Case study of student participation in transition program: Literature review

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Abstract

Transition programs for students with disabilities are an effort to prepare students from school to post-school life. According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), transition services must be coordinated, outcome-oriented, and tailored to individual student needs. Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0 emphasizes five key areas, including student-focused planning, self-determination development, and student participation in developing an IEP. This study aims to explore the role of students with disabilities in transition programs through a literature review. The method employed was a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) with PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines. The literature search was conducted through the ERIC, Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, and Sage Journals databases. The results show that student participation in transition programs varies, with students with severe intellectual disabilities tending to have lower participation rates. Factors such as functional skills, communication, and environmental support influence student engagement.

INTRODUCTION

The implementation of transition programs for students with disabilities has been growing in Indonesia. Transition itself is the transition from school to post-school adulthood, a crucial phase in a student's life. Transition programs exist as a systematic approach to preparing students with disabilities to achieve their goals after completing their education. This stage is not only about the physical transition from school to the workplace or university, but also encompasses shifts in identity, social roles, and complex skill demands. When the transition is not well planned, it can lead to students experiencing limitations in accessing further education, employment, or independent living, thus exacerbating existing social inequalities.

Various countries have developed transition programs as an anticipatory measure for students with disabilities in preparing for life after school. For example, the IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act) policy emphasizes the importance of transition services as a coordinated series of results-oriented activities for students with disabilities (Wehman, 2013). Transition services are designed to be results-oriented, so these services focus on improving

the academic and functional achievements of students with disabilities to facilitate them in the process of transition from school life to post-school life.

This transition program includes post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment, continuing education, adult services, independent living training, and participation in the community. The provision of transition programs must be based on the needs of each student by considering the strengths, abilities, preferences, and interests of students' talents, so that students are involved and taken into account in the preparation of transition programs (Wehman, 2013). The Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0 model has 5 taxonomy areas, namely (1) Student-Focused Planning, (2) Student Development, (3) Interagency Collaboration, (4) Family Involvement, and (5) Program Structure. Of the five taxonomies, student participation is mentioned as playing an important role. Students are encouraged to contribute to IEP/ITP meetings, increasing self-determination and decision-making abilities. Student participation appears in the process of coordinating cross-agency support, including appropriate after-school services, to student participation in policy and program evaluation. (National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative [NTACT: C], 2020).

Student participation in transition programs is highly valued, not just a formality in preparing an Individualized Education Program (IEP), but also a meaningful involvement in decision-making regarding life goals, education, and future employment. Student involvement in transition program planning has a positive impact, as it is expected to lead to student motivation, an increased sense of belonging, and improved post-school outcomes.

In line with Nassir's (2015) opinion, for a transition program to be successful, several factors are needed, including student-focused program design, active family involvement, cross-institutional and cross-disciplinary collaboration, a clear program structure, student skill development, and student readiness and work experience (Rahmani & Yuliyati, 2019).

However, the implementation of student participation in the role still faces various challenges, both in terms of student readiness, parental support, school support, and existing program structures. Several studies agree that student involvement in the transition process is often overlooked. Both teachers and parents actually recognize that better communication is needed to implement an effective transition process where students are involved in designing and developing their own future goals (Lehmann, Bassett, & Sands, 1999). Student involvement is not merely a pedagogical strategy, but an effort to create a learning environment that is appropriate to their needs. When students are given the space to express and determine their hopes for the future, this process becomes relevant and can strengthen their identity and confidence as individuals with potential.

In the United States, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) underscores the importance of student involvement in planning and decision-making regarding transition program design. Teachers' and parents' limited understanding of the importance of self-determination, limited opportunities for students to voice their aspirations, and a lack of policy integration are barriers. Yet, numerous studies have shown that student involvement is an effective way to improve post-school transition programs, which

impact outcomes that are not disappointing for students with disabilities (Lehmann, Bassett, & Sands, 1999).

In Indonesia, there is less research addressing the role of students, and students are often not involved in program development during implementation. The concept of self-determination is still being introduced and has not yet become a mandatory part of the curriculum. Students, as the primary subjects undergoing transition programs, whether for further education, job skills training, or community independence, are deprived of the opportunity to express their desires, interests, and talents. The research questions in this study were formulated based on the needs and relevance of the predetermined topic and as a limitation to prevent the research from becoming too broad. The research questions used include how the literature defines students' roles in Individualized Education Program (IEP)-based transition planning, identifying case studies from various literature on student participation in transition planning, and the concept of self-determination in student involvement in the program. It is important to understand that self-determination is a student's ability to understand and direct life, starting from the initial introduction stage of an inclusive curriculum.

Based on these conditions, this study focuses on a literature review on participation and transition programs to explore and analyze various sources of literature. The research focuses on the role of students in transition programs through various articles worthy of being used as references, both in local and international contexts, for critical and in-depth study. By reviewing various case studies, this article will identify factors that support and hinder student participation, approaches that can be used to increase their involvement, and practical implications for the development of inclusive educational transition policies and practices. Through analysis of various literature sources, this article is expected to contribute to transition programs that are responsive, participatory, and equitable for all students, especially students with disabilities.

METHOD

This research employed the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, using systematic review and journal identification, with each step of the process involving the application of a specific set of predetermined rules (Latifah, 2020). A Systematic Literature Review (SLR) can distinguish between subjective and objective information. Objective results are expected to enrich the literature and researchers' understanding of previous results and explain the research's position in a broader scientific context (Creswell, 2014). Through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR), a researcher can assess whether a paper is worthy of being used as a reference in research. In addition, a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) is useful for writers to know what needs to be improved or added to improve the quality of the paper.

The literature search was conducted through Elicit, ERIC, Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, and Sage Journals. This time, the researcher searched using the keywords "student participation for transition programming", "self-determination", and "student involvement in transition planning," sorted by relevance. This study used a literature review as a method for data collection. Then, it will be analyzed using a qualitative descriptive approach, as it is considered

appropriate to achieve the research objectives, namely a case study on the role of students in transition programs through various literature. This study includes a description of the research questions, search strategy, inclusion criteria, data extraction, and evaluation criteria using a systematic literature review method.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The systematic review in this study used the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines (Moher et al., 2009). The systematic review flow diagram is in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines (Moher et al., 2009).

Visualization details of the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines (Moher et al., 2009) are shown in Figure 2.
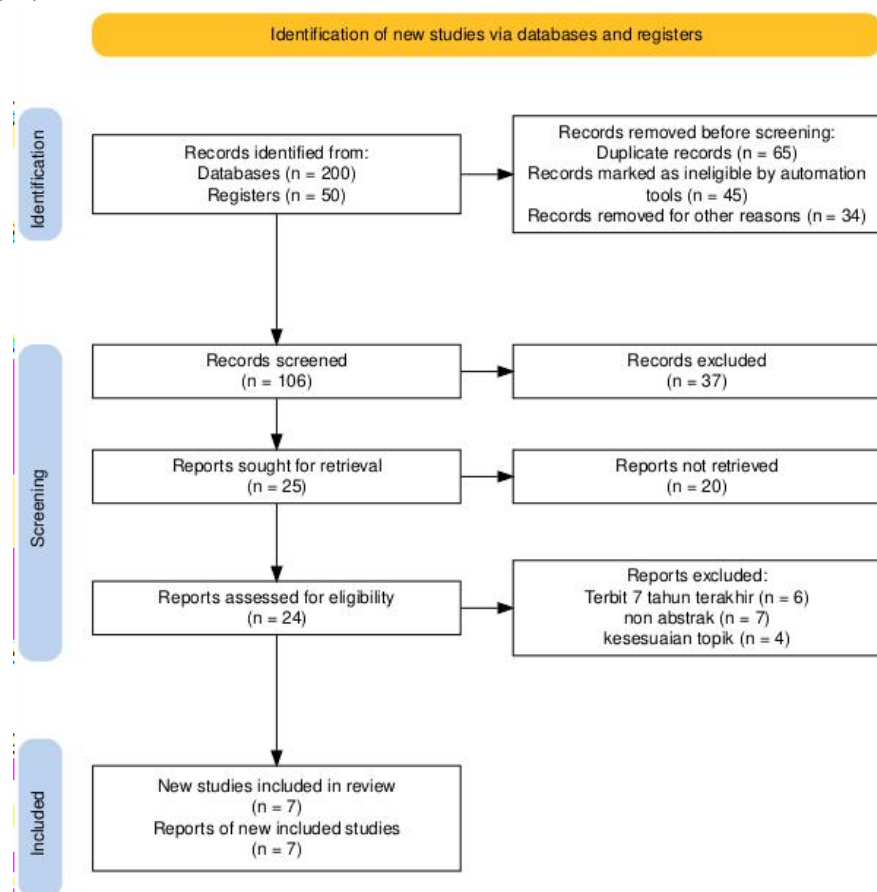

Figure 2 The stages of article selection according to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines (Moher et al., 2009)

The literature search process was conducted using Elicit, ERIC, Google Scholar, Science-Direct, and Sage Journals, resulting in 200 articles and 50 from

other relevant search sources. Then, filtering was carried out based on duplicate articles (65), articles deemed ineligible (45), and articles that were not available. (34). So the total remaining from the filtering results is 106 articles. Therefore, a screening process was conducted, with 37 articles excluded. After sorting based on article eligibility, 24 papers were obtained. The finding shows that a comprehensive reading of the articles was conducted to select the most relevant ones. Of the 24 papers, articles were excluded based on year of publication, abstract suitability, and topic suitability. From the selected papers, 7 met the criteria. Table 1 below illustrates the systematic and in-depth screening process that resulted in the selection of 7 articles for inclusion in this review.

Researchers grouped the article findings into two categories: intervention and survey articles. Two of the seven articles included in the survey were "IEP/Transition Planning Participation Among Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities: Findings from NLTS 2012" (Johnson et al., 2020) and "Predictors of Self-Determination in Postsecondary Education for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities" (Shogren et al., 2018). The remaining five articles were intervention articles.

Johnson et al. (2020) found that students with severe intellectual disabilities tended to have lower participation in IEP meetings than students with other disabilities. Only 19.5% of students with severe intellectual disabilities took a role in determining transition programs. This figure was lower than the 52.2% for other groups. Johnson et al. (2020) identified factors influencing students' roles in developing transition programs, including functional skills, communication, and self-advocacy.

Shogren et al. (2018) surveyed 251 students with IDD aged 17-42 years, finding that the average score was at the middle level, particularly on self-regulation, at 7.02. Based on the findings, pre-college work experience did not influence students' role in determining post-school programs. This article does not mention specific results on students' roles in developing transition programs.

Collier, Griffin et al. (2014) research tested an informal assessment tool called the Student Transition Questionnaire (STQ). This article emphasized the importance of involving students with disabilities in their transition program planning. The results showed that the use of the STQ can facilitate student participation in transition planning. This was demonstrated through a pilot test of the STQ and stakeholder evaluation through focus groups. Although still in need of refinement, the STQ shows potential to support student-centered transition assessment practices.

Flowers et al. (2018) evaluated an interagency collaborative approach to improving student self-determination and participation in IEP meetings using CIRCLES. A study of 877 students in 44 schools showed that CIRCLES significantly increased student engagement.

Table 1. Overview of the Selected Articles

Writer	Article Title	Research Subjects	Method	Location	Summary
Johnson, et al. (2020)	IEP/Transition Planning Participation Among Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities: Findings from NLTS 2012	Students with severe intellectual disabilities (autism, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities), ages 14–22, majority male (65.6%)	Analysis of longitudinal data (NLTS 2012)	University of Minnesota, United States	The study compares participation in IEP development between students with severe intellectual disabilities and other disabilities. It found limited participation in the IEP process for students with severe intellectual disabilities.
Hotez et al. (2018)	Designing a Summer Transition Program for Incoming and Current College Students on the Autism Spectrum: A Participatory Approach	Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), ages 17–28, majority 18–22, mostly male (80%)	Participatory study with intervention	City University of New York, United States	This study explores the development of a summer transition program for college students with autism, focusing on student involvement in designing and implementing the program.
Collier, Griffin et al. (2014)	Facilitating Students' Involvement in Transition Assessment: A Pilot Study of the Student Transition Questionnaire (STQ)	186 students with disabilities, grades 10-12, 29 students with disabilities (45% male, 55% female), 5 parents (80% female), 13 professionals	Mixed methods	Southwestern United States	The study discusses the development and testing of the Student Transition Questionnaire (STQ), emphasizing the critical role of student involvement in transition planning as part of self-determination.
Flowers et al. (2018)	A Demonstration Model of Interagency Collaboration for Students With Disabilities: A Multilevel Approach	877 students with disabilities, grades 10-12	Randomized controlled experiment with CIRCLES intervention	Southeastern United States	This research evaluates the CIRCLES model, a collaborative approach to increasing student participation and self-determination in IEP development.
Shogren et al. (2018)	Predictors of Self-Determination in Postsecondary Education for Students With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities	251 students with disabilities enrolled in the TPSID program, ages 17-24	Longitudinal study using secondary data from the National Coordinating Center (NCC)	23 US states	The study examines factors influencing self-determination in students with intellectual disabilities in post-school education settings.
Seong et al. (2015)	Effects of the Self-Directed Individualized Education Program on Self-Determination and Transition of Adolescents with Disabilities	143 students received self-directed IEP intervention, 195 students as control group	Experiment with Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) design	6 states in the US	This study evaluates the effectiveness of the Self-Directed IEP intervention in improving self-determination and transition for adolescents with disabilities.
Van Laarhoven-Myers et al. (2014)	Promoting Self-Determination and Transition Planning Using Technology: Student and Parent Perspectives	100 students with intellectual disabilities, ages 14-21, and their parents/guardians	Mixed methods	Illinois, United States	The study evaluates a multimedia technology-based program aimed at increasing self-determination and student involvement in transition planning and IEPs.

Seong et al. (2015) found that student involvement in the IEP is a crucial aspect believed to contribute to a more successful transition program. Their findings suggest that students with intellectual disabilities can influence decisions and their role in IEP meetings during transition programs. The primary outcome of this study was that students who received self-directed IEP training demonstrated significant improvements in self-determination compared to the control group.

Hotez et al. (2018) demonstrated that a participatory approach can increase the involvement of autistic students in transition program planning, with reported improvements in social skills and self-advocacy. Students' involvement in developing transition programs is not a one-off process. However, the role of mentors contributes to this increased student involvement.

Van Laarhoven-Myers et al. (2014) describe the results of research that examines the use of multimedia technology to increase self-determination and involvement of students with disabilities in the transition planning process and IEP (Individualized Education Program). The results of the study on students show that 93% of students enjoyed exploring post-school options, 96% enjoyed learning interesting activities, 85% had a plan to achieve their dreams, and 88% could communicate their desires. This program was considered beneficial, especially in giving students a voice in planning their own lives.

Student Participation in Individualized Education Program (IEP)-Based Transition Planning

Students' roles in IEPs are not simply as recipients of services, but as active agents who voice their interests, strengths, and needs. Based on findings by Collier et al. (2014), tools such as the Student Transition Questionnaire (STQ) allow students to self-evaluate their life skills, school participation, and work readiness. As a result, students are better able to participate in IEP meetings with a personal perspective. Directly involving students in presentations to the school and community teams, such as in the CIRCLES model, can help transition plans better align with student goals (Flowers et al., 2018). Students should be involved in self-assessments such as the STQ and IEP discussions to ensure individualized transition plans.

Johnson et al (2020) in their article divided the role of students into 3 levels, namely (1) basic level: physical presence during meetings, (2) intermediate level: providing input on interests and goals, and (3) advanced level: leading discussions, such as presenting career preferences. Meanwhile, in the case findings, students with disabilities with certain specifications, such as severe cognitive disabilities, tend to have a passive role (39.8%), only being present without significant contributions, which are still at the basic level.

Students who have the necessary skills and training, such as through after-school programs, have a different role to play. They can excel above others (Shofren et al. 2018). After-school programs provide support for students in determining their own careers, including access to higher education, developing social skills, and preparing for employment.

Case Studies from Various Literature and Field Findings

The use of the CIRCLES model (Flowers et al., 2018) and the STQ (Collier et al., 2014) can increase students' awareness and participation in developing transition programs. This is because students are asked to actively participate, such as by presenting their own goals using PowerPoint or video.

When linking literature findings to implementation in Indonesia, it is necessary to consider the local context, education system, and specific challenges. Implementation of student engagement in transition programs remains inadequate, impacted by weak regulations, limited infrastructure, and limited resources.

Field findings, such as those at a special needs school in East Java, show that student X does not receive career guidance in the upper secondary school class, in line with their wishes and interests. Career guidance and vocational training are provided based on the availability of teacher trainers and existing infrastructure. Teachers tend to dominate the planning process without meaningful student involvement. Students are not involved in choosing their interests and post-school plans after graduation.

In Indonesia, there has been no research such as the STQ (Student Transition Questionnaire) to assess student perspectives (Collier et al., 2014). This tool can be developed and adapted to local contexts, languages, and student characteristics. There is a lack of after-school programs for students with disabilities, such as TPSID (Shogren et al., 2018), which provide students with the tools to determine their own choices. However, opportunities that

can be utilized currently by getting involved in BLK (Vocational Training Centers) and MSME programs can provide transition training for students with disabilities in Indonesia.

The concept of self-determination of student involvement in the program

Self-determination is the ability of students to control their own lives. This concept includes transition planning. This concept encompasses four main components (Wehmeyer et al., 2014).

1. Autonomy is the ability of students to make choices such as choosing vocational training for themselves, determining whether, after graduating from school, they will continue to higher education or decide to enter the world of work.
2. Self-regulation, Students' ability to plan and solve problems, such as determining steps to achieve predetermined goals.
3. Psychological Empowerment, self-confidence that one is capable of achieving the goals of the transition program.
1. Self-realization is an understanding of one's strengths and weaknesses. Sogren et al. (2018) empirical findings that students with high levels of self-determination are more successful in post-secondary education because they are able to utilize accommodations and build social networks. In secondary schools, involving students in inclusive exams and activities, such as providing practice in goal-setting linked to the curriculum, can be a strategy to increase self-determination. In Indonesia, transition program decisions are often made by teachers or families, resulting in the underdevelopment of children's ability to apply the concept of self-determination. Teachers are poorly trained in providing person-centered planning or self-directed IEP methods, and parents lack understanding of the concept of self-determination. Socialization and workshops are needed to introduce teachers and parents to the importance of the concept of self-determination, training students to set their own goals according to their talents and interests.

CONCLUSION

Based on a literature review and field case studies, it was found that the participation of students with disabilities in developing transition programs is key to their success. Student involvement is measured not only by physical attendance, but also by their participation in meetings and actively determining life, educational, and career goals, which will yield significant results.

External factors such as understanding the concept of self-determination, parental support, collaboration between institutions, and student assessment instruments such as the STQ (Collier et al., 2014) need to be improved and developed. However, challenges in the field such as a lack of resources, facilities, and infrastructure, inadequate teacher training, a limited understanding of the concept of self-determination, regulations, curriculum, and obstacles.

Therefore, it is necessary to develop policies that support student participation in determining their destiny. This way, transition programs can be more effective in preparing students with disabilities for independent and meaningful adult life.

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