Knowledge, Practice and Challenges of Special Education Teachers in Managing the Behaviour of Students with Learning Disabilities

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Abstract
Students with learning disabilities often have behavioural problems, depending on their individual differences. Therefore, it is very important for special education teachers to be knowledgeable and skilled in managing behaviour issues of these students. The objective of this study is to explore the knowledge of special education teachers, their practices and challenges they faced in managing the behaviour of these students. The design of the study is qualitative where 12 special educators teaching in the Special Education Integration Program (SEIP) were interviewed. Data was analysed manually using interview transcripts. The findings show that the respondents have limited knowledge in managing the behaviour of students with learning disabilities. However, there are some specific challenges that are related to teachers, parents, students and issues with time constraints. All respondents reported that they have their own practices in managing the behaviour of these students. Among these practices are establishing a good relationship with students, establishing a good relationship with parents, and applying both positive and negative reinforcement.
Keywords: Special Education Teacher, Behaviour Issues, Knowledge of Special Education Teachers, Practices, Students with Learning Disabilities

Introduction
A learning disability is a disorder in one or more of the psychological processes that is indirectly related to a person's understanding of a subject either in the use of oral or written language. These differently abled children are usually categorised as students with special needs once they enter school after being diagnosed by a medical professional. Special Education Integration Program (SEIP) is a program established by the Ministry of Education Malaysia that involves students with special needs studying in integrated special education classes in government schools or in government-aided schools (Ministry of Education, Malaysia, 2015). The purpose of Special Education Programs is to help students with special needs so they can enjoy access to general education, as they may be unable to obtain the full input if placed in regular school programs.

Students with learning disabilities face various challenges due to their disabilities, which include physical, social, emotional and spiritual aspects. Aside from these challenges, these

students may also have behavioural issues similar to those of their typically developing peers (Mohan and Abd Majid, 2020). Behavioural problems leave negative effects on students, especially in adulthood, if these behaviours were not ameliorated during their school age (Singal et al., 2015; Nadhir and Alfa, 2016). This situation will also prove a hindrance to their acceptance in society when they become adults (Abu Hamour, 2014; Bolinger et al., 2020; Guerra and Brown, 2012; Ali et al., 2014).

Studies have found that helping these students to improve their behaviours is important as it can indirectly affect their educational achievements as they go through their schooling years (Abu Hamour, 2014; Bolinger et al., 2020; Guerra and Brown, 2012; Mohd Ali et al., 2014). Thus, teachers should possess a solid knowledge and skills regarding managing and shaping the behaviours of students with learning disabilities (Flower et al., 2016). Teachers' knowledge in managing the behaviours of students with learning disabilities is essential for reducing their behavioural issues as well as improving the quality of their lives during their school years.

While teaching in the classroom, teachers often face problems in dealing with the challenging behaviours of students with learning disabilities (Collier Meek et al., 2018). Challenging or negative behaviours are difficult for teachers as these students may have difficulties in concentrating, are easily bothered, face difficulties in following instructions and completing tasks. Thus, teachers must have knowledge in dealing with students' behavioural issues. According to Mahvar et al (2018), teachers need to take different approaches to better manage students' behaviours and lessen the difficulties they face. Taking the appropriate actions and approaches regarding students with learning disabilities is vital in facilitating the management of their behavioural issues.

To further investigate the issues that special educators face in the classroom, this study was driven by these objectives:
i.   To explore the knowledge of special education teachers in managing the behaviour of students with learning disabilities.
ii.   To explore the practices of special education teachers in managing the behaviour of students with learning disabilities.
iii. To explore the challenges faced by special education teachers in managing the behaviour of students with learning disabilities

Literature Review
This section reviews the literature on the behaviour of students with special needs, the knowledge and practices of teachers managing their behaviour as well as the challenges faced by the teachers.

Behaviour of Students with Special Needs
Negative behaviour is behaviour that can interfere with the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process in the classroom that are demonstrated by students directly or indirectly (Rosemary and Fideli, 2016). According to Iberahim et al (2017), a commonly occurring issue among students in school is disruptive behaviour such as being naughty, hyperactive and bothering peers during lessons. Students with learning disabilities may seem to have negative attitudes because they face difficulties in understanding lessons. Isolating themselves as they have difficulties in adapting themselves to the classroom situation may also cause students to behave negatively. According to Valeria et al (2017), as well as Abu Hamour (2014), students with learning disabilities do not consider that they have the same level of capabilities

as their peers, which leads to the behaviour of comparing themselves with others, which in turn leads to negative behaviour. This causes students with learning disabilities to have a lack of motivation and drive to take part in learning (Valeria et al., 2017). Thus, teachers of special education programs who wish to cultivate positive behaviours in students should not set autocratic or strict rules, such as scolding students or forcing them to do things according to their wishes. Instead, teachers should possess knowledge in planning and implementing appropriate strategies in order to properly manage behaviour. (Iberahim et al., 2017).

Teachers' Knowledge in Managing Students' Behaviour

Past studies on this topic in Malaysia found that special education teachers possess a high level of knowledge in managing the behaviour of students with learning disabilities (Zulkifli and Mohamed, 2019; Mohan and Abd Majid, 2020; Ahmad and Abu Hanifah, 2015). This knowledge is important for them to help sustain desired behaviours in students or prevent unwelcome behaviours. These studies found that teachers have a sound knowledge of behaviour management approaches to mitigate the negative behaviours of students with learning disabilities. The findings of these studies are also consistent with that of (Mahvar et al., 2018). Bolinger (2020) found that increased experience and time interacting with these students increase teachers' knowledge of these students and their behaviours. However, these studies have also found that the knowledge of teachers regarding their students and their management of classrooms are not related.

Teacher's Practices in Managing Students' Behaviour

It is important for special education teachers to use appropriate strategies or practices in managing the behaviour of students with learning disabilities to help them develop positive behaviour as well as improve their academic achievements. (Deshmukh, 2016; Ahmad and Abu Hanifah, 2015; Rumfola, 2017). In previous studies, positive reinforcement was used more often by teachers than the negative form. Examples of techniques to discourage negative behaviours include time-out, extinction, satiation and punishment.

Positive reinforcement involves teachers giving praise or showing appreciation towards students to move them away from negative behaviour towards positive behaviour (Ivy et al., 2017; Rumfola, 2017). These studies have also found that the practice of token economy has positive effects in managing the behaviour of students with learning disabilities. Receiving tokens or stickers when demonstrating positive behaviour results in feeling happy and satisfied.

Beaty-O'Ferrall et al (2010) found a number of practices or methods that are effective for teachers in managing students' behaviour. These include building empathy, commending attitude, and leaving one's own ego at the door. The strategy of building empathy means that teachers delve into the problems faced by students to convince them that teachers understand the reasons they behave the way they do, and not continue to place blame on them. Thus, students may be prepared to share their problems with teachers. Commending attitude involves teachers using indirect techniques to guide students from negative behaviour to positive behaviour. Leaving one's ego at the door means a teacher refrains from using authority in order to interact more closely with students. These practices and strategies are vital in dealing with any problems that hinder teachers from managing students' behaviour. This research also found that, in managing the classroom, it is important for teachers to build rapport with students, from the most motivated to the most difficult. These

practices enable teachers to manage the behaviour of students with learning disabilities more effectively.

Challenges in Managing Students' Behaviour

The greatest challenge in managing the behaviour of students with learning disabilities lies with the teachers themselves (Collier-Meek et al., 2018; Toran et al., 2016). This is due to a lack of training programs to prepare teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to teach students with special needs. Teachers with insufficient knowledge of students with learning disabilities have trouble in properly managing these students' behaviour.

In addition, special education teachers also face problems when parents do not pay attention to the actions shown by their children (Nor and Rashed, 2018). This study also found that there are parents who do not think that education is important for their children with learning disabilities. These attitudes make it difficult for teachers to collaborate well with parents to manage the behaviour of their students with learning disabilities. On the other hand, in managing the behaviour of students with learning disabilities, parents should spend more time with their children and constantly monitor the development of their children. This is because social problems caused by behavioural problems among students are becoming more widespread as a result of lack of concern and lack of attention by parents (Ibrahim et al., 2018).

Research method

This study takes a qualitative approach via case studies. According to Merriam (1998), case studies are studies carried out to explore and examine a situation with great depth and detail. This view is also supported by (Creswell, 2002). Thus, case study was chosen as the format. The study was performed by interviewing twelve special education teachers teaching in the Special Education Integration Program (SEIP) in Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah, and Sarawak. This qualitative research is carried out to obtain detailed and in-depth information on the subject of the study. Interviews are used to obtain data. Collecting information via interviews is vital to explore the behaviours, emotions and methods employed as a person reflects on their experiences. The method of interview is used to answer the problem of what do teachers know of managing students with learning disabilities as well as their practices in managing the behaviour of students with disabilities and the challenges they face in doing so.

This study uses semi-structured interviews. Questions were formulated as guidelines enabling researchers to obtain information from the research subjects. Semi-structured interviews were chosen to allow the researchers to adjust and adapt the questions posed according to the situation during the interview. Questions asked were related to teachers' knowledge, as well as the methods or practices employed by special education teachers in managing and shaping the behaviour of students with learning disabilities. The questions were adapted and modified to suit the current study's goals from a study by (Ahmad and Hanifah, 2015).

Before data was collected, content validity and face validity were evaluated and a pilot study was conducted to verify whether the questions suit the study's objectives. In order to validate the contents of the questions, three experts who are academicians in special education were chosen to evaluate the content validity. Three special education teachers were chosen to evaluate face validity and two SEIP teachers were chosen to carry out the pilot study in order to assess the validity and credibility of the study. The interview transcripts

were analysed qualitatively. Transcripts were checked and examined to make sure that the findings and themes matched the elaboration provided by respondents.

Research Findings

Results from interviews were obtained to answer the study's main objectives, which is exploring the knowledge and practices of, as well as challenges faced by special education teachers in managing students with learning disabilities. Research findings are based on responses from the 12 respondents, who are teachers in the Special Education Integration Program (SEIP). The participating teachers were given code names as SET1, SET2, SET3, SET4, SET5, SET6, SET7, SET8, SET9, SET10, SET11 and SET12. The entirety of the research findings from interviews were analysed in detail and stated according to research objectives.

8 female teachers and 4 male teachers in SEIP were interviewed to answer the research questions. Respondents' ages ranged from 28 to 55 years old. As far as types of schools, 9 teachers teach in a primary school, while 3 in a secondary school. As for location, 9 of the chosen teachers taught at schools in urban locations while 3 taught in rural locations. Of the 12 chosen teachers, 9 taught special education for students with learning disabilities, 3 were unit heads and 1 was a coordinator in the Special Education Integration Programs. All of them were teachers who teach students with learning disabilities. Regarding respondents' experience, 6 had less than 5 years of experience teaching in SEIP, while 6 had more than 5 years. In terms of course major, 8 of them majored in special education while 4 did not major in special education during their tertiary education.

Table 1
Respondents' demographics

Respondent	Age	Sex	Education Level	Type of School	School Location	Position in School	Teaching Experience (Years)	Experience Teaching Special Education (Years)	Major
SET 1	28	F	Master's Degree	Primary	Urban	Teacher	1-5	1-5	Special education
SET 2	36	F	Bachelor's Degree	Secondary	Urban	Teacher	11-15	11-15	Special education
SET 3	39	F	Master's Degree	Primary	Rural	Head unit	11-15	11-15	English
SET 4	45	F	Master's Degree	Primary	Urban	Coordinator	11-15	11-15	Special education

SET 5	33	M	Bachelor's Degree	Primary	Urban	Teacher	6-10	6-10	Malay Language
SET 6	40	M	Bachelor's Degree	Primary	Urban	Teacher	16 keatas	1- 5	Matematics
SET 7	43	M	Bachelor's Degree	Secondary	Rural	Head unit	11-15	11-15	Special education
SET 8	55	F	Bachelor's Degree	Secondary	Rural	Head unit	16 keatas	16 keatas	English
SET 9	28	F	Bachelor's Degree	Primary	Urban	Teacher	1-5	1-5	Special education
SET 10	28	F	Bachelor's Degree	Primary	Urban	Teacher	1-5	1-5	Special education
SET 11	28	M	Bachelor's Degree	Primary	Urban	Teacher	1-5	1-5	Special education
SET 12	28	F	Bachelor's Degree	Primary	Urban	Teacher	1-5	1-5	Special education

Knowledge of Special Education Teachers in Managing the Behaviour of Students with Learning Disabilities

In order to address the research objectives of this study, the interview transcripts were analysed and divided into themes. The knowledge of special education teachers is considered from the aspects of teachers' understanding of the meaning of managing behaviour, the importance placed on behavioural management, the aim and objective of behavioural management, support in managing behaviour, whether they had received training or courses in managing behaviour of students with learning disabilities, as well as teacher's confidence in managing the behaviour of students with learning disabilities.

Teachers' Understanding of Behavioural Management

From the study's findings, all respondents (SET1, SET2, SET3, SET4, SET5, SET6, SET7, SET8, SET9, SET10, SET11, and SET12) understand that behavioural management is adjusting students' behaviour from unwanted behaviour to desirable or positive behaviour through appropriate practices, methods or techniques.

SET2 states that:

"Behavioural management is the systematic or methodical planning that needs to be performed or implemented by the teacher in regards to managing the behaviour of students or adjusting their behavioural issues to go from unwanted behaviour to desired behaviour, or bad behaviour to good behaviour."

SET9 states:

"Behavioural management of a student is a modification to manage a student's negative behaviour towards positive behaviour."

The Importance Placed on Behavioural Management

All respondents had the opinion that behavioural management is important for students with learning disabilities. According to SET3, SET 5, SET7, SET 10 and SET12, without behavioural management, teachers would face difficulty managing unwanted behaviour shown by students. SET2, SET4, SET6, SET11 expressed the opinion that behavioural management is important to prevent learning in the classroom being disrupted by students who cannot control themselves, especially those who can't sit still and habitually bother their classmates.

SET2 states:

"It is important because when we don't pay attention to behaviour of students with learning disabilities or the management of behaviour, it may disrupt the processes of teaching and learning in the classroom."

SET4 states:

"If there are behavioural problems, the child won't sit still, won't focus, and will disrupt their peers."

Goals and Objectives of Behavioural Management

All respondents could clearly explain the goals and objectives of behavioural management for students with learning disabilities. All respondents stated that the goals and objectives of behavioural management for students with learning disabilities amount to adjusting their behaviour from negative to positive.

SET7 states:

"The goal and objective of behavioural management is to adjust these students' behaviour from negative to positive.

SET9 states:

"The goal and objective of behavioural management of students with learning disabilities is to shift them from poor behaviour to desired behaviour. That is how I understand it".

Support in Managing Behaviour

Study finds that all respondents received support from various groups to manage the behaviour of students with learning disabilities. A majority receives support from colleagues, administration and parents. SET1, SET2, SET3, SET7, SET8 and SET9 also receive outside support such as from Non Governmental Organisations. Support from various parties can help

respondents in managing the behaviour of students with learning disabilities either by providing moral support or material support.
SET3 states:

"Necessarily we receive support from the PTA, administration, teachers, and from the parents of students with special needs. As well as from Non-Governmental Organizations."

Provision of Training or Courses in Managing the Behaviour of Students with Learning Disabilities

The study finds that 7 out of 12 respondents did not receive training in managing the behaviour of students with learning disabilities. SET2, SET4, SET6, SET7, SET10, SET11, and SET12 state they did not receive training in managing the behaviour of students with disabilities. SET2 also states that most of them only studied theory and only learned directly from their experience with students.
SET2 states:

"Feels like there isn't any. Usually, we only learn theory and learn directly from experience. We learn from our students."

Some respondents had received training and attended courses during their service, due to the initiative of school administrations who sponsor training and courses for their teachers. Teachers taking their own initiative to find training or courses in behavioural management also contributes to the number of respondents who received training or courses in behavioural management during their tenure.

Confidence in Managing the Behaviour of Students with Learning Disabilities

9 out of 12 respondents felt confident in managing the behavioural issues of students with learning disabilities. SET2, SET3, SET4, SET5, SET6, SET7, SET8, SET9 and SET10 are confident that they can competently manage the behaviour of students with learning disabilities. However, while being confident, SET2 believes she may need to keep learning as she has students with various behavioural issues that change with time.
SET2 states:

"I've been a special education teacher for 11 years and I am confident. Not too confident as we need to keep learning. This is because we have students with various behaviour issues that change."

However, SET1, SET11, and SET12 were not confident in their ability to manage the behaviour of students with learning disabilities, as they believe all students with special needs are unique with their own traits.

SET1 states
"For now, I am not very confident. As every student with special needs is unique and we as special education teachers face different challenges every day."

SET11 states
"…I feel my experience is still lacking, so I am not so confident in managing the behaviour of students with learning disabilities on my own."

SET12 states

>   *"…I don't feel very confident in managing students' behaviour as I still need help from more experienced teachers, because every student has their own traits, so I must properly understand them in order to manage their behaviour effectively."*

In conclusion, for the first objective, respondents possess knowledge in managing the behaviour of students with learning disabilities because they understand the meaning, goals and objectives of managing the behaviour of students with learning disabilities. In addition, support from various parties is also obtained by teachers while managing the behaviour of students and think that the management of this behaviour is important to students with learning disabilities. The majority of respondents felt confident that they could manage the behavioural problems of students with learning disabilities well. However, the knowledge of teachers is less and limited because the majority of study participants did not receive training and courses either during pre -service or while in service.

Practices Used to Manage the Behaviour of Students with Learning Disabilities
Studies find there are several practices used by teachers of students with learning disabilities in managing their students' behaviour. These include building positive relationships with the students, building good relations with their parents, positive and negative reinforcements.
4.2.1 Building Positive Relationships with the Students
From the findings, 8 respondents; SET3, SET5, SET6, SET7, SET8, SET9, SET11 and SET12 shared that among the practices they used to manage their students' behaviour is building positive relationships with them. They find good student-teacher relationships to be very helpful in managing their students' behaviour.

SET3 states:
>   *"I have a good relationship with my special students. I believe that these students are unique individuals who should be approached, given attention and taken seriously. This will let us grow closer with them, and it's something I know about."*

SET7 states:
>   *"… when we face problems, we should talk to these students personally. We must know how to handle them as students with learning disabilities should be guided gently rather than scolded."*

SET12 states:
>   *"I form good relationships with the students, I talk with them like friends, since I feel that a good relationship between teacher and student is important."*

Building Good Relationships with Parents
Three respondents; SET8, SET3 and SET12 build good relationships with parents in order to manage the behaviour of their students with learning disabilities. When questioned about this strategy, they shared that through a good relationship with parents, students' challenging behaviour could be handled as they could get parents' help and collaboration on this matter.

SET3 States
>   *"When we have good relationships with the students' parents, the parents will help us. Parents will pay more attention to their children, and thus will be more concerned."*

SET8 States

"My most frequent practice is sharing with parents. We can't be timid; we must grab their attention. We must be knowledgeable in giving them information about their children."

SET11 States

"…I also form good relationships with their parents. Because I have found that if I want to manage my students' behaviour, I need cooperation from their parents."

Positive Reinforcement

All respondents practice positive reinforcement to shape desired behaviour among their students with learning disabilities. Respondents agreed that positive reinforcement using rewards such as gifts, token economy, stickers as well as encouraging words can shift the behaviour of students with learning disabilities from unwanted behaviour to desired behaviour. SET8 is of the opinion that rewards do not necessarily need to be tangible but can be verbal in the form of praise or encouraging words.

SET8 states:

"Rewards don't necessarily have to be stuff, but praise and attention are important."

For SET1, even though she uses positive reinforcement, she rarely uses tangibles, as she believes that students could grow to be too dependent on tangibles to behave well.

SET1 states

"I rarely provide concrete rewards like gifts and snacks as they could lead to a negative result where students only behave well when they can get (tangible) rewards."

Negative Reinforcement

Negative reinforcement is another strategy used to manage the behaviour of students with learning disabilities. SET1, SET2, SET10 and SET11 shared that they are inclined to use negative reinforcement such as time-out and extinction in the classroom.

SET1 states

"…I tend to use negative reinforcement such as time-outs. I frequently use time-outs a lot in the classroom because I observed that the students don't like being alone and prefer to be in groups."

SET2 states

"I use extinction for students who frequently complain or disobey instructions."

SET11 states

"I use time-outs if students refuse to follow instructions."

In conclusion, this study finds there are four major practices used by respondents to manage their students' behaviour. These practices are building positive relationships with the students and their parents, positive reinforcement, and negative reinforcement.

Challenges Faced by Special Education Teachers in Managing the Behaviour of Students with Learning Disabilities

For the third research objective, this study finds that the challenges faced by special education teachers in managing the behaviour of students with learning disabilities can be divided into four categories. The categories are challenges related to teachers, those related to parents, those related to students, and time constraints.

Teachers

This study finds that 8 respondents; SET1, SET2, SET3, SET4, SET6, SET8, SET10, and SET12 admitted that they lack knowledge and experience in shaping desired behaviours in students with learning disabilities. In the interviews, they shared that they need more knowledge and experience to properly manage the behaviour of students with learning disabilities

SET2 states:

"... as a teacher, I don't have in-depth knowledge on how to manage the negative behaviour of (my) students."

SET8 states:

"...because I was new at that school, I left the problem to other teachers, as there were only two teachers that could handle that student."

SET10 states:

"I feel my experience is insufficient, which makes it difficult for me to manage my students' behaviour."

Parents

The study finds that 8 respondents; SET1, SET2, SET3, SET4, SET8, SET10, SET11 and SET12 face challenges related to parents. Without cooperation from parents, it makes it hard for teachers to effectively manage the behaviour of students with learning disabilities. Parents who are too busy, overprotective, or inattentive are difficult to cooperate with in managing the behaviour of students with learning disabilities.

SET3 states:

"...the biggest problem we face is difficulty in communicating with the parents."

SET10 states:

"Sometimes, these parents are too busy working and do not pay attention towards their children. Sometimes, we have to speak only through the phone because they're too busy to meet teachers at school."

Students

The study finds that all 12 respondents reported that they faced challenges from their students' attitudes. Some of their students' negative behaviours are too serious for them to handle. Examples of these behaviours are tantrums, meltdowns, being aggressive, not listening to instructions, arguing with the teacher and unable to focus on lessons. SET3 and SET7 share some of the challenges that they face in the classroom.

SET3 states:

"When students bother their classmates who also have learning disabilities, and doing things to grab attention, they want teachers to focus on them. When they do something wrong, teachers pay attention to them. When these kids are reprimanded or scolded by teachers, they feel as if they are receiving attention."

SET7 states:

"…incapable of following instructions. Meaning that this student has trouble following instructions."

Time Constraint

Time constraint is also a challenge faced by respondents in managing the behaviour of students with learning disabilities. SET1 and SET5 state that they face challenges with regards to time when managing the behaviour of students with learning disabilities. They felt that the time spent with students are too short, making it difficult to effectively manage their students' behaviour.

SET1 states:

"The main problem I face is not having (enough) time to carry out the interventions I planned. This is because planned interventions take time and need to be carried out systematically and consistently."

SET5 states:

"The challenge I face in managing the behaviour of students with learning disabilities is related to time."

"…if we're teaching the class, we can manage the student's behaviour. The student can't run around. When I'm not teaching, they're acting up again."

It can be concluded that this study has managed to identify common challenges faced by the respondents in managing the behaviour of students with learning disabilities. These challenges were identified from the interviews with them.

Discussion

The study has managed to find the answers to the 3 research objectives. For the first research objectives regarding the knowledge of teachers in managing the behaviour of students with learning disabilities, the findings found that teachers had knowledge in managing the behaviour of students with learning disabilities. This finding was obtained from interviews with the research 12 respondents which explained and elaborated on the meaning of behavioural management. Most interviewed respondents were confident they could competently manage their students' behaviour. Confidence is important in enabling teachers to carry something out effectively.

However, a few respondents were not confident they could manage the behaviours of students effectively, as they lack the knowledge and experience in teaching students with learning disabilities. Knowledge and experience in teaching students with disabilities is vital for teachers to effectively manage their students' behaviour. This statement is supported by Rosemary and Fidelis (2016) and aligns with the research findings by Bolinger et al (2020) which found that experienced teachers can more easily manage and control the disruptive behaviour of their students, compared with teachers with little experience in managing behaviour.

Moreover, respondents admitted that they lack a comprehensive knowledge on managing the behaviour of students with learning disabilities, as a majority of them did not receive training specific to the subject of behavioural management either before or during their service as special education teachers. Thus, they find it hard to plan appropriate behavioural interventions as they don't have sufficient knowledge regarding behavioural management. Training and courses on managing the behaviour of students with learning disabilities is vital to ensure teachers are capable and prepared for the task (O'Neill and Stephenson, 2011; Poznanski et al., 2018).

The second research question, regarding practices used by special education teachers to manage the behaviour of students with learning disabilities is also answered. The study found that the practices the teachers used are building positive relationships with the students, building positive relationships with their parents, positive reinforcement, and negative reinforcement. Building positive relationships with the students is important so teachers could choose appropriate actions to take and effectively manage students' behaviour (Baker et al., 2008; Nye et. al., 2015; Murray and Murray, 2008; Ngadmid et al., 2015). Teachers that understand their students can more effectively identify and manage their behaviour when they have a good relationship with them (Mohan and Abd Majid, 2020).

Building good relationships with the students' parents is also important in students' behaviour management as it enables teachers to plan interventions together with parents and smoothly carry them out. Thus, parents should have good relationships with teachers and cooperate with them (Irna et al., 2018). This statement is also supported by (Mardhiyyah and Nurazan, 2016).

Positive reinforcement in the form of rewards such as gifts or stickers is also frequently used by respondents in managing the behaviour of students with learning disabilities. This is a key effective method in managing the negative behaviour of students (Ivy et al., 2017; Ali et al., 2014; Rumfola, 2017; Samantha et al., 2018), because physical rewards that can be seen and touched thus encouraging students to adopt desired behaviour (Doll et al., 2013).

However, negative reinforcement in the form of time-outs and extinction is also practised by the respondents in order to cultivate desired behaviour and discourage unwanted behaviour. This matches the research of Slocum, Vollmer and Donaldson (2019), which found that behavioural problems can be diminished using negative reinforcement in the form of time-outs. Negative reinforcement can also be used to shift students' behaviour from negative to positive. This statement is supported by Rashid et al (2012), who stated that the tendency for certain behaviour can be diminished through negative reinforcement.

The study's third research objective, focused on the challenges faced by special education teachers in managing the behaviour of students with learning disabilities. The study found multiple challenges faced by the respondents in managing the behaviour of students with learning disabilities. These challenges are related to teachers, parents, students, and time constraints. Teachers find that they lack the knowledge and experience necessary to face challenges in managing behaviour. Having insufficient knowledge and experience is also an issue as it is difficult for teachers to plan the appropriate actions in managing the behaviour of students with learning disabilities (Collier-Meek et al., 2018). This statement also matches the study by Bolinger et al (2020), who found that familiarity and experience with students increases the teachers' knowledge of those students and their behaviours.

Teachers also face difficulty in managing the behaviour of students with learning disabilities when parents are too busy with work that they are unable to support the interventions planned by teachers. Thus these planned interventions became less effective. This statement matches the study by Archer-Banks and Behar-Horenstein (2008) who found that busy parents did not have time to cooperate with teachers and resolve problems regarding their children. It is thus vital for parents to cooperate with teachers to ensure positive development of their children (Irna et al., 2018; Mardhiyyah and Nurazan, 2016).

Aside from these two challenges, the respondents also reported that some of the students' negative behaviours are too challenging for them to handle. This finding is linked to the fact that most of the respondents did not receive specialised training or courses in behavioural management which in turn causes them to face challenges in handling the

behaviour of students with learning disabilities. They also reported that they only have basic knowledge in behavioural management. If special education teachers consistently receive training and courses in behavioural management, they would be more capable of facing challenges and taking appropriate actions with different issues of students (Aisya and Zabidi, 2016).

Conclusion

The study has answered the research objectives outlined by this study, pertaining to the knowledge, practices, and challenges of special education teachers in managing the behaviour of students with learning disabilities. All respondents have some basic knowledge in managing the behaviour of students with learning difficulties. There are respondents who are not confident in managing and handling the behaviour of students with learning disabilities because the findings of the study found that there are teachers who do not receive training or courses on the management of student behaviour with learning disabilities either during pre-service or while in service. The short service period of less than 5 years is also a factor in teachers not being confident to manage student behaviour more effectively. Because of that, training and courses for special education teachers are very important in preparation for teachers to manage student behaviour to improve teachers' knowledge in managing the behaviour of students with learning disabilities (Bolinger et al., 2020; Hasnah et al., 2010; O'Neill and Stephenson, 2011; Poznanski et al., 2018).

The challenges faced by the respondents were related to themselves, the parents of the students, serious behavioural issues of the students, and time constraints. Teachers face challenges from the teacher's own aspect because teachers perceive that student's ever-changing behaviours and lack of experience make it difficult for them to manage the unwanted behaviours exhibited by students (Collier-Meek et al., 2018; Toran et al., 2016). Lack of training and courses on behaviour management among special education teachers also makes the desired behaviour difficult to form because teachers lack exposure to the most appropriate interventions or practices applied to a student with learning disabilities.

In addition, the findings of the study found that the lack of cooperation provided by parents also made it difficult for teachers to carry out interventions. These findings indicate the importance of cooperation between teachers and parents in managing student behaviour (Ibrahim et al., 2018). This is because parents who give good cooperation to the school, especially teachers, will facilitate the interventions planned by teachers to form positive behaviour among students because the interventions carried out in school can be carried out continuously at home. To overcome this issue, trainings provided to teachers must include skills to build good relationships with parents and to support them.

Students' erratic attitudes such as not being able to sit still, walking, and disturbing friends also make it difficult for teachers to manage their behaviour. This is because the interventions carried out on students cannot be achieved and teachers have to form new interventions according to the current situation and circumstances. Challenges from the limited time constraints faced by teachers while planning and conducting interventions also make it difficult for teachers to shape the behaviours of students with these learning disabilities. This is because the teacher's limited time with the student makes it difficult for behaviour to be formed in a short time. With regards to this issue, teachers need support to carry out the behavioural intervention. Forming a behavioural intervention team in the SEIP may provide the support needed by the teachers.

Certain practices are carried out in shaping and managing student behaviour. Among the practices observed in the study were building positive relationships with students, building good relationships with parents, positive reinforcement, and negative reinforcement. The majority of teachers find that establishing a good relationship between teachers and students can allow teachers to understand the problems faced by each student in more depth. This statement is supported by the findings conducted by Beaty-O'Ferrall et al (2010) where the findings of the study found that good relationships between teachers and students can help in managing poor student behaviour learning ability because the teacher understands every problem faced by his students.

The good relationship between teachers and parents is also important in managing the behaviour of students with learning disabilities (Irna et al., 2018). This practice greatly helps teachers to manage the behaviour of students with disabilities through good involvement and cooperation between teachers and parents especially when teachers plan and implement interventions in shaping the desired behaviour.

Positive reinforcement practices are particularly suitable for use on students with special needs because these concrete-shaped reinforcement practices can be seen externally (Doll et al., 2013; Ivy et al., 2017; Rumfola, 2017). This statement is also supported by the findings of a study conducted by Samantha et al (2018) that the practice of positive reinforcement in the form of appropriate gifts given to students in the process of shaping the desired behaviour.

Moreover, the findings of the study found that negative reinforcement practices such as time-out and elimination are also used by special education teachers in managing the behaviour of students with learning disabilities. The findings of this study also have similarities with the findings of a study conducted by Slocum et al (2019) that unwanted student behaviour can be reduced when time-out is applied to students who exhibit unwanted behaviour.

A few suggestions are proposed for further research. Firstly, researchers should consider the selection of respondents based on their experience teaching special education students and their chosen category of students so studies regarding students' behavioural issues can be examined in more detail to overcome the limitations that exist. This is because experience in teaching students with special needs has an influence on teachers' knowledge and confidence in managing students' behaviour. Moreover, the scope of chosen students can be narrowed down to other disabilities such as students with autism, ADHD, Down syndrome and others. Furthermore, the suggestion of further studies is to improve and expand the knowledge of managing student behaviour so that unwanted behaviour can be diminished, and desired behaviour can be encouraged.

In conclusion, behavioural management is important for students with learning disabilities so they can learn more effectively, and the desired outcome is for students to be able to demonstrate positive behaviour when they participate in society. This is supported by Amira and Sabah (2015) who stated that behavioural management is vital to enable students with special needs to demonstrate desired behaviour when they enter society. The Ministry of Education needs to step up the training on behavioural intervention for special education teachers at the preservice and the in-service level.

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