

The Nature Of Special Education Teachers Post Covid 19 Pandemic: A Brief Study From The Field

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Abstract: *The Covid 19 pandemic posed a major disaster to various sectors. This pandemic attack has crippled certain sectors that have long stood firmly. With this pandemic as well, human beings are forced to live life with new norms. Constraints and challenges related to this pandemic are also felt by the education sector, especially in special education. New norms and global challenges make teaching methods and management of students with special needs more challenging. This situation has also changed the perspective and way of teachers in performing tasks. This qualitative study was conducted to explore the views of special education teachers regarding their appearance and thinking after the end of this pandemic. An online interview session was conducted with 10 fellow special education teachers in BatuPahat district, Johor, Malaysia. A thematic analysis was conducted and the results found that, special education teachers will come out of this pandemic with a new perspective, namely proficient in using gadgets, ready with alternative plans for each item and working between teachers more closely. The findings of this study are expected to help the parties involved in improving self-competence and hopefully be able to provide a basic overview to the next researcher to conduct further research.*

Keywords: *special education teachers, special education, Covid19 pandemic, effective leaders, role of teachers*

1. INTRODUCTION

The seriousness of special education teachers in providing the best in teaching to students with special needs should not be questioned anymore (Badaruddin et al., 2021, Abdul Rasid et al., 2021). With the challenges faced related to the diversity of student disabilities as well as different levels of ability, teachers remain committed in carrying out their duties (Irma et al., 2021; Suzana et al., 2021; Rohanida et al., 2021; Nazrah et al., 2021; Shahrulliza et al., 2021). Teachers also do not feel burdened in giving their best to meet the needs of students (Ahmad Shafarin et al., 2021; Junaidah et al., 2021; Farah Adibah et al., 2021; Ahmad Shakani et al., 2021; Muhammad Amin et al., 2021). The commitment of these teachers is unlimited and it always happens even with the great challenge of implementing it in the new norms, as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic (Farah et al., 2021; Syahrul et al., 2021; Quah et al., 2021; Ahmad Syarifuddin et al. ., 2021; Jumiah et al., 2021). The pandemic that is plaguing the world at this time causes various things to be implemented in new methods and

more emphasis on long -distance communication (Mohd Ali et al., 2021; Parimala et al., 2021; SitiJamilah et al., 2021; Nor Fauziyana et al. , 2021; Noel et al., 2021). This norm is included in the implementation of learning sessions that have to be implemented online (Mohd Arafat et al., 2021; Sumaiyah et al., 2021; Hifzan et al., 2021; Shahrul et al., 2021; Helme et al., 2021) . Constraints such as student commitment, provision of appropriate gadgets as well as unsatisfactory internet connection do not dampen the spirit of special education teachers to deliver education more effectively (Abdul Jalil et al., 2021; Mohd Noh et al., 2021; Mustafa et al. , 2021; Roszi et al., 2021; Tumisah et al., 2021). Nevertheless, a frequently debated question is the extent to which teachers can implement this situation once the pandemic is over (Santibuana et al., 2021; Nor Diana et al., 2021; Zarina et al., 2021; Khairul et al. , 2021; Rohani et al., 2021). Therefore, this brief study was conducted to gather the opinions of special education teachers on their situation after the pandemic ended.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach in obtaining research data. Interview sessions were conducted involving 10 special education teachers randomly selected in the district of BatuPahat, Johor, Malaysia. The interviews conducted were semi structured which involved some planned questions and some additional questions. The interview session lasted between 15-20 minutes per session. These sessions are conducted online using the Google Meet platform. Recordings were made when the interview session was conducted and a transcript was issued as soon as the interview was completed. At the end of the process, thematic analysis is performed to obtain the required data. The thematic analysis conducted involves three phases, namely open coding, axial coding and selective coding. These three phases were analyzed based on the transcripts of the interviews of the respondents involved. Results on selective coding became the theme and findings of this study.

FINDINGS

As a result of the thematic analysis conducted, there are statements that form the theme of the nature of special education teachers post covid 19 pandemic. Summaries of these statements are such as, proficient in using gadgets, ready with alternative plans for each item and working between teachers more closely. The relevant statements have formed a specific code in the axial coding phase before a code is selected in the selective coding phase i.e. ‘nature of special education teachers post covid 19 pandemic’ which is the main finding of the study. Table 1 shows a summary of the findings of this study.

Table 1: Thematic Process Analysis That Shapes the Nature of Special Education Teachers Post Covid 19 Pandemic

<i>Open coding</i>	<i>Axial coding</i>	<i>Selective coding</i>
<i>SET1, SET2, SET3, SET4, SET5, SET6, SET7, SET9</i>	proficient in using gadgets	nature of special education teachers post covid 19 pandemic
<i>SET2, SET3, SET4, SET6, SET8, SET9, SET10</i>	ready with alternative plans	
<i>SET1, SET3, SET4, SET5, SET7, SET9, SET10</i>	working between teachers more closely	

Based on Table 1, a total of eight respondents issued statements related to proficient in using gadgets. Meanwhile, seven respondents stated related to ready with alternative plans and working between teachers more closely. All of these statements form the 'nature of special education teachers post covid 19 pandemic' theme for selective coding.

3. DISCUSSION

Through the findings of this study, it can be stated that, the Covid 19 pandemic greatly affects teachers in special education. Various additional challenges and constraints that need to be faced by teachers, in addition to existing challenges such as the level of student ability, materials and even funds. Respondents stated that, at the beginning of the implementation of online teaching, they were still not able to accept the method well. There are various weaknesses in its implementation because it is a new norm that needs to be practiced. Lack of cooperation from students due to the constraints of gadgets, internet and skills make the delivery of teaching very limited and less effective. With the challenges faced, respondents stated that, they have indirectly learned various new things in their service. After using the same method for a long time every time the teaching session, they have gradually changed to a fresher and more innovative method. The pandemic situation is also forcing them to be more creative teachers in all things. In discussing their situation after the end of the pandemic, respondents stated that, they will come out as a new product in education. The majority of study respondents explained that, after this pandemic phase, they will become a more skilled special education teacher using the latest gadgets as well as more modern teaching equipment. This situation occurs because during the pandemic phase, they are forced to use the latest technological devices and have to master it in a short period of time. In addition, respondents also stated that, this pandemic teaches them to always be prepared with alternative methods for all things in case the main way is not feasible. This is also because during a pandemic, teachers have to think of various ways in a short period of time to deliver effective teaching to students. They also agreed that, this pandemic has also made them stronger teachers and eager to collaborate in performing tasks.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Covid 19 pandemic that hit the world has changed various norms in human life. These changes remind us to always be prepared in the face of various challenges that are difficult to anticipate. In the world of education, especially special education which is accustomed to challenges, has succeeded in producing teachers who are always committed in providing the best possible educational delivery. As a suggestion, a more extensive and empirical further study can be conducted by subsequent researchers in exploring many more things related to this issue. In addition, data collection in different ways is also able to provide more accurate findings.

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