

## Knowledge and Practice of Sexual Education Teacher of Special Needs Students

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**Abstract:** The problem of sexual behavior among Special Needs Students can be overcome by the effectiveness of teaching or presentation in Sexual Education lesson. In this regard, the study aims to identify the relationship between knowledge level and Sexual Education practice of Special Needs Students Special Education teacher. This study was based on cognitive theory that emphasizes internal mental processes. The model used in this study was the Model of Cognitive Response. This quantitative study conducted cross-sectional surveys on 86 special education teachers in Kulai, Johor, Malaysia. The sample was selected through stratified random sampling technique to balance the number of samples comprising male teachers and female teachers. The research instrument was adapted from Ang Chai Tin's study in year of 2014. All the questionnaires showed the reliability level of 0.801 Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The data obtained from questionnaires were distributed to teachers. Data were analyzed via SPSS and described with descriptively as well as inferentially. The findings of the Spearman Correlation Coefficient indicated that there was a relationship between the level of knowledge and the teaching practice of Special Needs Students Sexual Education among teachers. [ $r_s = 0.664, n=86, p < 0.05$ ]. Correlation strength value was strong. The conclusions of this study showed that Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) rejected, knowing that there was a strong and significant positive relationship between the level of knowledge and the level of teacher practice in MBK Sexual Education.

**Keywords:** Sexual Education, Knowledge and Teaching Practice, Special Education Teacher.

### INTRODUCTION

Sex education is an essential need to be taught and applied in every student accordingly. Ang (2014) explained that the importance and need of Sexual Education is not absolute to any class/group. Thus, there is no exception to Special Needs Students. The special education program has a specific syllabus that concentrates more towards self-management. It focuses on the formation of positive attitudes towards self-change and environment. Shariza et al. (2014) has also described that sexual education is a process of information acquisition in the formation of attitudes and beliefs about sex to reduce the risks associated with sexual behaviour.

Delivery of formal education is provided to children and adolescents in order to attain a minimum level of understanding related to sexual education. Thus, the intermediary for delivering this sexual education is a teacher with maximum knowledge and comprehension over this topic. Nevertheless, up to what extent the effectiveness of the elements in sexual education is taught by teachers to students, particularly Special Needs Students (MBK). Irina and Elena (2016) related with effectiveness of bilateral communications that is able to produce presentation with right idea to the target. In addition, educators and parents are the closest groups to the students. This can also be demonstrated in

Widayati (2015), which stated that parents play a role in sexual education by cooperating, being assessors, educators, companions and observers in the student's sexual matters.

Furthermore, sexual education allows students with learning disabilities to gain knowledge about body parts functions, growth and development that they experienced as well as physical changes during puberty. This knowledge enables students to face the challenges of physical and emotional changes during their growths. Hence, students will love themselves more, knowing that everyone is responsible for themselves and has absolute right on their own body.

Studies related to sexual education of Special Needs Students were limited compared to the regular students. In this regard, Ang (2014) has expressed the issue on necessity of sex education among children with special needs especially Students with Learning Disabilities (MBP) who should be given special attention and in-depth study. He also pointed out that the sexual education of special needs students was still neglected. The most worrying thing was when these students did not have enough exposure regarding sexual education and became victims of sex acts, they did not know the follow-up action to protect themselves. Normally, the irresponsible parties were among the people closest to them.

**Table 1. Number of Special Education Teachers (GPK) in Kulai area**

School Type	Gender		Total
	Men	Woman	
Primary School (SR)	18	57	75
Secondary School (SM)	17	18	35
GPK Overall Total	35	75	110

Source: District Education Officer of Kulai Special Education Division, Johor

Talib et al. (2012) indicated that the issues of sexual education in Malaysia were associated with social problems. These issues did not only happen in this country, but also involved in other developed countries. The findings of their study showed 95% respondents (a total of 361 people) agreed that sexual education should be taught in schools. Hence, the thing that needs to be reformed in teaching is the teaching methodology. According to the UNESCO Education Curriculum (2009), respondents mentioned that sexual education was not taught in Malaysian schools. Studies on sexual education were usually performed by researchers in general by general education teachers. Meiriawan (2016) stated that teachers' perceptions or attitudes about sexual education can only be seen from general educators only.

Some students with learning disabilities were involved with sexual acts without them being aware of it or being victimized by sexual abuse. They did this only for self-satisfaction without knowing the rules and risks of such behaviour. This statement was also acknowledged Yaakub and Kusrin (2015), the sexual behaviour of Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) teenager who often masturbates either secretly or in front of friends, in the toilet at school or home based on information given by parents with ASD kids. According to Lee and Low (2014), it happened because students with learning disabilities also showed sexual behaviour problems. They stated that cognitive weakness has caused students with special needs being often exploited or influenced by mass media. Consequently, they were often exploited by irresponsible parties due to the inability to discern right or wrong.

Therefore, in this study, researchers investigated extensively about knowledge and sexual education practice which involved teachers with Special-Needs Students. Teachers as curriculum implementer play an important role in ensuring the delivery of knowledge to be grasped by students. Students' achievement depends on the level of knowledge and teachers' teaching practices. Ninlawan and Areerachakul (2015) showed that the curriculum development process and learning of children with disabilities was at a high level with the

involvement of stakeholders. These stakeholders refer to the role of teachers as a knowledge delivery channel/medium.

Therefore, the study was focusing on several objectives: a) Identifying the knowledge level of sexual education teachers of special needs students, b) Identifying the teaching practice level of sexual education teachers of special needs students, c) Identify the relationship between knowledge level and practice of Special Needs Students sexual education teacher.

This study was expected to benefit special education teachers and parents on up to what extent the effectiveness of sexual education influence on students with learning disabilities. Furthermore, it can provide exposure to parents as an observer and educator outside the school and help the school authorities with this problem promptly.

## METHOD

This research used a quantitative method using a survey. The purpose of this study was to analyse the level of knowledge and practice of sexual education teachers of Special Needs Students.

This study was based on Piaget's Cognitive Theory and the Cognitive Response Model pioneered. This theory explained that the brain will actively process the received information and converted the information into new forms or categories. Travers et al. (2014) stated that teachers were only aware of their role as the driving force of knowledge without realizing the need to nurture students' understanding in the right approach. This theory focused on how teachers are able to apply the knowledge gained by practicing them in the classroom efficiently. This model began with the receipt of the information containing some message. Next, the information was linked to existing knowledge and mind responded actively to the received information.

This research employed the cross-sectional survey method which analysed the level of knowledge and practice of sexual education teachers of Special Needs Students with quantitative approaches. The data obtained from this study were able to represent large populations through sampling technique, and The results of the study can be generalized to the actual population. It was also able to indicate the relationship between the variables.

The location of the study was in Johor. The researchers appointed several primary and secondary schools under the supervision of the PPD of Kulai district as a study population. This study only involved appointed schools with Special Education Class.

**Table 2. Profile of Teacher Respondents**

Demography	Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Home Location / Settlement	City	32	47.1
	Rural	36	52.9
Gender	Man	15	22.1
	Women	53	77.9
Highest Academic Qualification	Doctorate	1	1.5
	Master's in Education	7	10.3
	Bachelor's	53	77.9
	Certificate/Diploma in Teaching	7	10.3
Teaching experience	1 – 5 years	12	17.6
	6 – 10 years	35	51.5
	11 – 15 years	12	17.6
	16 – 20 years	5	7.4
	20 years and above	4	5.9

Stratified random sampling technique was employed on a total of 86 samples of 110 Special Education teachers in Kulai district, Johor.

The researcher used the method of collecting data through 5 points of likert scale survey questionnaires. The researcher used 14 items for instruments of both categories in parts A and B. Part A used a single selection item, while Part B was made up of optional/ various type item that were systematically arranged according to level of agreement: “most disagreeable”, “disagree”, “uncertain”, “agree”, and “most agree”. There were some parts covered in the questionnaire for the special education teacher, which were parts A, B and C. Part A has 4 demographic-related items i.e. gender, school location, highest academic qualifications and teaching experience. Part B has 10 items that covered the level of knowledge of special education teachers in

terms of professionalism. Similarly, Part C also has 10 items containing teaching practices of sexual education teacher of Special Needs Students.

This questionnaire instrument was approved by a Special Education lecturer, a Master's of literature language from UPM and a Kulai district Special Education officer. The questionnaire instrument was administered through circulation to respondents. The results from the questionnaires were analysed descriptively using SPSS.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### Finding

#### *Summary of Special Education Teachers Respondents Profile*

The findings can be seen through descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Respondents' profiles of 86 special education teachers were obtained from the survey questionnaire, consisting of demographics i.e. school location, gender, highest academic qualification and teaching experience of Special Needs Students.

The percentage of respondents according to the school location was presented in Table 2 with 32 respondents working in the city (47.1%) and 36 respondents working in rural areas (52.9%). Table 2 also showed that there were 15 male respondents (22.1%) respondents and 55 female respondents (77.9%). For the highest academic qualifications, only one person (1.5%) had a doctorate, 7 persons (10.3%) from undergraduate education, 53 person (77.9%) has bachelor's and 7 (10.3%) had a certificate / diploma in teaching.

In the teaching experience category, 12 persons (17.6%) have served in Special Education between 1 to 5 years and 35 persons (51.5%) have taught for 6 to 10 years. A total of 12 people (17.6%) had taught for 11 to 15 years and 5 people (7.4%) had served for 16 to 20 years. Lastly, only 4 people (5.9%) have served for more than 20 years.

#### Knowledge Level of Sexual Education Teacher Of Special Needs Students

The analysis result on table 3 showed the knowledge level of sexual education teacher. Overall, the knowledge level of sexual education teachers in Special Education was at a high level. This result was obtained by viewing the average mean value of 4.163 which indicates that it was at a high level and the average value of the standard deviation was at the opposite level of 0.343 which showed low level.

**Table 3. Knowledge Level of Sexual Education Teacher Of Special Needs Students**

Code	Item	Mean and Standard Deviation		Level
B	Knowledge of Special Needs Students Sexual Education among Special Education Teachers	Mean		
B1	I know there are elements of Sexual Education in Physical and Health Education subjects for year 4 and 5.	4.012	0.563	T
B2	I know the focus of the Physical and Health Education curriculum on Sexual Education is to establish a positive impression on reproductive and social health for personal, family and society.	4.221	0.495	T
B3	I know Curricullum Standard Secondary School for Special Education of Self-Management has been organized into five topics and Self-Care skill is the first topic.	4.198	0.591	T
B4	I know Self-Managing topic is related with self-care in the physical and personality aspects.	4.291	0.571	T
B5	I know Self-Managing topic regarding physical changes as well as genital hygiene.	4.268	0.541	T
B6	I know Self-managing topic regarding self-management before and during menstruation, usage and management of pads/tampons. (Menstrual Hygiene Management)	4.244	0.612	T
B7	I know Self-managing topic regarding self-management during wet dream, adoption of social constraints in daily life, touch limitations/ boundary in maintaining the personal safety and dignity.	4.267	0.541	T
B8	I know Self-managing topic regarding healthy lifestyle.	4.291	0.482	T
B9	I know Self-managing topic regarding communication effectives in the management of the residential/living area.	4.151	0.543	T
B10	I am aware there are elements of Sexual Education that covered in the Special Needs Students Curriculum.	4.093	0.500	T
Overall		4.163	0.343	T

The data showed that all 10 items were at a high level. All the items were B1 (mean = 4.012, SP = 0.563), B2 (mean = 4.221, SP = 0.495), B3 (mean = 4.198, SP = 0.591), B4 (mean = 4.291, SP = 0.571) (mean = 4.244, SP = 0.612), B7 (mean = 4.267, SP = 0.541), B8 (mean = 4.291, SP = 0.482), B9 (mean = 4.151, SP = 0.543), B10 (mean = 4.093, SP = 0.500). Thus, the research findings on the knowledge level of Sexual Education teacher Special Needs Students showed all the items have high interpretations mean value and excellent results.

Education will be able to support Special Education teachers to teach sexual education based on the right guidelines. The findings have answered the first objective of this study; which showed that the knowledge level of sexual education teacher of students with special needs was high.

Practice of Sexual Education Teacher of Special Needs Students. The analysis outcome on table 4 showed the mean value was 4.019 which showed the practice of sexual education teacher of special needs students was high. Overall, data findings showed that the teaching practice was at a high level. The average value of standard deviation showed that the findings

were at a low level. (SP = 0.312).

Data presented that there were 10 items related to the teaching practices level of Special-Needs Students' Sexual Education teachers. The findings showed 6 items in high interpretation All the items were C1 (mean = 4.314, SP = 0.559), C2 (mean = 4.070, SP = 0.400), C4 (mean = 4.163, SP = 0.528), C5 (mean = 4.244, SP = 0.593), C9 mean = 4.093, SP = 0.644), C10 (mean = 4.000, SP = 0.632). However, there were 4 items that fell under the medium interpretation category. All the items were C3 (mean = 3.814, SP = 0.861), C6 (mean = 3.744, SP = 0.654), C7 (mean = 3.826, SP = 0.636), C8 (mean = 3.919, SP = 0.578).

Item C3 related to the teacher's ability to handle the challenges of sexual behaviours that arise. Item C6 related to the application of existing and new knowledge about sexual education towards Special-Needs Students. The teachers's ability and application of current knowledge merged with new knowledge should be revised more thoroughly as Moss, K. and Blaha (2001) also mentioned that the ability to deliver an adequate instruction related to lesson content using accurate communication approach was a great challenge for teachers.

**Table 4. Practice of Sexual Education Teacher Of Special Needs Students**

Code	Item	Mean and Standard Deviation		Stage / Level
C	Special Needs Students Sexual Education Practice among Special Education Teacher	Mean		
C1	I have difficulty in handling Special Needs Students sexual behaviour problems.	4.314	0.559	T
C2	I used teaching materials that are suitable with students' ability level and the topics to be taught.	4.070	0.400	T
C3	I am competent on the action needs to be done if sexual behaviours appear in the Special Needs Students.	3.814	0.861	S
C4	I am confident to teach topics that involve Sexual Education to Special Needs Students.	4.163	0.528	T
C5	I think Special Needs Students has no problem managing themselves when they reached at secondary level	4.244	0.593	T
C6	I have applied the existing and new knowledge on Sexual Education to Special Needs Students.	3.744	0.654	S
C7	I have chosen the appropriate strategy and method in lesson and learning Sex Education topic.	3.826	0.636	S
C8	I have explained to Special Needs Students in a proper and clear approach about sexual behaviour and personal safety management.	3.919	0.578	S
C9	I have taught all the elements in the Self-Management topics to Special Needs Students.	4.093	0.644	T
C10	I'm feeling embarrassed to convey knowledge of Sexual Education to Special Needs Students.	4.000	0.632	T
Overall		4.019	0.312	T

**Table 5. Kolmogorov-Smirnov Statistic to Determine Normalization**

		Kolmogorov-Smirnov		
		Statistic	Df	Sig.
Teachers' Knowledge		0.217	86	.00
Teachers' Teaching Practice		0.186	86	.00

For example, the lesson delivery regarding personal safety to Special-Needs Student in vision impairment category was complex. Moreover, these students are very risky to be the victims of sexual abuse. Apart from that, item C7 was linked to the selection of proper strategies and methods in lesson presentation and facilitation of sexual education topics. This item should be observed more explicitly because Hanum, Huda, and Kurniawan (2018) also found that Special Education teachers should specify the teaching requirement as well as materials or teaching module for Special-Needs Students.

Item C8 referred to the explanations regarding sexual behaviour and personal safety to Special Needs Students in a right and accurate approach. Therefore, the study findings was consistent with the

researched conducted by Bekirogullari et al. (2011) which indicated that the teaching of sexual education among normal students was difficult/challenging, so for learning disabilities like autism was more complex. Thus, the results of this study have answered the second objective of identifying the practice level of sexual education teachers of Special Needs Students.

#### *Determination of Data Normality*

The analysis result on table 5 indicated the output of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test to assess normality. The significant level of teachers' knowledge and teachers' teaching practices was 0.00,  $p < 0.05$ . The distribution of both data was abnormal. The assumption of data normality cannot be fulfilled. Thus, the non-parametric test of the Spearman's Correlation Coefficient was used.

Correlation of Knowledge Level and Teaching Practice of Special-Needs Students' Sexual Education Teacher. The findings analysis in table 6 indicated the Spearman's Rho correlation between teacher's knowledge level and teaching practice of Sexual Education Teacher of Special Needs Students.

**Table 6. Spearman's correlation between Knowledge and Teachers Teaching Practice**

Variable	Teachers' Knowledge		
	N	rs	P
Teachers' Teaching Practice	86	0.664	0.000**

p<0.005\*\*

The results of the analysis for the level of knowledge on teaching practice showed that the correlation coefficient value was 0.664 ( $r_s = 0.664$ ) and the probability value was 0.000 which tested at the significant level of 0.05. This probability value was found to be smaller than 0.05. The resulting correlation value was high correlation.

Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The results of this study have answered the third objective, which there was a positive and significant relationship between level of knowledge and teaching practices of sexual education teachers of Special Needs Students ( $r_s = 0.664$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

The study found that the Spearman's correlation coefficient, ( $\rho$ , also pronounced rho) indicated that there was a strong and significant positive relationship between teachers' knowledge and teachers' practice [ $r(82) = 0.664$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ]. From the findings of this study, it can be concluded that there was a likelihood that the higher the level of the teachers' knowledge, the better the teaching practices of Special-Needs Students' Sexual Education teacher. From the results of the study, it was found that there was a significant correlation between teachers' level of knowledge and teaching practices.

## Discussion

This research's finding showed that the knowledge level of Special Education teachers with special needs students was high. Hence, this study findings have supported Ujang et al. (2017) which proved that majority of trainees agreed that Health Education was essential for students with learning disabilities in primary schools and being taught in Health Education during teacher training.

Majin, Hashmi, and Sombuling (2017) recommended that each school shall conduct basic courses, appropriate training, workshops or seminars to Special Education teachers. Teaching practices that were applied confidently and accurately based on a solid knowledge related to sexual education is very crucial. It will influence and change the sexual behaviour problems within Special-Needs Students. Special education teachers should change the negative perceptions about the difficulty of teaching sex

education knowledge in order to support these students to not be stigmatized by the local community.

Kong and Tan (2010) explained that the sex education covered biology field, belief (cognitive, behavioural and affective), socio-cultural, effective communication skills as well as ability to make a wise and responsible decision-making. Thus, the incapability to properly implement/deliver the sex education to students will produce a negative impact in the future. Special-Needs Students shall be guided with full attention by the authorities so that they will not be ostracized and left behind. A growing number of government institutions and private sector have provided relevant disclosure of Sexual Education for Special-Needs Students. All parties need to be aware and sensitive to these sexual behaviour issues and not just point fingers at certain parties to resolve these crises. This finding in line with reseach conducted by Dapudong (2014), that learning support programmes and the actual delivery of the program should be developed in terms of individual education plan (IEP) provision, curriculum modifications and classroom adaptations that are appropriate for students with special educational needs. Cooperation and support should be given to the teachers so that both parties can work together in order to help these special children.

## CONCLUSION

Knowledge level and teachers' teaching practice are closely related in ensuring the maximum teaching effectiveness. Sexual Behaviour Problems of Special-Needs Students can be resolved swiftly if interventions are given accordingly by the authorities.

The intellectual problem of Special-Needs Students is not a barrier to study the sexual education knowledge. It depends on the skill and teacher's knowledge in application of teaching materials that are linked to sexual education.

Furthermore, the limitations of this study is related to the aspect of teachers' knowledge integration, effectiveness of teaching strategies and teachers' teaching practice on sexual education knowledge that can be greatly utilized in the teaching and learning session of the Special-Needs Students.

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