality Training (DET). The aim of the project was to promote the participation of persons with disabilities in society through Employment Support. This phase was developmental, raising awareness and understanding among agencies and staff in the Klang Valley about disabilities and employment support for persons with disabilities. In addition to raising societal awareness, this phase also concentrated on developing training modules and producing DET trainers and Job Coaches to create more advocates and Job Coaches across Malaysia.

Seeing the need, this collaborative project was continued with the same initiative, **Project To Support Participation Of Persons With Disabilities (Phase 2)**, from September 1, 2012 to August 31, 2015. The second phase was the implementation phase, aimed at expanding awareness about disabilities and employment support throughout Malaysia. The Job Coach Service Program (PPJC) was introduced to promote sustainable employment for persons with disabilities in the open job market. Job Coaches are trained individuals who are experienced and professional in providing support to persons with disabilities. Job Coaches act as intermediaries between persons with disabilities and employers by providing support to both parties as follows:

- i. Assessment of Persons with Disabilities: Conducting assessments and understanding the condition of persons with disabilities.
- ii. Workplace Assessment: Evaluating the work environment.
- iii. Job Matching: Adjusting work conditions and reorganizing tasks to suit persons with disabilities with the employer's consent.
- iv. Intensive Support: Providing support for persons with disabilities and employers in the workplace.
- v. Natural Support: Establishing coworker support for persons with disabilities to gradually reduce the dependence on the Job Coach.
- vi. Follow-up: Periodic support to maintain persons with disabilities in employment.

The Job Coach service, introduced in 2012 through a collaboration between the Department of Social Welfare (JKM) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), is an initiative to provide employment support to persons with disabilities. During this period 2012-2020, a total of:

Table 2

*Data About Job Coach Period 2012-2020*

No.	Data about Job Coach period 2012-2020	Total
1	Persons with disabilities gained employment through the Job Coach service	1,397 persons with disabilities
2	Have hired persons with disabilities through the Job Coach service	770 employers
3	Consisting of various agencies including the public sector, private sector and NGOs	49 Job Coach Trainers
4	Who have been trained through the Job Coach courses under the Department of Social Welfare	2,773 Job Coaches
5	Have served in the Public Service	4,002 persons with disabilities
6	Have worked in the Private Sector.	15,326 persons with disabilities

### Literature Review or Research Background

The implementation of career transition programs provides opportunities for students with special needs to gain work experience, vocational training, skill learning, community service, independent living training, and others (Aliza 2015; Bernaldez 2015; Noor Azizah 2011; Adnie 2021). This statement is also supported by (Lindstrom et al. 2014; Mohd Zulkarnain et al. 2018; Nuraisyah Adnie, 2021; Yaeda et al. 2011), where providing students with opportunities to gain work experience and skill training throughout their career transition process facilitates their adjustment to the challenging real work environment.

Career transition provides opportunities for students with special needs to obtain suitable job placements and receive job advisory services to help disabled individuals identify suitable job fields based on their strengths (Falina, Safura, Nurazla & Afnee 2015). As an extension of this policy, a Disability Research Committee has been established in the private sector for the same purpose of providing and identifying suitable job opportunities for persons with disabilities (Norhasyikin, Balqis, Zaihana, Shuhairimi & Azizan 2016). The Department of Labour Peninsular Malaysia has also established the Code of Practice on Research of Persons with Disabilities in 1990. However, this initiative is considered unsuccessful as many qualified persons with disabilities still face challenges in finding employment and ultimately become unemployed.

One important step in addressing the issue of unemployment among persons with disabilities in this country is to expand efforts in their recruitment through permanent, temporary, contract, or other effective appointment methods (Circular of Public Service Number 16 Year 2010). However, its implementation remains unsatisfactory. This is evidenced by the failure to implement the one percent employment opportunity policy in the public service for persons with disabilities and the lack of action against employers or government agencies that do not hire persons with disabilities. Lack of awareness about the one percent policy and its implementation steps also contributes to this issue (Moha Asri et al. 2020). Therefore, it is crucial to establish, disseminate, and enforce specific guidelines regarding the recruitment of persons with disabilities as a minimum requirement to comply with the one percent quota set (Falina et al., 2015).

Inclusive programs at national and global levels play a crucial role in addressing the challenges faced by persons with disabilities. Through the 12th Malaysia Plan (RMK-12) and Goal 1 of the Incheon Strategy established through the Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities 2016-2022, the principle of inclusivity is emphasized (Mid-Term Review of RMK-11 2018; UN ESCAP 2012; KPWKM 2016). The United Nations 2030 Agenda also emphasizes sustainable economic development based on inclusive principles, including the enforcement of rights for persons with disabilities (UN, 2015). In this context, one of the key solutions for the government, the disability community, and society as a whole to achieve these goals is through the broader acceptance and inclusion of persons with disabilities in the workforce. Moreover, the lack of participation of persons with disabilities in the labor market can result in the loss of talent in the workforce, which could negatively impact the country's economic growth (Turcotte M. 2014).

In this country, the average gross income of employed persons with disabilities is low, totaling RM 1,560 per month (Employment and Labor Statistics Series 35 Issue 1/2023). Most persons with disabilities (91%) fall into the B40 category, meaning they earn less than RM3,860 per month. The best workplace conditions for persons with disabilities are found in the private sector, as 88% of persons with disabilities report that employers provide very friendly facilities for them (Asri et al., 2020). Additionally, researchers assert that only 39% of all respondents with disabilities are aware of the Persons with Disabilities Employment Scheme or JobsMalaysia, and out of that number, only 16% have ever used it to apply for jobs. Limited job opportunities lead to more persons with disabilities being hesitant and withdrawing from the labor market (Turcotte, 2014). This factor causes many persons with disabilities to choose self-employment over joining the labor market (Rozali et al., 2017). The Job Coach service, introduced in 2012 through a collaboration between the Department of Social Welfare and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), is an initiative aimed at providing employment support to persons with disabilities.

In schools, Job Coach support can be provided by teachers taking on the role of Job Coach as part of their job duties (Ghani 2019, Alias 2019, Career Transition Program Module 2019). However, detailed guidelines for teachers as Job Coaches have not yet been established in this country (Asri 2020). Madinah (2014) stated that the implementation of career transition programs relies heavily on teacher initiatives, and there is currently no consistent specific guidance across all states for coordinating teachers to implement such transition programs. Therefore, it is appropriate to have teacher modules as Job Coaches to guide and facilitate all special education teachers in secondary schools nationwide to better understand the process of career transition for students with special needs.

This study utilizes previous literature to explore the Job Coach services available in Malaysia. An analysis of past studies revealed that there are five articles related to Job Coach research from 2018 to 2024. This indicates that research on Job Coaches is still limited in the country.

Table 3

Literature Review Matrix Table 2018-2024 on Job Coaching In Malaysia

Authors	Year	Country	Title	Study design/ Method	Study participants/target	Theory/ Model	Intervention	Findings
Abdul Razak Abd Manaf	2018	UUM, Sintok, Kedah, Malaysia	Employability of persons with Disabilities : Job Coaches' Perspectives	Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7 Job Coaches (5 male and 2 female)</li> </ul>	Not specified	Not specified	Results of the study revealed that there are ten key points shared by these Job Coaches in helping PWDs to secure employment and increase their participation in the work setting
Chu Shi Wei	2019	Universiti Sains Malaysia.	Assessment Of Quality Standards Of Supported Employment By In-House Job Coaches And Employees With Disabilities	Qualitative and Quantitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>173 in-house job coaches and 173 employees with disabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory</li> <li>Social Model of Disability</li> </ul>	Assessment	The results of the study indicated that the organizations surveyed were of the view that the quality standards of supported employment were good. Findings also included predictors of quality outcomes of supported employment which were the management and leadership of the organization, the intensive support at the workplace and follow-up services.
Nur Izzaty Mohamad	2019	UKM, Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia	Learning Motivation as a Mediating Variable in the Relationship Between Supervisory Guidance and Job Motivation	Quantitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>300 survey questionnaire employees at Malaysian Federal Government Central Agencies, Putrajaya</li> </ul>	Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1979)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>questionnaire</li> <li>Software SmartPLS</li> </ul>	This outcome explains that the ability of supervisors to appropriately implement coaching in executing daily job operations had strongly invoked employees' learning motivation.
Yeo Swee Lan	2019	Gamuda Foundation, Petaling Jaya, Selangor	Development of supported employment in Malaysia	Not specified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2,398 participants have attended 3 days course or 4 days</li> </ul>	Not specified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not specified</li> </ul>	A total of 329 job coaches were involved in



					course of job coach training			supporting these PWDs
Siti Zunaida Yusop	2023	Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM)	Exploring the Role of Job Coaches in Career Transition Programme for Students with Special Needs	Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 respondents, 3 students with special needs and 3 Job Coaches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kirkpatrick Model (1955)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>interview</li> </ul>	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.

Based on the data collected, there are five relevant articles on Job Coach services in Malaysia identified by the researcher. However, these findings indicate that research on Job Coach in this country is still insufficient. Therefore, the researcher recommends that more research be conducted in this area to expand understanding and knowledge of the roles and effectiveness of Job Coach in supporting persons with disabilities, especially in the Malaysian context. Further investigation can help identify more specific needs, assess program implementation, and generate practical guidelines for more effective and efficient implementation of Job Coach services within the education system and job market of this country.

**Results and Discussion**

Reasons Why Job Coach is Less Effective in Malaysia

a) Lack of Awareness of Job Coach Services

Research findings indicate that information regarding Job Coach services for both public and private sectors is not widely disseminated. According to respondents, some are unaware that agencies in the public and private sectors can access Job Coach services from the Department of Social Welfare. Government departments can request Job Coach services to assist persons with disabilities in adapting, but few are aware of this information (Asri et al., 2020). Another challenge is maintaining the need for job matching and job guidance in the long term. Respondents highlight challenges related to incentives for Job Coaches to continue providing services over an extended period.

Furthermore, there are challenges in providing professional Job Coaches to assist persons with disabilities in the workplace. The process of helping students with special needs receive training and adapt to the workplace environment requires a considerable amount of time. Job Coaches from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and government agencies often have limited focus on this process due to their busy schedules. Therefore, the presence of professional Job Coaches is crucial to assist students with special needs in adapting to appropriate training and workplace environments. Research by Hassan (2015) shows that Job Coach services play a significant role in enhancing emotional intelligence, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment among employees with disabilities compared to those who do not receive such support.

b) Lack of Enforcement and Monitoring of Policies

The public sector appears to lack serious commitment in implementing the one percent policy for hiring persons with disabilities. Respondents report that only a few government agencies

actually employ PWDs, and they feel that the one percent policy should represent each ministry rather than the entire public sector as it currently stands. Recent evidence shows an imbalance in achieving this policy among organizational units within the public service. For instance, the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development has recorded more than one percent of PWD employees, while several other ministries are far from reaching this target. Statistical data indicates that the number of PWDs offered employment in the public service is very low. Therefore, it is crucial for the government to understand and take necessary actions to enhance the implementation of this one percent policy.

The implications of this issue also hinder the role of Job Coaches in career transition implementation. The actual role of Job Coaches is to train employees and act as a link between employers and employees. The support provided by Job Coaches provides employment opportunities for PWDs and raises awareness among employers about the importance of providing job opportunities for PWDs. However, the effectiveness of the Job Coach role can be compromised if the one percent policy is not well adhered to by the government. This also highlights the challenges faced by the private sector in complying with the one percent policy if the government itself does not achieve this target through the hiring of PWDs. Therefore, it is important for the government to prioritize compliance with the one percent policy in the employment of PWDs.

The implementation of this policy is identified as lacking proper enforcement and monitoring regarding PWD policies (Zulazhar, Sridevi, Zabdi & Saufi, 2018). The process of implementing and enforcing disability policies for PWD employees appears insufficiently robust and effective. This has resulted in many government agencies failing to achieve the target number of disabled employees and a lack of effort to achieve it. Additionally, disability employment policies are not included in any existing acts or laws. This means that no legal action can be taken against any agency or employer who does not comply with these policies. As a result, many government agencies or private employers are reluctant or not motivated to comply with this policy because they do not consider themselves bound by it (Asri et al., 2020).

### c) Employer Readiness

Employers in the context of Job Coach services refer to individuals or organizations interested in hiring persons with disabilities using Job Coach services. Additionally, the term "employer" includes individuals with whom employees have signed service contracts.

According to Noor Maznah and Aliza (2016), employers often hesitate to hire PWDs due to their lack of knowledge about PWDs and career transition programs. Key employability skills that need to be emphasized for PWDs include good personal presentation, positive behavior, punctuality and attendance, communication skills, job responsibility, teamwork skills, and emotional management (Chu & Zang 2015). Employer readiness to accept and understand the situations of individuals with special needs as an initial step in placing them as employees is also supported by (Fitri & Mokhtar 2021).

However, there is still misunderstanding among employers regarding the policies and benefits of hiring persons with disabilities. This includes salary deductions made for PWDs, training tax deductions approved by the government, and special deductions for building modifications or support equipment for PWDs. More extensive efforts are needed to disseminate information about the incentives provided by the government to employers for hiring PWDs because many employers are still unaware of the benefits offered by the government in this service.

**d) Parental Involvement**

Parental involvement is a crucial and influential aspect in the overall success of implementing career transition programs for PWDs (Fitri & Mohd Mokhtar 2021; Nurulhuda & Hanafi 2018). The role of parents is essential in planning and implementing preparations for their children to face the world of work and strengthening advocacy skills and building positive relationships between parents and schools. Moreover, studies by Noraini (2015) and Nor (2019) show that parental involvement helps stimulate social achievement, support emotional, physical, and academic aspects, and improve the employability skills of students with special needs. Therefore, active parental participation in the career transition process is crucial to ensure the success of their children in overcoming the challenges of the job market after completing schooling (Polloway, Patton, Serna & Bailey 2013; Medina 2014).

**Main Recommendations**

Based on the research findings, several recommendations have been proposed to enhance the implementation of career transition programs for persons with disabilities (PWDs):

- a) Every school should be equipped with modules and guidelines for the implementation of Job Coach services in all special secondary schools.
- b) Each school should appoint teachers as Job Coaches who attend basic courses to clarify their roles. This will facilitate the implementation of career transition programs in secondary schools for PWDs.
- c) The government is encouraged to enforce policies related to PWD employees by imposing penalties and legal actions against employers who violate these policies.
- d) The government should elevate the professional status of Job Coaches by certifying them as a recognized career field and offering Job Coach employment opportunities in the public sector.
- e) Local Disability Centers should be established as data collection centers and training providers for PWDs. Assistance, allowances, and grants for PWDs can also be provided at these centers to facilitate access and delivery of services to PWDs, similar to neighboring country Singapore.

**Conclusion**

Overall, it is clear that PWDs can be prepared to enter adulthood and achieve independent living through various well-organized and implemented programs that consider individual abilities, interests, and diversities.

Strong cooperation between government and non-government agencies, particularly with industries, can provide opportunities for PWDs to gain practical workplace experience through On Job Training (OJT), which helps them prepare for the workforce and adult life. With the assistance of Job Coaches, PWDs can more effectively adapt to work environments and job demands.

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