

Resource Room Set Up as Means for Development of Inclusive Education in An International School

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Resource room is a service provided in an inclusive educational setting to provide support to pupils with special educational needs (SEN). With an increased demand on educational set up to accommodate more children with SEN, international schools are driven to set up specialised programme and resource room to better facilitate learning for these children. The lack of framework in setting up a resource room causes disruption in providing continuous support to inclusive pupils with SEN, notably whenever a Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) leaves the school establishment. A framework for resource room set up was established by explaining the roles of each member involved in providing and receiving the services provided in the resource room, types of services provided and the functions of the resource room. A multiple case study was adopted where the SENCOs, the member of the management and teachers teaching pupils with SEN were interviewed. Important elements were identified for the setting up and sustaining of the resource room, namely, understanding each member's roles and responsibility towards the operation; the collaboration and communication between all members; support from the school community and having an allocation of funds and resources required to operate the resource room. The resource room requires a whole school collaborative effort to ensure that pupils with SEN receive the required services.

Keywords: Resource room set-up, Inclusive education, International school, Special needs

INTRODUCTION

Malaysia has seen a significant increase in international schools. In the year 2000, Malaysia had only 26 international schools, as compared to 112 international schools in 2013 (Bailey, 2015). By the year 2020, the expansion of international schools' sector would expect to serve about 75,000 students in Kuala Lumpur with 87 international schools (Economic Transformation Programme, 2012). With this vast increase, Malaysian students were allowed to attend international school, bounded by the 40% restriction imposed by the Ministry of Education (MOE). Parents were attracted to enrol their children in an international school because of five elements of international school practice, namely, use of English as a medium of instruction, international curriculums, teaching approaches, learning methods, and school's cultural orientation. In a case study conducted to understand experience of host county nationals in an international school, local students reported using English as instructional medium can have a huge benefit for them later in their careers (Bailey, 2015).

International schools are complicated and dynamic organisations made up of diverse nationalities, giving teachers and administrators several opportunities to learn about different cultures (Hirsch, 2016). An international school setting receives enrolment of students from different countries and with diverse backgrounds. Students in international schools are exposed to cultural diversity amongst their peers, teachers and administrators, influence of culture is dominant. These different experiences of students influenced and affected students learning styles. Although there was no previous study to indicate the accurate data on the enrolment of students with special needs in international school, annual exhibitions for private and international school allows parents to personally inquire about the establishment and schedule a walk-in to find out if the school is suited for their children with SEN. Most international schools have begun to receive enrolment of students with SEN in their school establishments. Students with SEN comprises visual impairments, hearing impairments, speech impairments, physical impairments, and learning disabilities such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Down Syndrome, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and Dyslexia (Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025). Practice of special education began with the signing of the Salamanca Statements (UNESCO, 1994) advocating inclusive education for all. The Malaysian Education Act 1996 introduced inclusive education in response to the Salamanca Statement on Special Needs Education. This effort addresses equal educational opportunities and access to all students including those with SEN (Adams, Harris & Jones, 2016).

Least restrictive educational environment is ideal for children with disabilities to be educated, so they can learn alongside with children without disabilities in a typical classroom setting (Individual with Disabilities Educational Act). Inclusive educational practice educates all students with diverse abilities in the same school. In private settings, schools are accepting enrolments of students with SEN, along with appropriate accommodation with specialised programme to better facilitate learning for students. When supplemental support and services provided are not helping students with SEN to meet adequate academic goals, they may be pulled out of the regular classroom, in these instances they may be brought to the resource room for further support.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Along with the growing demands for enrolment for children with SEN, most international schools would have a department to facilitate not only the enrolment of potential students with SEN, but to ensure students are given the support to supplement their learning. Echoing Plester (2019), the frustration due to the lack of guidance in the field of inclusive education in the context of international school, school establishments faced challenges in setting up a resource room, providing services to students with SEN and cultivating ideal inclusive educational practice. Despite previous effort of setting up a resource room, it is difficult to sustain an efficient and ongoing resource room whenever SENCOs leaves the establishment, these instances would cause disruption and discontinuation of inclusive programme. It is difficult to completely dependent on a SENCO's effort to maintain and upkeep the resource room, to continue growth and efficacy of a resource room. A framework describing considerations in setting up a resource room can help future SENCOs to have a clearer guideline on setting up and maintaining the resource room.

In an international school setting, students come from many different countries with this cultural diversity, students and families have different cultural practices, beliefs and customs. In some cultures, parental perception influences prognosis of the child. For instance, boys are expected to obtain higher levels of education, occupy better positions and be financially secure in cultural context (Chandramuki, Krishna & Vranda, 2012). These cultural diversities are challenges for teachers to convince parents to bring their children to get proper assessment and intervention. Cultural beliefs about disabilities have a big influence in determining how family perceives disability and what measures they take for prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation (Chandramuki et al., 2012).

Parents from certain countries are more difficult to convince as children with SEN is taboo topic and not spoken about. When parents are confronted with their disabled children, they often experience a range of emotions including denial, guilt, blame, frustration, rage, and despair. (Chandramuki et al., 2012). Despite showing signs of learning needs, some parents prefer to have their children be advanced to another level until they leave school than to have their children be diagnosed with a learning disability. Limited financial resources, lack of suitable services, and insufficient support systems are all risk factors contributing to a poor prognosis in children with exceptional learning needs (Chandramuki et al., 2012). Students are typically enrolled without prior assessments for SEN. To solve these issues, school establishments would hire academic staff members with a special education background to provide support to these students and their family members. Problem arises when parents might not be aware their children have SEN enrol them into school, then be advised to send their children to get assessed, some parents will not cooperate and will insist to keep their children in a regular mainstream setting, resource room member would have to put in effort to convince parents to get their child diagnosed.

Inclusion of pupils with learning disabilities requires teachers to implement important structural changes (e.g., educational design and organisation, class management) which significantly increases their workload. These requirements sometimes collide with a lack of knowledge or competence to deal with students with disabilities or can be perceived as needing specific personal attributes (Busby, Ingram, Bowron, Oliver, & Lyson, 2012). Even with increased awareness about the importance and benefit of an inclusive educational setting, teachers experience stress and exhaustion, they are challenged by presence of students with SEN, many teachers struggled to accommodate their needs, teachers need to ensure typically developing students in homeroom are not left behind due to special attention given to students with SEN. It requires a lot of effort and collaboration to guarantee inclusion practice succeeds and all students receive a high-quality education. To have a learning environment suited for diverse groups of students with different abilities, backgrounds, and cultures, it needs to address how information is presented to learners; means of how and what learners are required to express what they learned; and means of engaging learners (Slee, 2018). An all-inclusive school establishment needs to consider all means stated to ensure students in their care could thrive in learning environment. Resource rooms and SEN departments can cater to needs of students with SEN so students can learn alongside their peers with different abilities and disabilities. It is important to establish and sustain resource rooms to continue providing services to its students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Resource Room in Inclusive Educational Setting

Resource room, known as Pull-Outs, where children with special needs can receive specialised instruction as part of their regular programme (Wiederholt & Chamberlain, 1989). It is a separate setting or a designated room where interventions can be delivered to students with SEN either in a small group or provided individually. Resource room serves a variety of functions such as providing instruction, homework assistance, organizing meetings, academic intervention, or alternative space for students to meet certain objectives. Resource room provides students with a less restrictive environment to learn.

In this programme, students with special learning need are placed with all students in general mainstream classroom with special education service provided. Gifted students are usually picked for pull-out programme as it allows teachers and students to be free from traditional educational practice. Teachers can choose what to cover and how it will be covered in pull-out programme, and students can choose types of activity they want to participate in. Programme allows academic freedom where students' abilities, interests and learning styles are respected and accommodated. Students are grouped depending on their abilities, interests, cross-age grouping, and teacher engagement (Renzulli, 1987). Resource room provides services for students with SEN and typically developing students who need special educational instructions and even individualised settings for a block of time to meet certain educational objectives. Facilitator can utilise the resource room to go over materials at a more appropriate pace with more aids to help students be more focused and more engaged. In 1991, a study conducted by Vaughn, Feldhusen and Asher, assessed the performance of gifted students' pull-out programme by examining nine experimental schools. It was concluded students have shown a positive effect in areas of academic achievement and critical thinking. Pull-out programme models can be paired with other strategies, such as grouping in mainstream classroom, to better accommodate needs of gifted students, according to the research.

According to Individual with Disabilities Educational Act (IDEA), Section 1412 (a)(5) children with disabilities should be educated in least restrictive environment possible so they can study alongside children without disabilities in a typical classroom setting. When supplemental aids and services provided when goals are not met adequately, students are removed or pulled out of regular educational environment. In those instances, they are brought to the resource rooms for further support. This form of support is sometimes called Resource, Withdrawal or Pull-out children with disabilities or required extra support will spend some time in smaller settings, and sometimes in regular classroom with modification and accommodations.

The US resource room model has been adopted across different countries such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, Botswana, and Zimbabwe. America was the first nation to conceptualise resource room model, schools in the country went through revamp in teachers' training to handle a wide range of disabilities, resource allocation and allocation for professional development (Poon-Mcbrayer, 2016). Resource Room Model in Special Education (Hammill, 1972) states the fundamental difference between a resource room and a special needs classroom is the child attends resource room only on a part-time basis and remains in regular class for a portion of day. Resource room programme's purpose is to provide essential services to students while they remain in their regular classrooms for most of the day.

Implementing the model for student support offers numerous advantages. Firstly, it enables personalised assistance within regular classrooms, promoting seamless integration without isolation. This cost-effective approach ensures that resource rooms, being less expensive to operate, can accommodate a larger student population. Early intervention for students with learning disabilities is facilitated, bypassing the need for a formal diagnosis, and minimizing associated stigmas. Flexibility in scheduling ensures timely support without significant delays. The employment of resource teachers by the school fosters an integrated support system, avoiding an outsider perception. Furthermore, the model adopts a request-based approach for medical and psychological assessments, prioritizing individual needs over standardized screening procedures. This model not only addresses the specific needs of students but also contributes to an inclusive educational environment, benefiting the entire academic community.

Resource programme in school establishments is responsible of providing support services to students who are considered at risk for school failure. There are mainly three services provided in a resource programme: 1) assessment of student's aptitude and achievement; 2) direct education, such as analytical, remedial, developmental, or compensatory training, and socio-emotional behavioural management; 3) behavioural management, organisational, medical, mental health, process, clinical, or collaborative consultation support for classroom instructors and parents (Widerholt & Chamberlain, 1989).

Roles and Responsibilities of a Special Education Teacher in Inclusive Education

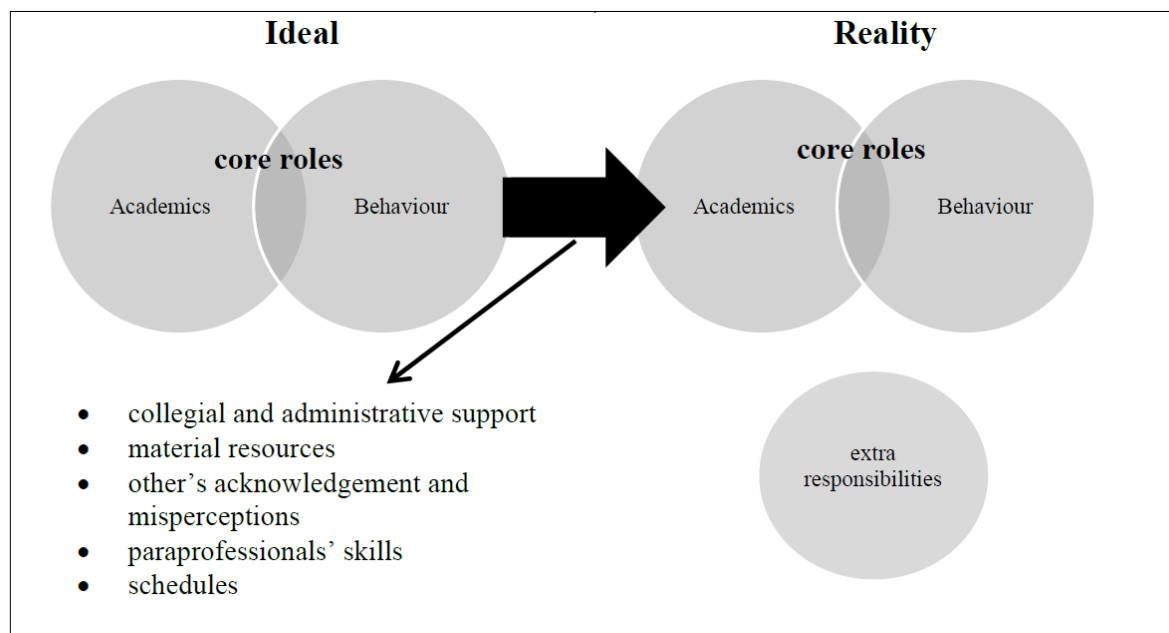
Majority of special educators are expected to collaborate with general educators to support children from increasingly varied backgrounds who require varying levels of assistance. Special education teachers must be familiar with an expanded knowledge base in special education, new technologies for teaching and assessment, and effective approaches to collaborate with families from a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds, in addition to providing specialised instruction for students who require it. (Shepherd, Fowler & McCormick, 2016).

Attrition has been a major concern in teacher shortage situation in special education, researchers have investigated reasons to understand why new teachers leave the field and find better solutions to better support teachers in the field. Major role of special educators in planning and teaching, managing behaviour and crisis intervention, one major identified issue are stress and lack of recognition and support (Hagaman & Casey, 2016). In the same study, researchers concluded administrator's influence is important to help special education teachers better manage their workload to reduce stress levels. Potential solution includes providing more planning time for special education teachers, providing mentor support, and reducing caseload among special education teachers, providing additional support and training namely in teaching, managing IEPs, crisis intervention, and managing challenging caseload are crucial to be provided especially during first few years of teaching for special education teachers. Implementing evidence-based practices to improve student outcomes, mentors trained in evidence-based approaches are needed regularly to support preservice teachers (Schles & Robertson, 2017). Special education teachers required training to develop better skill sets to work in the field so they can better take on roles and responsibilities of working with students with special needs.

Ng and Kwan (2019) outlined the responsibilities of inclusive education teachers, which include participating in professional development to understand and address the unique needs of children with SEN. Teachers are also expected to provide direct support, employ creative teaching methods, and create a supportive classroom environment. Diverse teaching techniques, staying informed on research, collaborating with professional teams, and preparing Individualised Education Plans (IEP) are crucial aspects. Despite challenges in time allocation, effective communication with the school, team, parents, and children with SEN is emphasized for successful outcomes.

Another issue causing role ambiguity on special education teachers is from key stakeholders who often inaccurately understand extent of special educator's responsibilities (Bettini, Wang, Cumming, Kimerling & Schutz, 2018). Researchers have illustrated relationship between special educators' experience of their roles and responsibilities as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Special Educators' Experience of Their Roles and Responsibilities



As SENCO's roles and responsibilities were explored, it shows SENCOs have multiple different roles and responsibilities within an inclusive educational setting. They are required to perform these roles and responsibilities to support students with diverse needs. Reality of attrition amongst teachers in the field of special education is alarming, as past studies revealed they experienced stress, and do not receive recognition and support for their work. Special education teachers reported experiencing ambiguity of roles and responsibilities which resulted in them taking on many additional tasks resulting in experiencing more stress from workplace. School administrators need to provide support to help teachers better manage their workload and reduce tendency of stress.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study intends to understand how to set up a resource room that can sustain, by learning different aspects of an inclusive educational set up and understand what are factors which cause a programme to be disrupted and discontinued, to find solutions ensuring programme sustains. Having a framework explains what are needed to set up a learning support team so schools new to inclusion concept, that is transferable to different settings be maintained for some time. When resource rooms are well equipped, students can be better accommodated. With increasing enrolment of students with SEN, setting up resource rooms promotes learning support benefiting students with SEN; supporting teachers to understand, better accommodate and facilitate students' learning.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The research objectives of this study are:

1. To identify the roles and responsibilities of the members involved in providing and receiving support through the resource room:
 - a) special educational needs coordinator (SENCO)
 - b) management
 - c) teacher
2. To explore the suitable resource room services to be provided in support of inclusive pupils with SEN;
3. To define the functions of the resource room in supporting inclusive pupils with special learning needs; and
4. To produce a framework on resource room set up.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A multiple case study was adapted using purposive sampling, to explore the experiences of stakeholders in a resource room, to understand the daily operations and interactions which occurs amongst the members of the resource room. Semi-structured interviews were administered to seven participants from two international schools in Kuala Lumpur with existing resource room. Documents and image analysis were collected to gather data on the daily operations of the resource room.

Participants

The participants in this study consist of identified members of the resource room within two school establishments: Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), member from management, teacher working with students with SEN. Each school were required to engage a team consisting the three mentioned members. There were seven participants in total for this study, four from school A, and three from school B. Both identified schools fulfilled the sampling criteria of the study, specifically international schools that accepts enrolment of students with SEN, international school with an inclusive education programme, and international school with a resource room set up. In school A, there were one SENCO, one principal and two teachers. When SENCO of school A approached teachers, two teachers

expressed their interest in participating in the interview. Researcher discussed with the supervisor and decided having more input from members of resource room can enhance and provide better insights, increasing chances of collecting richer data for this study. In school B, there were three participants, one SENCO, one principal and one teacher teaching pupils with SEN (Please refer to Table 1).

Table 1
Participant's Demographic Profile

Participant	Gender	Age (years)	Nationality	Years of service in education	School
SENCO A	Female	20-30	England	0-10	A
Principal A	Male	40-50	Netherland	20-30	A
Teacher A1	Female	20-30	Malaysia	0-10	A
Teacher A2	Female	20-30	Malaysia	0-10	A
SENCO B	Female	40-50	New Zealand	20-30	B
Principal B	Male	40-50	England	20-30	B
Teacher B	Male	30-40	Malaysia	10-20	B

Instruments of the Study

Three main instruments were used in this study, first instrument was the interview protocol, to ensure researcher can obtain focused, meaningful data which captures and accurately depicts participant's experiences. Second instrument was the document provided by SENCOs, these documents may consist lesson plans and scheme of work to provide an insight into daily operations and interactions which happen within resource rooms. Third instrument used was the image documents, where picture of resource rooms provides visualization of physical set up of resource rooms.

Data Collection Process

Researcher engaged the schools through email attached with the letter from the faculty to convey the purpose of the study and establish communication with participating schools. The consent form was emailed to the participants when the schools given permission to the academic staff to participate in the study. Due to the global pandemic (COVID-19), participants were given the option to have the interview conducted on location or through video call depending on the time of contact and restrictions imposed by the government.

All the participants chose to video call. However, as most of the participants were teaching online, consideration must be given to their work schedule, availability, conducive home environment and secure internet connection. An open-ended, semi-structured interview was conducted individually, as participants decided on the time and the day, they are most convenient to participate in the interview. The SENCOs from both schools were asked to provide image documents of the resource room set up for descriptive purposes and documents such as lesson plans, lesson reflections and scheme of work to provide an insight to a daily operation of the resource room. The interviews sessions were recorded.

Data Analysis

All interview recordings were transcribed verbatim, then sent to participants for member checking. Thematic analysis was conducted as the transcriptions were organized systematically, to provide meaning across the data collected. Researcher began by familiarizing with the transcription, then generate the initial codes as keywords emerged. The codes were then organized into themes consisting of ideas similar in a theme. The themes were further analysed to ensure the data accurately presented.

Document and image analysis was conducted, as SENCOs were requested to sent lesson plans, lesson reflection and scheme of work. Photos of the physical set up of the resource room were sent to provide a richer insight of the operations of the resource room. Two inter-raters were engaged to ensure that the themes generated accurately illustrates the participants responses.

FINDINGS

Roles and Responsibilities of the Members Involved in Providing and Receiving Support through the Resource Room

Findings indicated that each member played an important role in providing and receiving support through the resource room.

SENCO's Roles and Responsibilities

- a) Creating conducive learning environment.* SENCOs create conducive learning space for pupils with SEN, encouraging learning to occur in a safe, comfortable, well-resourced, and inspiring space.

“Create an environment that is safe, and calm, so children feel comfortable.” (SENCO)

- b) Providing services to pupils with diverse needs.* Pupils with SEN may have a wide range of needs requiring attention, accommodation, and intervention to help pupils overcome their learning needs.

“Some students fall behind, they can get specialised attention, targeting their own learning goals.” (Teacher)

- c) Collaborating with other departments to provide services to pupils with SEN.* Inter-departmental collaboration is crucial to ensure pupils with SEN receives the continuous support required.

“The teachers work in close collaboration with the SENCOs.” (Principal)

- d) Coordinating the operations of the resource room.* SENCOs are the leaders of the SEN department, they are responsible to ensure the operations of the resource room runs smoothly, pupils under their care receives the support needed, and the SENCOs are required to mediated and collaborate with other departments, have frequent check-ins with parents to ensure each member are working towards ensuring the pupil receives the support needed.

“As the head of inclusion, they are in charge of what happens in the department.”
(Principal)

Managements’ Roles and Responsibilities

- a) Allocation of funds and resources.** To ensure there are sufficient funding to provide continuous support for pupils with SEN.

“Not draining the school’s allocation, management have to balance and provide the best accommodation along with all the recommendations on purchase.” (Teacher)

- b) Imposing school policies.** Policies imposed by school establishment, then enforced by management can influence the inclusion practice of the school.

“The school establishment set up to be an inclusive school, there are allocation put aside to support a small percentage of students who have special needs.” (Teacher)

Teachers’ Roles and Responsibilities

- a) Accommodate and adapting to pupil’s learning needs.** Teachers need to accommodate and adapt to pupil’s needs in the classroom, to ensure pupils can learn alongside their peers.

“It’s the teacher’s responsibility to differentiate and personalise learning for pupils in the classroom, providing individual resources for them.” (Principal)

- b) Collaborating with other departments to provide services to pupils with special needs.** Teachers need to work with other departments to plan strategies to support pupil’s needs.

“Having a discussion with the SEN department about the pupil’s strength, weakness, finding out strategies that works.” (Teacher)

Execution of Each Member’s Roles and Responsibility

To ensure the resource room operates optimally, each member must commit and execute their roles and responsibilities.

- a) Communicate and collaborate with members involved.** Effective communication is crucial to ensure continuous and successful collaboration between department.

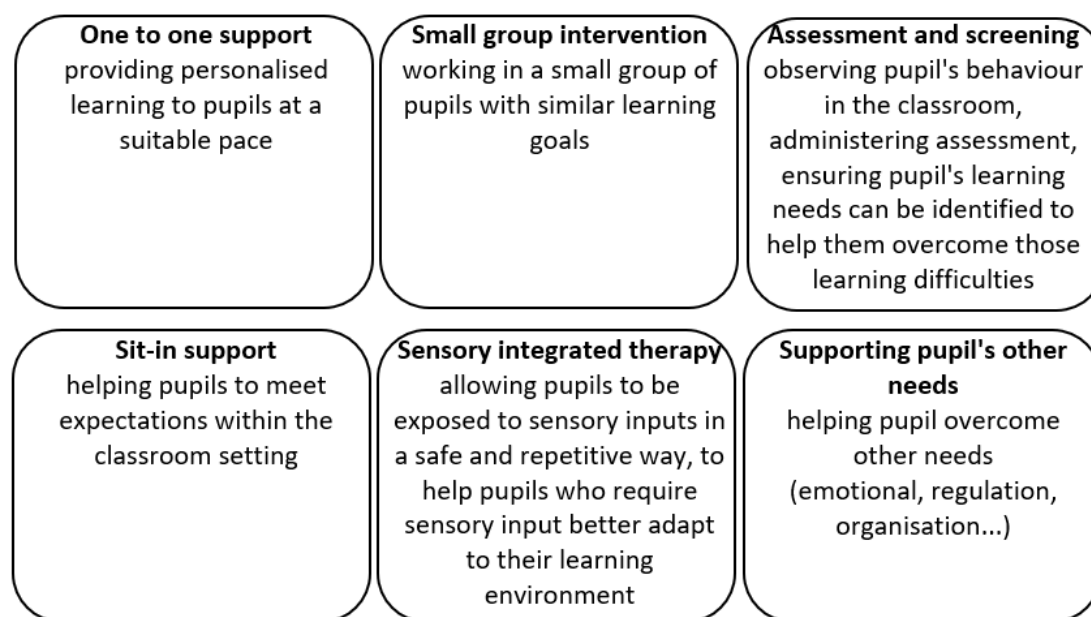
“Having weekly meetings with the team to move children along specific goals as a team.” (Principal)

Suitable Resource Room Services to Be Provided in Support of Inclusive Pupils with SEN

Learning support services serves as part of an intervention to help pupils overcome their learning needs. Figure 2 shows the type of services provided in the resource room.

Figure 2

Type of Services Suitable Provided in the Resource Room



Execution of Services Provided

Inter-departmental coordination is crucial to ensure services can be delivered to pupils efficiently.

SENCO coordinates the services provided by the resource room. SENCOs are required to consider scheduling, sharing of space, facilitator's availability, and resources to coordinate the services.

"The SENCO monitors the services provided to pupils, collaborates with teachers so that they're not clashing with different classes." (SENCO)

Communication and collaboration between departments. Inter-departmental communication is established, so that everyone is aware of the pupil's needs and the type of intervention provided.

"Working closely with educational psychologists, to look into recommendations and develop learning programme alongside the classroom programme." (SENCO)

School Policies. Imposing policies would impact the way resource rooms execute the services provided, and it bounds staff to follow policies imposed by the school establishment.

"Establishing a structure and system which allows collaboration. (Principal)

Benefit from Receiving Services Provided in the Resource Room

Interventions aims to help pupils overcome their learning needs and develop in different areas.

Individualised learning and personalised learning goals. Pupils with SEN require extra support to ensure they can adapt to the classroom expectations.

“Making it an individual basis, helping children reach the mainstream goals.” (SENCO)

Personalised interaction. SEN department can provide personalised attention and work on skills pupils need help with.

“In small groups, there’s a lot of interaction between the child and the teacher.”
(Principal)

Pupil empowerment. Pupils with SEN may experience negative emotion, the SEN department could provide tools and strategies to help pupils overcome those feelings.

“It is a safe place; they won’t be worried about what their friends are going to think of them and they can go into the resource room to calm down.” (Teacher)

Access to privacy, space, and time. The resource room serves as a space for pupils with SEN to have the privacy to speak to the SEN teachers or work on skills on an individual basis away from other peers.

“Not judged by their peers for being different, they feel safe there.” (Teacher)

Functions of the Resource Room in Supporting Inclusive Pupils with SEN

Functions of the resource room was defined based on the interactions between all the stakeholders (Figure 3).

Figure 3

Functions of the Resource Room in Supporting Pupils with SEN

Functions of the resource room			
Creating an individualised educational plan (IEP)	Communication, Consultation and Collaboration with Parents	Staff Enrichment and Training	Providing Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IEP team work together to create an IEP • Provide useful information to build pupil’s learning profile • States pupil learning strengths, and challenges • Tracks pupil’s progress • States the intervention and strategies in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents can provide support outside of school • Working towards the same learning goals • Providing useful feedback on strategies to use at home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training to teachers teaching pupils with special learning needs • Teachers learn strategies to adapt to pupils learning needs in the classroom setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep all the resources • Teachers and other support staff can get the resources and use them in their own learning space with pupils

Members of the Resource Room Ensuring the Functions of the Resource Room

Each stakeholder must be involved and aware of the operations within the resource room.

Communication and collaboration with stakeholders. Stakeholders can work on the same learning goals set, so everyone can provide each other with helpful information to better serve pupils.

“Monitoring and having conversations with teachers and members of staff, if there are gaps in learning and if that student isn’t making progress.” (Principal)

Scheduling and documentation. It is important to have a schedule to ensure everyone is aware of the time and place when pupils are taken out for additional support, documentations are crucial to track pupil’s progress.

“Having a learning profile that can be communicated to the teachers.” (Teacher)

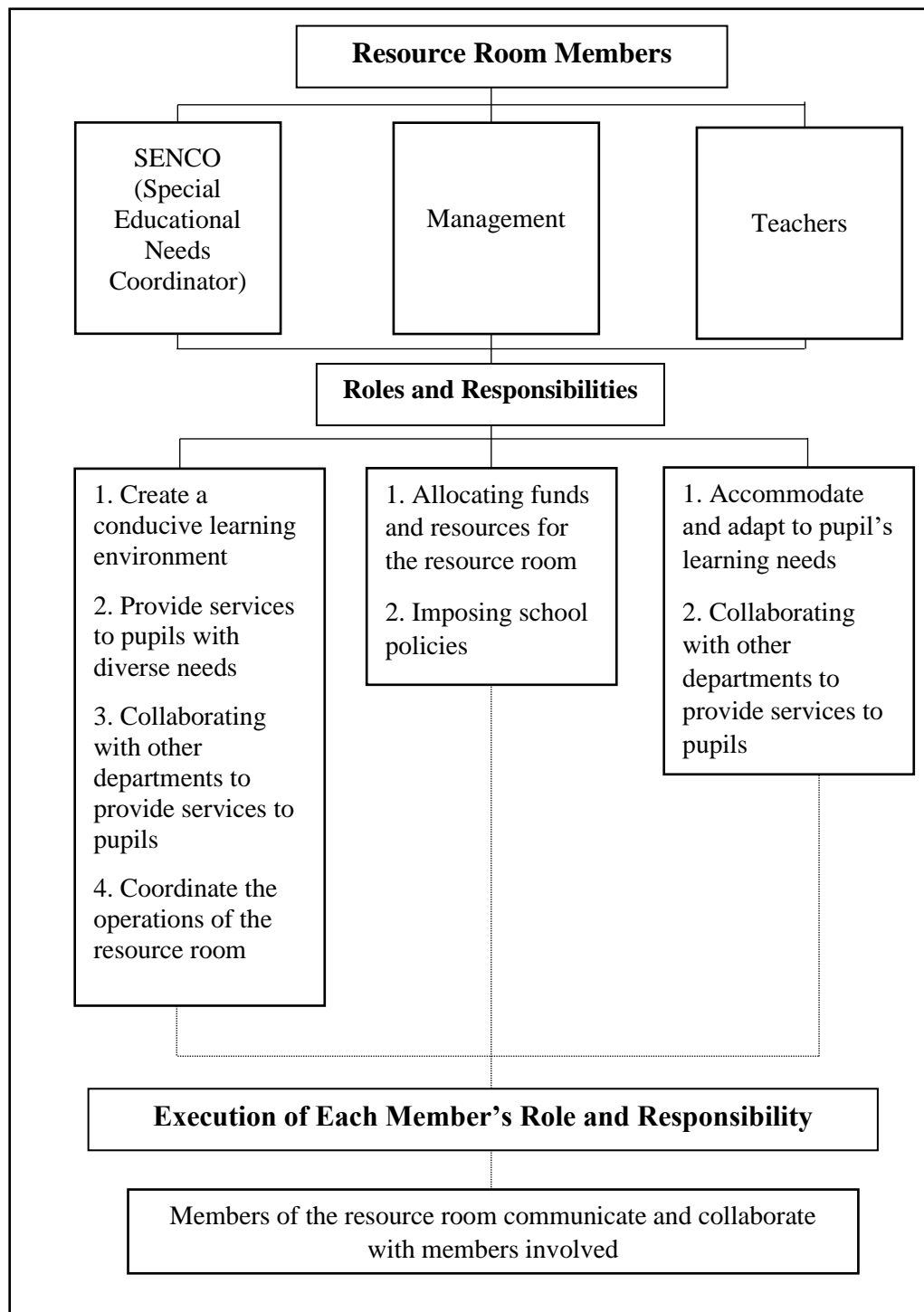
“Teachers need to be included in conversation deciding if there should be pull-outs and when, making sure that there’s an agreement.” (Principal)

DISCUSSION

Researcher was able to obtain a better understanding of operations of resource room in an inclusive, international school setting because of these responses. Themes emerged were reported compiled and illustrated in a framework (Figure 4) to explain operation of resource room and each stakeholder’s role and responsibilities within the resource room.

Figure 4

Member of the Resource Room Roles and Responsibilities and the Execution of Their Roles and Responsibilities



Roles and Responsibilities of the Members Involved in Providing and Receiving Support through the Resource Room

SENCO was identified as stakeholder with direct influence on operations within the resource room. Findings from this study indicated roles and responsibilities of a SENCO in resource room is to (1) create a conducive learning environment, (2) provide services to pupils with diverse needs, (3) collaborate with other departments to provide services to pupils, and (4) coordinating operations of resource room. These findings were like findings in past studies, as SEN teachers reported sharing common notions in providing instructions, being resourceful, being able to communicate with parents, collaborating with teachers from mainstream classrooms and building a meaningful relationship with pupils (Urbach, Moore, Klingner, Galman, Haager, Brownell & Dingle, 2015). To support pupils with increasingly diverse backgrounds, SENCOs and SEN teachers are expected to collaborate with mainstream classroom teachers, requiring a different level of support and providing pupils with specialised instructions, SENCOs and SEN teachers must be equipped with wide expanded knowledge in area of special education, innovative technology and assessments, and successful approaches to working with families of all cultures and backgrounds (Shepherd et al., 2016). SENCO needs to create an environment within inclusive educational settings, be equipped to deliver services to ensure pupils with SEN can develop in learning environment. SENCO needs to collaborate with other departments so everyone can work together towards pupil's learning goals.

Members from management team were identified as being a crucial stakeholder in imposing policies and shaping practices within school establishments, management need to support inclusive education for the school to be able to practice inclusion and educate pupils with SEN. Past studies revealed inclusion practice requires proactive policies to be imposed as Pletser (2019) suggested practice of inclusion was a proactive, dynamic, and continuous cycle with an emphasis on learning, access, and finding solutions. Having school policies imposed to support practice of inclusive education is not sufficient, as school management needs to understand limitation, strengths, and potential of the school, and provide feasible solutions to provide school with an effective support team to ensure pupils are receiving quality education in school establishments. Funding and allocation were seen as a major factor contributing to efficiency of resource room operation and SEN department in supporting pupils with SEN.

There were three recommended actions for policymakers to help establish inclusion in educational settings, (1) developing a commonly used, multifaceted definition of inclusion, (2) providing staff members with continuous training and education, (3) exploring alternative educational models (Bemiller, 2019).

Teachers working with pupils with SEN were identified as stakeholder who has a direct influence on pupil within classroom settings, teachers influence services received by pupils from resource room through communication and collaboration with the SEN department. Past studies revealed teachers were reported to experiencing heavy workloads and being demanded of their time and energy, making teachers feel burnout, teachers had to support other academic staff to solve pupil's learning challenges, attend meetings and counsel parents and pupils (Poon-McBrayer, 2016). Like findings of this study, as teachers are responsible for their class, and having pupils with SEN requires teachers to work with other departments to ensure pupils can thrive and adapt to their learning environment and they have equal opportunities to receive quality education alongside their typically developing peers.

Inclusion practices is a whole school collaboration effort, to ensure the programme succeeds; (1) interaction: teacher collaboration, teacher and student's collaboration, student collaboration; (2) support criteria: general teachers' role, special education teacher's role, students participating in learning communities; (3) adaptation criteria: mastery of learning, classroom facilities, learning materials, instruction (Buli-Holmberg & Jeyaprabhan, 2016). School A has a dormant inclusion practice and school policies require pupils with SEN to have Personal Learning Assistant (PLA), otherwise known as shadow-aide. School A provides intervention to further support learning in mainstream classrooms.

A vision and mission statement are used by school administration to communicate important values and conventions to school's stakeholders, and it indicates expectation which school employees need to do to achieve vision (Varadarajan & Malone, 2018). Administrative staff in School A are aware of inclusion policies and will ensure pupil can adapt and thrive in school settings before accepting enrolment of pupils with SEN. School B was established with the idea of inclusion, they have ten per cent of pupil population with SEN. In School B, allocation for staff and resources is robust, from image documents provided, indicates the resource room has a good set up providing services to pupils with different and diverse needs.

Resource room serves as a centre for collaboration amongst diverse disciplinary and professionals, as pupils with SEN would benefit from collaborative teaming, which a group of professionals, such as teachers, parents, therapists, related service providers, and other professionals with diverse but complementary skills in their unique areas of expertise, collaborate to observe, evaluate, and find solutions and plan services to address challenges through mutually agreed-upon goals (Weiss, Cook & Eren, 2019). To ensure operations within resource room run smoothly, each member of resource room have important roles and responsibilities to carry out. Each identified members of resource room collaborate, ensures communication to provide best services to pupils with SEN.

Suitable Resource Room Services to Be Provided in Support of Inclusive Pupils with Special Educational Needs

When supplemental aids and services are provided but pupils were unable to meet expected goals, they are removed or pulled out of regular educational environments. They are brought into resource rooms for further support. Students who receive special education and related assistance for at least 21% and no more than 60% of their school day meet criteria for a resource room (Smith & Tyler, 2010). Similarly, both School A and School B operate in a similar resource room model, where pupils with SEN receive intervention in a small group setting or on a one-to-one basis. Resource rooms provide services like one-to-one support, small group intervention, assessment and screening, sit-in support, sensory integrated therapy and supporting pupils' other needs.

SEN departments are expected to work with school administrators and academic staff to support pupils with increasingly diverse backgrounds from across different required levels of support, besides providing specialized instruction for pupils who requires support, special education teachers must be familiar with an expanded knowledge base in special education, new teaching and assessment technology, and effective ways to engage with families from a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds (Shepherd et al., 2016). Services provided in resource rooms by the SEN department support pupil's learning in a suited delivery and pace, to ensure pupil gets to work on their learning gaps in a less restricted environment, pupils can learn skills to adapt to expectation in classroom settings.

Both schools provided services to assess pupil's academic and aptitude achievement, some participants responded entry assessments may be conducted by SEN department, when a pupil enrolls into the school and teachers observe a learning gap or challenge which a pupil exhibits, SEN department will be called to conduct an assessment for pupil.

Generalisation deals with having skills set learned in resource rooms transferable in a different setting so pupils can adapt to different circumstances (Burt & Whitney, 2018). Both schools aim to provide interventions in resource rooms so pupils can utilise skills learned in resource rooms away from their peers around them with safety, comfort, and privacy away from attention and judgement, pupils with SEN can work on those gaps and use those skills in their classroom settings to adapt to expectations and requirements within classrooms. Objective of receiving support from resource rooms is to be able to generalise those skills learned so pupils with SEN can adapt to expectations in classroom settings and these would indicate a successful inclusion practice, and effective resource room services delivered.

Functions of the Resource Room in Supporting Inclusive Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Individualised Educational Plan (IEP) collaboration between mainstream classroom teachers and SEN teachers, sharing decision-making responsibilities and collaborating with other professionals to achieve IEP goals and objectives (Zagona, Kurth & MacFarland, 2017). In this study, participants stated SEN department collaborates with homeroom teachers to discuss pupils' learning challenges, strengths, and weaknesses to plan and execute an IEP to help pupil overcome their learning challenges and thrive in their homeroom surroundings.

Ng and Kwan (2019) proposed importance of inclusive education teachers to approach parents and have effective communication about their children with SEN. In this study, SEN department ensures continuous communication with parents. This partnership is important to promote children's well-being, health, and learning (Ng & Kwan, 2019). To establish communication with family members, to support and monitor pupil progress alongside parent's support outside of school, and to teach parents to implement strategies and intervention to better support pupils.

Past studies revealed teachers in mainstream classrooms having pupils with SEN under their care reported needing more professional instructional strategies to support pupils' learning needs (Kennedy, Rodgers, Romig, Llyod & Brownell, 2017). Findings from this study were similar as SEN department run staff enrichment programme, training, and professional development sessions to help teachers learn skills to adapt and accommodate to pupils' needs in classroom settings so teachers can be better prepared and equipped to serve pupils with SEN.

Supplemental instruction for pupils who are not responding to universal curriculum (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Compton, 2012). Developing differentiated materials for students who require additional materials. Demonstrating special techniques and approaches for pupils with SEN (Wiedmeyer & Lehman, 1991). Participants from this study stated SEN department serves many different functions, such as providing resources to homeroom teachers for them to adapt to pupils' SEN in classroom settings and demonstrating different techniques and approaches to accommodate pupils with SEN.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

To further validate the study in areas of resource room set up in an inclusive international school, targeted sample may be a better direction, schools that claimed inclusion and has a strong foundation for inclusive education would be a better sampling criterion. This research clearly illustrated operations of a resource rooms within two international schools with resource room, but it raises concern on how both schools do not directly claim inclusion as part of their practice. Having a larger sample of schools with same sampling criteria can provide a clearer understanding of how other international schools operate their resource room.

Future research can include more stakeholders in the study, to better understand from other stakeholders' perspectives. From a typically developing pupil's standpoint, their parents and their family members are clients of a school establishment, to understand from their perspectives on having their children study alongside pupils with SEN would be a good area of interest. Since parents pay for their child's education and intentionally pick these schools for their children's learning, exploring their attitude towards inclusion can bring value to the research on inclusive education in an international school.

It is important to explore attitudes towards inclusion and resource rooms and to explore cultural factors influencing inclusion practices. There is a lack of awareness and open communication about special education within communities. To better understand implications of community's awareness and acceptance and how it correlates to policies imposed in school establishment for inclusive education, and levels of support given to pupils with special education needs in an inclusive educational setting. Future research can explore these topics to better understand community's behaviour on special education and policies in school to support inclusion.

From the study, and review of past studies, resource room model from schools was mostly adapted from the American model, despite being in an international school, adapting from the Asian context may be more appropriate in our local Malaysian school setting. To further consolidate applications of resource room model, studying and interviewing schools in Asia would be a good direction to understand similarity and differences of applications of resource room model, and how each school establishment adapts from models to suit their needs.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this research project offered valuable insights into the operation of a resource room, shedding light on limitations and challenges within an international school setting. The study effectively delineated the core principles of resource room operations and highlighted a noteworthy hesitation in embracing inclusive practices across both school environments. The research underscored the importance of a collaborative approach within the entire school to ensure that students with SEN receive the necessary services for overcoming challenges and thriving in an inclusive educational context. Key elements identified for the establishment and sustainability of a resource room include a comprehensive understanding of the unique limitations and requirements specific to the school, clear delineation of roles and responsibilities for each member involved in resource room operations, effective collaboration and communication among all stakeholders, support from the school community, and the allocation of sufficient funds and resources essential for the seamless functioning of the resource room.

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