A Meta-Analysis for the Inclusion of Area of Kohler's Taxonomy in Transition Program for Students with Disabilities

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Abstract--- A transition program is a path for special needs student to prepare themselves from school-to-work nature. Apparently, in order for these students to be successful in life, a proper facilitation is needed via the correct transition program. One of the most established taxonomy pertaining to transition program is Kohler Taxonomy. The purpose of this study is to identify the most studied area of Kohler Taxonomy and why it is popularly being studied. Subsequently, a review was carried out to determine which Kohler's Taxonomy area are the most popular within the contemporary literature. The term of transition program, Kohler's Taxonomy, special needs and meta-analysis were used to conduct the search through various databases which includes Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science, Science Direct and ProQuest. Only papers published from 2014 until 2018 were selected. As a result, it is identified that thestudent-focused planning and interagency collaboration are the most studied area in Kohler Taxonomy. Partially, the participation in student focused planning such as Individual Education Plan (IEP) activity for example meetings, translates into better access to work benefits, higher earning potential and higher quality of life. At the same time, interagency collaboration needs to be undertaken within both,top-down and bottom-up approach, or via the planning and the execution level. To conclude, this study pave the way for Special Education Department, teachers and parents to improve the transition program by making full use of the identified Kohler Taxonomy areas of student-focused planning and interagency collaboration.

Keywords--- Transition Program , Transition Planning, Kohler's Taxonomy, Special Needs, Meta-analysis.

I. Introduction

Transition planning or better known as transition program is a path for special needs student to prepare themselves from school-to-work nature. On top of the preparation purpose, it also provide opportunities for student to gain work exposure within the actual working atmosphere (Alias, 2014). The significance of the transition program is highlighted where in United States, this program is mentioned by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in its later reaccreditation of 1997 and 2004. The latest reaccreditation via (IDEA) 2004 made it necessary for the transition program to be arranged for disable students at the age 16 years old. On top of that, the transition program is also in accordance with the No Child Left behind Act (2001) where school authorities are held responsible for the disable student performance on standards-based assessments and post-school outcomes (Povenmire-Kirk et al., 2015; Trainor, Morningstar, & Murray, 2016; Wehman, 2013).

Similarly in Malaysia, the Disable Action Plan 2016-2022 mentioned that the transition program will be expand to achieve the minimum 10% increase for the enrolment of special needs student after completing the high school. At the same time, the government also provides a range of opportunities to the disable, among them by introducing specific policies and programs based on the "Welfare Responsibility" motto (A.M. Yusof, Ali, & Salleh, 2014). This shows that the transition program for students with disabilities is important for continuity of their life. A significant finding from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2018) highlights the unemployment rate for disable was 9.2 % in the year 2017 which was approximately against normal workers. However, recent research fails to disaggregate the data by disability category and school characteristics (Arakelian, 2017).

In spite of many efforts for improving the post-school success of student with disabilities, there still exist major challenges faced by the entire stakeholders in relation to establishing the transition program. Apparently, in order for

them to be successful in life, a proper facilitation for student with disabilities is needed via the correct transition program. There might be a significant number of existing studies on transition program. However, the ones which focus on the specific area of Kohler Taxonomy is somehow limited. This paper aimed to answer the research questions as stated below:

- 1. What is the type of respondent mostly involved in the existing studies?
- 2. What is the statistical method mostly used in the existing studies?
- 3. What is the mostly used method of data collection in the studies?
- 4. What is the most studied area in Kohler Taxonomy pertaining to transition program for students with disabilities?
- 5. Why the above area is mostly studied?

II. Kohler's Taxonomy in Transition Program for Students with Disabilities

According to Wehman (2013), Test et al. (2009) and Landmark et al. (2010) have properly summarizes the transition studies to date. Their extensive work has identified studies that fit specific criteria which allow their inclusion in the Kohler and Field (2003) taxonomy for transition study. Kohler and Field initially designed the Transition Programming Taxonomy in 1996, and later on in 2016 where this taxonomy includes five areas of 133 efficient practices in transition, established to increase post-school success (Chandroo, Strnadová, & Cumming, 2018). The five areas include student-focused planning, student development, interagency collaboration, family involvement, and program structure. These areas are theoretically proven in the literature and were collectively certified by a countrywide group of transition experts" (Kohler & Field, 2003). Sequentially, the attention given towards these five areas by stakeholders can somehow ensure the enhancement of the transition program and support processes as follow.

1) Student-Focused Planning

This area concentratesin identifying students' ability, preferences, interests and requirements by considering students within the transition program and encouraging students to speak up for their opinion (Chandroo et al., 2018). Any student can be a good participant in the secondary transition and the overall Individual Education Plan (IEP) if they are self-determined where this provides a reasonable mixture of knowledge and skill which subsequently will assist in decision-making and future planning. During the primary and initial secondary education years, teachers might have to provide guidance to students throughout the process, which later on expectation is given where students will obtain proficiency as they move to through high school. A crucial area of student-focused planning is that any educational-related judgment are made out on students' aims, visions, and preferences; therefore, it is integral to facilitate improvement of the student's own consciousness and use this to arrange short and long-term aims (Kohler & Field, 2003).

2) Student Development

Student development relates to the assessment and teaching of functional, academic, social, and vocational skills to make it a point that students are ready to face the challenges of adult life (Kohler, 1996). Student development emphasizes real-life, career, and career-related skill improvement through school and career-based learning exposure. This also means that student development does include student appraisal and accommodations, where subsequently it provides a solid base for measuring learning exposures to guarantee successful transition. The importance of student development practices in helping students with disabilities to prepare for postsecondary environments has been validated through several studies for many years (Ookeditse, 2018). A systematic student development practice contributes to correct students knowledge and skill, which provides direction for applying skills and further opportunities (Kohler & Field, 2003).

3) Interagency Collaboration

Interagency is defined as "a process through which the whole is greater than the sum of the parts; agency representatives come together to achieve, collectively, more than they could each achieve working independently" (Povenmire-Kirk et al., 2015). The collaborative practices synthesized through the taxonomy considers the business entity in the entire areas of transition program (Kohler & Field, 2003). With the interagency collaboration, educational service providers are able to address opportunities for students. Later on, any community issue which has influence on these opportunities can be addressed as well (Abdullah, Yasin, & Abdullah, 2015). In addition, it is essential to bring the right agencies to the table during any transition program phase, and to enable these agencies to collaborate to deliver services in order to ensure the best possible post-school result for disable students (Povenmire-Kirk et al., 2015).

4) Family Involvement

Family involvement is a necessity from the initial stage of any special education recommendation. It is integral for any education authority to keep parents updated at each stage for knowing their rights (Snyder, 2014). Younger adults in which their parents were involved in transition program had more pleasant post-school career output

(Young, Morgan, Callow-Heusser, & Lindstrom, 2016). The practices represented within the category of family involvement are linked with the planning and delivery of education, which includes transition services by parents and other family members. These practices emphasizes three aspects of family involvement which are: (a) participation and roles, (b) empowerment, and (c) training (Kohler, 1996).

5) Program Structure

Program structures relates to the systematic delivery of transition-focused education and services, which includes philosophy, planning, policy, evaluation, and resource development (Kohler, 1996). Teachers are required to facilitate effective transition programs and practices, as well as have an understanding and the ability to elicit support at every level of the student's transition (Ookeditse, 2018). Predictors of post-school success linked to program structure include student support, the inclusion of students in general education, a transition program, and high school diploma status. Numerous factors will help teachers to improve transition programs to ensure that students have a clear transition from high school to adult life including: an understanding of the distinct elements of predictors of post-school success, identification of opportunities that students with disabilities have beyond secondary school, knowledge and skills for facilitation of students' access to the general curriculum, and identification of models of transition programs such as employment programs and career education, including establishment of formal/informal student support networks (Morningstar & Mazzotti, 2014).

III. Methodology

Subsequently, a review was carried out to determine which Kohler's Taxonomy area are the most popular within the contemporary literature. This is done by initially combining type of respondent, statistical concept and the exact methodology for each literature, where later on, the specific areas of Kohler's Taxonomy for instance Student-Focused Planning, Student Development, Interagency Collaboration, Program Structure and Family Involvement are identified. The procedure of doing this synthesis review was based on review of Chan, Ismail, and Sumintono (2015). The term of transition program, Kohler's Taxonomy, special needs and meta-analysis were used to conduct the search through various databases which includes Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science, Science Direct and ProQuest. Only papers published from 2014 until 2018 were selected.

IV. Findings and Discussion

As a result, a total of 18 studies were reviewed as shown in Tables 1,2,3 and 4. Each table is distinguished by its specific number of Kohler's Taxonomy area covered.

Table 1: Studies of the One Area of Kohler's Taxonomy in Transition Program for Students with Learning Disabilities

Researcher	Type of Respondent	Statistical Analysis Used	Method of Data Collection	Kohler's Taxonomy
Young et al. (2016)	Parents	Descriptive analysis Correlation –Regression	Experimental Group	Family Involvement
Brinck(2018)	Special Education Teachers and VR counselors	Descriptive analysis Correlation and regression, Hypothesis testing – T-test	Survey	Interagency Collaboration
Povenmire-Kirk, T (2015)	Students, Teachers, Agency Members, Parents	Data was processed, analysed and managed using ATLAS.ti	Interview, Document Analysis	Interagency Collaboration
Abdullah et al. (2015)	10 teachers of vocational education in six Integration Program within schools withlearning disabilities facilities	Data was processed, analysed and managed using ATLAS.ti 7.5.2	Interview	Interagency Collaboration
Meadows, Davies, and Beamish (2014)	104 transition teachers and associated personnel	Descriptive analysis	Survey	Interagency Collaboration
Arakelian (2017)	Youthwith disabilities, twelve participants from two high schools	Descriptive analysis, Correlation	Interview, Survey, Document Analysis	Student- Focused Planning

Table 2: Studies of Three Area of Kohler's Taxonomy in Transition Program for Students with Learning Disabilities

Researcher	Type of Respondent	Statistical	Method of	Kohler's Taxonomy
		Analysis Used	Data	
			Collection	
Trainor et al.	Countrywide	Descriptive -	Data Analysis	Student –FocusedPlanning
(2016)	representative group of	mean, percentage		Interagency Collaboration
	teenagers with specific	Goodness of fit –		FamilyIinvolvement
	disabilities	Pearson chi-		
		square		
Thoma, Agran,	Students who are Black	None	Extensive	Student-Focused Planning
and Scott (2016)	and have disabilities		Literature	Student Development
			Review	Program Structure
M. b. M. Yusof,	179 Special Education	Descriptive -	Survey	Student-FocusedPlanning
Yasin, and Itam	Teachersthat participate in	mean		Program Structure
(2015)	the program			FamilyInvolvement

Table 3: Studies of the Four Area of Kohler's Taxonomy in Transition Program for Students with Learning Disabilities

Researcher	Type of	Statistical Analysis Used	Method of	Kohler's Taxonomy
	Respondent		Data	
			Collection	
DevadritaTalapatra	176 practicing	Descriptive analysis,	Survey	Student -FocusedPlanning
(2016)	school	Exploratory Factor		StudentDevelopment
	psychologists	Analysis, Correlation –		Program Structure
		multiple regression		FamilyInvolvement
Elliott (2014)	Seven young men	Descriptive analysis	Observation	Student-FocusedPlanning
	ages fifteen to			Student Development
	eighteen			Program Structure
				Interagency Collaboration

Table 4: Studies of the Five Area of Kohler's Taxonomy in Transition Program for Students with Learning Disabilities

Researcher	Type of Respondent	Statistical	Method of	Kohler's Taxonomy
		Analysis Used	Data Collection	
Xu, Dempsey,	5 Chinese transition experts	Descriptive	Interview,	Student-Focused
and Foreman	reviewed KTTP items, 14	analysis,	Survey	Planning
(2016)	Transition teachers and 14	Exploratory Factor		Student Development
	Parents of adolescents with	Analysis,		Interagency
	ID who would transition from	Hypothesis Testing		Collaboration
	school in the next 12	Chi-square		Program Structure
	monthsfor interview, 329			Family Involvement
	transition teacher			
Knollman(2015)	Three students with learning	Data were coded	Case Study	Student-Focused
	disabilities, family members,	using open and		Planning
	their previous transition	thematic coding		Student Developmentt
	coordinator and their support	strategies		Program Structure
	circle			Family Involvement
				Interagency
				Collaboration
Brezenski (2018)	Three special education	Data were coded	Case study	Student-Focused
	teachers, Two general	using open and		Planning
	education teachers, Three	thematic coding		Student Development

	district administrators, Three agency representatives, Two graduated High School Student With Disabilities and Three parents	strategies		Program Structure Family Involvement Interagency Collaboration
Almutairi (2018)	Five special education teachers and six vocational rehabilitation practitioners	Data were coded using open and thematic coding strategies.	Interview	Student-Focused Planning Student Development Program Structure Family Involvement Interagency Collaboration
Morningstar and Mazzotti (2014)	Youth With Disabilities	None	Extensive literature review	Student-Focused Planning Student Development Family Involvement Program Structure Interagency Collaboration
Ookeditse (2018)	1186 teachers in general education, special education, guidance and counseling and vocational	Descriptive analysis, Hypothesis Testing – Kruskall Wallis, Mann Whitney U	Survey	Student-Focused Planning Student Development Family Involvement Program Structure Interagency Collaboration
Riches, Knox, and O'Brien (2014)	12 NOVA TTW trainees, 7 NOVA staff, 3 former TTW trainees, 2 parents and 3 employers	None	Document Analysis, Observations, Interviews	Student-Focused Planning Student Development Family Involvement Program Structure Interagency Collaboration

According to Table 1, there are six out of 15 studies which focus only in one single area of Kohler Taxonomy (Abdullah et al., 2015; Arakelian, 2017; Brinck, 2019; Meadows et al., 2014; Povenmire-Kirk et al., 2015; Young et al., 2016). This includes one each for family involvement and student-focused planning and the other four studies emphasis more in interagency. Table 2 highlighted three studies which include three areas of Kohler Taxonomy in transition program for students with learning disabilities (Thoma et al., 2016; Trainor et al., 2016; M. b. M. Yusof et al., 2015). Apparently, the combination of areas is totally different for each study. This includes one study for student-focused planning, interagency collaboration and family involvement where Trainor et al. (2016) analyses data from countrywide representative group of teenagers with specific disabilities. Another study by Thoma et al. (2016) which conducted an extensive literature review on disable Black studentsfocuses more on the combination of student-focused planning, student development and program structure. The last study by M. b. M. Yusof et al. (2015) emphasis more on student-focused planning, program structure and family involvement where they arrange a survey of 179 special education teachers. Interestingly, student-focused planning appears in each three studies.

Concurrently, there are only two studies which combine four areas of Kohler Taxonomy in Table 3. Talapatra (2014) study 176 practicing school psychologists via survey regarding student-focused planning, student development, program structure and interagency collaboration, while Elliott (2014) studied seven young men ages fifteen to eighteen on student-focused planning, student development, interagency collaboration and program structure. Last but not least, based on Table 4, there are seven studies (Almutairi, 2018; Brezenski, 2018; Knollman, 2015; Morningstar & Mazzotti, 2014; Ookeditse, 2018; Riches et al., 2014; Xu et al., 2016) regarding the entire areas of Kohler Taxonomy in transition program for students with learning disabilities.

Consequently, the rest of this section presents the findings and discussions according to the sequence of research questions based on several figures derived from Tables 1 until Table 4. Figure 1 answers the first research questions. Based on Figure 1, there are nine types of respondent which participated in this study. They include vocational rehabilitation practitioner, transition coordinator, transition expert, psychologist, vocational rehabilitation counselor,

agency members, students, teachers and parents. It seems that, teachers participate most in this study at 8 out of 18 respondents. Subsequently, the second most participating respondents are students while at the other end, there are five types of respondents which share the lowest number of participation at only one single respondent. They are vocational rehabilitation practitioner, transition coordinator, transition expert, psychologist, vocational rehabilitation counselor. The transition program requires various stakeholders with the desired to provide more comprehensive and holistic services. This covers teachers such as general and special education teachers where they are the most chosen respondent. According to Wehman (2013), teachers who fully understand the importance of transition in the special education program can empower young people with disabilities. By applying certain principles, professionals such as teachers can move in the right direction for students to achieve postschool outcomes (Almutairi, 2018).

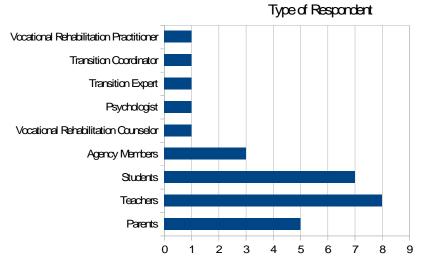


Figure 1: Type of Respondent

Concurrently, Figure 2answers the second research question, where itshows the statistical method analysis that are used in the study which consists of hypothesis testing, correlation and regression, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), goodness of fit and descriptive analysis. Unlike the previous figure, Figure 2 highlighted the superiority of descriptive analysis over other statistical measures where it stands at a significantly higher amount of 10 studies. On the contrary, only one single study which is employing goodness of fit statistical analysis. According to Figure 2, the descriptive analysis is commonly used due to its nature which is considered as the starting point for working with quantitative data. According to Loeb et al. (2017), a descriptive analysis also presents a quantitative descriptions in a manageable form and can assist in simplifying large amounts of data in a sensible way. The proper determination of results of a mixed method study should use quantitative data collection and statistical trends to support qualitative themes (Creswell & Creswell, 2005). This can be easily conveyed by using descriptive analysis.

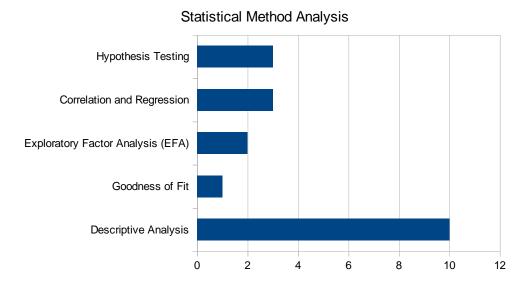


Figure 2: Statistical Method Analysis

Figure 3 highlighted eight different method of data collection, i.e. experimental group, survey, interview, document analysis, observation, extensive literature review, data analysis and case studywhich answers research question number 3. It can be obviously seen that survey is the most used method of data collection with a figure of seven out of 18 studies. This is because descriptive statistics are the basic measures used to describe survey data. In contrast, only one single study is using each experimental group and data analysis method of data collection.

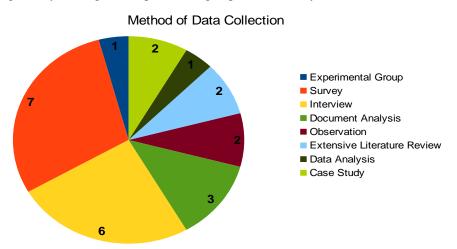


Figure 3: Method of Data Collection

Finally, Figure 4 answers the fourth and fifth research question where it pinpointed the most important criteria of this meta-analysis. From, Figure 4, it can be seen that interagency collaboration and student-focused planning share the top spot with the figure of 13 studies. Both, the areas of family involvement and program structure are at the second spot with 11 studies while student development sits last at 10 studies. The range of these figures from 10 to 13 shows that there are no clear winner out of these areas and highlighted the important aspect of applying the entire areas of Kohler's taxonomy. The analysis of Figure 4 can be further divided according to different tables where it came from. Accordingly, based on Figure 4, student-focused planning and interagency collaboration are the most studied area in Kohler Taxonomy. Partially, this is attributed to the importance of student-focused planning which consists of IEP development, student participation and planning strategies components. This component which is upon the student's present level of performance identifies the student's academic, transition services and accommodation needs. According to Shogren, Wehmeyer, Palmer, Rifenbark, and Little (2015), the active participation in IEP activity such as meetings somehow translates into better access to work benefits, higher earning potential and higher quality of life. Subsequently, active students' participation somehow can increase graduate employment rates.

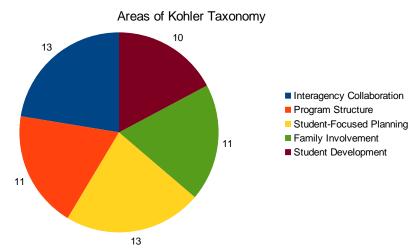


Figure 4: Areas of Kohler Taxonomy

On another hand, the importance of interagency collaboration is conveniently highlighted by Figure 4 where it aims to improve transition planning. To accomplish this aim, an initiative of high level collaboration which combines sustainable employment, independent living, and postsecondary education and training management is much needed (Antosh et al., 2013). According to Abdullah et al. (2015), there are five collaborating entities which are school with specific facilities of continuing education, public and private sectors, community, employers, and non-governmental organization (NGO). According to Povenmire-Kirk et al. (2015), interagency collaboration needs to be conducted at the high level so that an efficient top-down approach can be achieved. Furthermore, on top of the high level collaboration, a bottom-up approach such as ensuring active participation in meeting and interagency low level communication initiative by teachers can ensure the efficiency of interagency collaboration (Povenmire-Kirk et al., 2015).

V. Conclusion

This study reports a qualitative meta-analysis which includes 18 existing studies within the area of Kohler Taxonomy. Towards acknowledging the most important area of Kohler Taxonomy, this study identifies the other necessary aspects of Kohler Taxonomy to supplement Kohler Taxonomy area which are the type of respondent, statistical analysis used and the method of data collection in the first half of Section 4.0. This has answered the first research question.

Altogether, there are five areas in Kohler Taxonomy which are student-focused planning, student development, interagency collaboration, program structure and family involvement. From the conclusion of the Section 4.0, it is identified that the student-focused planning and interagency collaboration are the most studied area in Kohler Taxonomy. This somehow has answered the second research question which is to identify the most studied area in Kohler Taxonomy pertaining to transition program. Why this particular Kohler Taxonomy area is mostly studied is also answered.

These findings are significance for several entities. Firstly, The Special Education Department can make full use of student focused planning and interagency collaboration to improve the existing transition program structure. Next, teachers can work out the bottom-up approach of student focused planning and interagency collaboration such as improving IEP through the active participation with parents and by engaging the correct stakeholders through regular activities such as meetings. Finally, to make this a two-way initiative, parents must ensure their involvement within the area of student focused planning by simply exchanging information on their kids to teachers and having a positive attitude towards their kids IEP.

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