

SEX EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL EXCLUSION GROUP: A PROFESSIONAL VIEWS ON DISABLED CHILDREN

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1. INTRODUCTION

Disabled children or special needs children are assumed as children that could not handle their life perfectly compared to normal children. They need to be monitored and be trained regularly for them to adapt to life. These children can be classified as children that have Autism, Downs Syndrome, Dyslexia, and many others (Aminah Bee, 2012). Even disabled children may not act the same as normal children, but their sexual development is still the same as normal people. In terms of sexuality or sex education, in Malaysia, it is still being assumed as a subject that must not be exposed openly to all as many people still have the assumption that sex education is solely teaching about sex to the children, but it taught about their sexual health, what needs to be done to avoid disease that related to sexuality and others. People will still deny its importance especially when it needs to be exposed to disabled children.

For disabled children to understand sexuality, it needs to be educated by the right platforms and methods. The available resources such as campaigns and programs for this issue are limited. This education had led to controversy and had been disagreed by some of the communities especially when it needed to be educated to the disabled children because some of them assumed all disabled children will not have normal development of sexuality. There are also many sex crime cases involving disabled children such as the case where the disabled teenager had been raped by her uncle, this shows that there are some people that take advantage of disabled teenagers (Zatul Iffah, 2019). Based on the Ministry of Women, Family, and Community Development, there are 1,721 cases related to sexual crime towards children from January and June 2020 (Mutakhir, 2020). This statistic included the cases involving disabled children. Due to that, it is important to give disabled children exposure to actions or ways to protect themselves other than to differentiate between 'good touch' and 'bad touch'. The issue also had been analyzed based on the study that had been done by Sorah Stein, Taylor Kohut, and Karola Dillenburg, United States (US) states that taught sex education included comprehensive sexuality education had decreased the rate of teen pregnancy and Sexual Transmitted Infections (STIs) (Stein, Kohut, & Dillenburg, 2017). Therefore, this study is initiated to study three objectives (i) To study the level of knowledge on sexual health education towards children with disabilities; (ii) To identify available resources and factors influencing the adequacy of sexuality education among children with disabilities; and (iii) To analyse how sexuality education will help to reduce sexual crimes among children with disabilities.

2. METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research involving professionals related to disabled children was conducted. The unit of analysis is the entity that is at the end of the study able to conclude something about, probably what would be considered the focus of the study (DeCarlo, n.d.). This study is to identify the perceptions and information of sex education to disabled children. Thus, the unit of analysis is referring to the individuals that work closely with disabled children which are from non-governmental agencies, teachers, police, and welfare officers. The professionals that are consist of educators, physiologists, police officers, and other professions related to disabled children are using purposive sampling which under non-probability sampling method that is also known as selective and judgmental sampling (Sharma, 2017). In this study, 12 respondents were selected via purposive sampling. This is enough to reach saturated data as higher numbers will not contribute to the finding due to the repetition of themes and comments from the participants (Vasileiou, Barnett, & Thorpe, 2018). Semi-structured interviews had helped the researchers to use the drafted questions as the guidelines to proceed with the interviews. The question consists of four sections which are Section A (Respondent's Information), Section B (Study level of knowledge on sexual health education towards children with disability), Section C (Available resources and factors influencing the adequacy of sexuality education among children with disabilities), Section D (Analyse how sexuality education will help to reduce sexual crimes among children with disabilities). Additional questions might be asked to have a further explanation. The details of the interview had been recorded through writing and a voice recorder. In this interview, two languages have been used which are Bahasa Melayu and English to help the respondents to answer it well. After the information had been gained, thematic analysis had been used to analyse the data which included reading the data set and analyzed the patterns of the data set to receive the final finding.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings for this study were divided into three sections which are level of knowledge, available resources, and how sexuality education helps in reducing sexual crimes. The level of knowledge in the community is low and less exposed due to the difficulty of the topic to talk to others but most of the respondents are comfortable in exposing sex education towards disabled children. However, the readiness of Malaysians in exposing sex education towards disabled children are all depending on the implementation of sex education itself. Based on the finding, 10 years old is the age that is suitable for disabled children to study sexuality, but it also depends on the type of disabilities based on the complexity of the disabilities which needed more years for them to be exposed. It still is assumed as taboo is one of the factors this issue not be focused on. However, nowadays communities start to talk about it, but more improvement should be done. Based on a previous study's result, even around 11.3% of parents do not approve of any kind of sex education for their disabled children but there are still a huge among of parents that had opened with it which is around 88.7%, based on the survey. Besides, Sorah, Kohut, and Dillenburger (2017) in their study, there are more than half of parents that agree with disabled children and teenagers may be exposed to sexual victimization.

Therefore, the mentality and culture are the main barrier in implementing the sex education. Every disabled child has the right in learning sex education and equality must be stood to ensure that they are not taking for granted and not underestimate. Other than that, the available resources influencing the acceptability of sexuality education are still lacking where it is not directly about sexuality education. The current syllabus of sexuality education only has

been discussed or explained indirectly as the subtopic in Physical Education and Health Education (PJPK). Visual methods are the best way for disabled children to understand. Government and parents play vital roles to create awareness on sex education to the public. Furthermore, it also has been stated that the first education is from home. Even at school the teachers had taught sexuality education but there is no implementation at home, the objectives would not be achieved. Self-Management is important for the disabled children will be taught about basic ways to manage themselves, their private parts, and others that are related.

Finally, the effect of sex education on disabled children where all the respondents agreed that sex education will give positive impacts on disabled children. This is because it will provide them with knowledge and give exposure to social limitations. This will help in reducing the sexual crimes and unwilling pregnancy by educating them at an early stage. One of the Government's approaches to protect disabled children from sexual crimes is on the law which is the Children Act 2017 is one of the initiatives to protect the children including the disabled children and punishment will be given to those convicted of wrongdoings.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it can be summarized that based on the professionals' views, sex education is important for disabled children as it will provide good impacts to them. However, it can be admitted that the level of knowledge on sexual health education towards children with disabilities is still low in society. It is due to the society that does not properly expose to this education and some of them still have a bad perception towards sex education due to their cultures. The available resources and factors influencing the adequacy of sexuality education among children can be seen through the government effort by included in the syllabus, but it is only covered the basic information. Malaysia is recommended to strengthen the implementation of comprehensive sex education to help curb criminal sexual cases. Based on the survey conducted in 2014 by the National Population and Family Development Board (LPPKN) that the teen pregnancy can be curbed by having high awareness (Kaler, 2018). Therefore, it is crucial for Malaysia in implementing Comprehensive Sex Education (CSE) fully as an effort in exposing sex education in the community. It is also recommended to enlarge the coverage of exposing sex education to primary and disabled schools will help in raising awareness of the importance of sex education. The syllabus that will be involved in exposing sex education is under the subject of Physical Education and Health Education (PJPK) that is under the Reproductive and Social Health Education (PEERS) topic in which has slowly implement (Teh Athira, 2019). In this study, there are limitations which are limited samples and models. Limited samples that can cover only respondents in certain areas and the interviews are conducted through phone calls. It is due to the Movement Control Order (MCO) which most of the related organizations had been closed and the researchers could not keep in touch with them to receive their feedback. Other than that, the limitation on the limited model which the researchers use consists of professionals' views that are influenced by their job professions. Thus, other groups of society may have different responses to the question asked. Overall, this study helps to identify the views from the professionals related to sex education towards disabled children.

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