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Interpersonal intelligence of students with disabilities and their impact on social interaction: a case study in Universiti Utara Malaysia

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Abstract:

This study describes the interpersonal intelligence of students with disabilities and their impact on social interaction. This study was qualitative by using a structured interview method for six disabled students at Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). In particular, the findings show that interpersonal intelligence affects the social interaction of disabled students, especially from disabled students with peers. In addition, students with disabilities were also found to have problems with limited mobility problems as well as unsatisfactory facilities or facilities in the university which made their movements difficult. Students with disabilities also reported that they relied heavily on close friends to help them attend and attend college at UUM. Most students with disabilities have good social interactions with peers, although they have disabilities that affect their quality of life especially physically and visually impaired students. The study also suggested that facilities for disabled students in UUM be upgraded to enable disabled persons to be self-reliant in UUM. This can improve the social function of disabled students and also develop the potential of the disabled person to the maximum level.

Keywords: Interpersonal Intelligence, Student with disabilities, Social interaction

Introduction

In Malaysia, people with disabilities have the opportunity to get their education from primary, secondary, to tertiary institutions either at the Public Institution of Higher Learning or Private Institution of Higher Learning. Special education programs implemented for students with disabilities are part of the National Education Policy. This practice demonstrates that the rights and opportunities of persons with disabilities in the formal education system are not neglected (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2000).

The emergence of disabled people as college and university students is a prerequisite for fulfilling their rights and potential as individuals gaining the same place as others. Disability is one of the highest quality human resources in order to function as a subject of development (Anwas, 2014). Success in higher education has a lifelong impact on the self-sufficiency of the disabled.

Through higher education, these groups have the opportunity to improve their knowledge, develop social skills, acquire academic qualifications and have the opportunity to develop their minds. All of these experiences are important in their empowerment (Hurst, 1996). However, students with physical and sensory disabilities face great challenges in higher education institutions and their ability to learn is impaired (Reindal, 1995).

Skills are very much needed for every individual especially nowadays. Skills for some people are a must have because in all respects we as individuals need to be skilled in dealing with everything. In contrast to the disabled, their inability to prevent them from expressing or expressing their ability. The purpose of the skills for the disabled is to enable them to meet their daily needs and to live independently (Anggraeni, 2012).

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Interpersonal intelligence also known as social intelligence is closely related to social interaction. It is defined as one's ability and ability to build relationships, build relationships and maintain social relationships (West & Lynn, 2008). Interpersonal intelligence is a very important skill for humans. According to Gardner (1983) good interpersonal intelligence enables one to become socially conscious and adaptable. Recent studies suggest that interpersonal intelligence is an important part of one's life because it is essential for one to develop a harmonious relationship with another person (Weber, 1970).

Based on the problem statement presented, this study will explain in more detail about interpersonal intelligence of students with disabilities and their impact on social interaction.



This study was conducted due to the lack of research on interpersonal intelligence among students with disabilities at university level. The objectives of this study are to: (1), Describes the characteristics of the interpersonal intelligence of disabled students at Universiti Utara Malaysia. (2), explains the social interaction of students with disabilities at Universiti Utara Malaysia. (3), To study the problems faced by disabled students in social interaction.

Definition of Interpersonal Intelligence

Interpersonal intelligence is the ability to understand others, empathize, understand the desires of others, the skills to act impressively towards others and can help to socialize with others (Gardner, 1983; McKenzie, 2000). Gordon and Huggins-Cooper (2013) refer to interpersonal intelligence as social intelligence, which helps humans understand the feelings, motivations and incitement of others.

Definition of Disability

Persons with disabilities is someone who has a disability in the long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory that when faced with various barriers may not be able to participate fully and effectively in society (Kementerian Pembangunan Wanita, Keluarga dan Masyarakat, 2016). According to Somantri (2006) Disability is a limitation or inability to perform an activity in a manner that is or is considered normal to humans, largely due to a decline in ability.

Definition of Social Interaction

Social interactions can be defined as dynamic social relationships, which are social relations in the form of one person to another, to one group to another, or to groups to individuals (Weber, 1970; Vygotsky, 1978).

Interpersonal Intelligence and Social Interaction

Several previous studies have been conducted to identify people with disabilities in social interactions with the environment such as the study by Arhamdy Wirahadikusumah (2014) where studies of blind and low-vision disabled people can play an active role in building social interaction with the community. In addition, people with disabilities at the primary and secondary levels can interact well with the school environment with the disabled students and their friends, teachers and staff at the school (Tuti Farhan, 2013).

Interpersonal intelligence is the basis for social interaction. Based on the background of such issues as referenced in previous studies by Sitti Habiba (2017), Hasnah, Hanafi, Mokhtar, & Norasuzaini (2010), Nur & Haris (2015), Arhamdy Wirahadikusumah (2014),

Tuti Farhan (2013) and Anggraeni (2012) noted that social interaction of the disabled at the primary, middle school, and community environments in the process of social interaction in children with disabilities can provide a good relationship with the environment. Education at the university level is also very important for people with disabilities, but lack of information is causing potential students with disabilities if there is discrimination or rejection from the university. In fact, many state universities have approved many people with disabilities.

A recent study by Erin (2017) shows that forms of social interaction at Univeritas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga College are not always allied and dissociative, some are all- dissociative and dissociative-allied. This is influenced by the lecturer's knowledge of the disabled and the attitude of the disabled student. In addition, according to Yune (2016) The fulfillment of the rights of students with disabilities to the Islamic University of Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta includes the provision of access, administration, assistance, counseling, socialization, advocacy, discussion, training and research. This form of fulfillment has supported and facilitated students with disabilities to obtain their rights in the educational process. The role of the Disability Services Center in realizing the Univeritas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga is a campus that meets the educational needs of students with disabilities even though they are far from perfect.

Therefore, as a matter of concern and the seriousness and commitment of higher education to the disabled, a policy that provides greater scope for them to access higher education is needed (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2010).

Students with Disabilities Challenge

There are factors that cause disabilities to be challenged on campus such as Hasnah, Hanafi, Mokhtar, & Norasuzaini (2010), proving that the challenge of infrastructure facilities provided to students with disabilities in public universities is not friendly and that these facilities are not suitable for use by students with disabilities so it is difficult to move from one place to another. This situation has been a hindrance to the movement of disabled students on campus, providing good infrastructure



and facilities that will enable students with disabilities to enjoy a more comfortable day-to-day life like other normal students (Sanmargaraja, Shalini & Seow, 2011; Tinklin and Hall, 1999).

Method

In this research, the researcher selected the method that would be most appropriate for the project to be undertaken and in line with the research questions and objectives to be studied. This research uses qualitative methods because it is able to give an accurate picture of a phenomenon (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003).

The qualitative method is to explore, explain, or describe the actual phenomena from the perspective of the study participants. In addition, qualitative research enables the researcher to obtain clearer, more comprehensive information about what is being studied (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1996; Merriam, 1998).

This research uses interview data collection and observation Interviews are the methods used in this research, structured interviewing techniques as one of the data collection techniques used by researchers and involving students with disabilities, the researchers questioned the study participants for information on interpersonal intelligence and social interaction among disabled students at Universiti Utara Malaysia. Describe interview method as a method that allows researchers to access the participants' perceptions of the study, meaning or understanding built by the study participant (Robson, 2002).

Observation is essentially an activity using the senses, can vision, smell, hearing, to obtain information needed to answer the research problem. The results of observations in the form of activities, events, objects, conditions or certain atmosphere, and a person's emotional feelings. Observations are made to obtain a real picture of an event or event to answer research questions (Grieshaber, 2006; Creswell, 2013).

Indirect sources of information obtained from informants are derived from other information such as pictures, number of persons with disabilities in

Universiti Utara Malaysia, books, journals, reports and official documents and other supporting data that may complement this study. Researchers also used data collection method for observation, to observe behavior and social interaction of students with disabilities at Universiti Utara Malaysia. Consistent with Grieshaber (2006) view that observation is the most accurate way to obtain information about social symptoms.

Looking at the sample size, Patton (1990) did not provide the right number of cases to be used in qualitative research. However, he suggested that the sample be selected for purposive sampling. Therefore, this study uses a sampling method where the researcher selects samples from one population according to the purpose of the study. The sample involved in this study was the selection of students with disabilities in Universiti Utara Malaysia and the location of the study that the researcher wanted to investigate. Therefore, the researchers recruited six students with disabilities at Universiti Utara Malaysia. The rationale for the selection of six disabled students in UUM was; (1). The students consist of three boys and three girls (2). The willingness of students with disabilities to respond to research (3). The various disabilities in UUM students are two visually impaired, two hearing impaired, one physically disabled, and one cerebral Palsy plus physical disability (4). Undergraduate students.

The instrument of study refers to the characteristics of the interpersonal intelligence presented by Gardner (1983) and McKenzie (2000) while the characteristics are introduced by the social interaction of Gillin and Gillin (1954). The characteristics of interpersonal intelligence (Gardner, 1983) are: (1) Cooperate; (2) Empathy for others; (3) Have lots of friends; (4) Communicate; (5) Admire; (6) Leadership (7) Solution of problems. While the characteristics of Social Interaction (Gillin and Gillin, 1954) are: (1) Get together; (2) Involved in; (3) Keeping Interaction; (4) Positive feelings; (5) Build relationships; (6) Follow the rules; (7) Created the same view.

Results and Discussion

a. Characteristics of Interpersonal Intelligence Students with Disabilities at Universiti Utara Malaysia

Based on the face-to-face interview results, the findings related to the interpersonal intelligence of students with disabilities are as follows:



Characteristics of Interpersonal Intelligence

| Cooperate | Empathy for others | Have lots of friends | Communicate | Admire | Leadership | solution of problems |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| participants 1'2'3'4'5'6 | participants 1'2'3'4'5'6 | participants 1'2'3'4'5'6 | participants 1'2'4'5'6 | participants 1'2'3'4'5'6 | participants 1'2'3'4'5'6 | participants 1'2'3'4'5'6 |

Source: face-to-face interviews and observations

Cooperate

Six study participants stated that they were able to work with other colleagues in UUM. Here is an example of a face-to-face interview with a research participant on a collaborative aspect:

"During my time at UUM, I was able to work with friends like group assignment partners and co-curriculum partners, this is what I do for the benefit of the group and myself".(Participants 2)

Empathy for others

Six participants stated that they could understand their friends (empathy). Here is an example of a face-to-face interview with a study participant on the aspect of understanding friends:

"It always made me feel good about friends like when my roommate was in financial trouble, and I was motivated, and then helping my friends out of pity, so I lent them money or I shared food with them, this incident left me and my friends in shock. become closer and more understanding".(Participants 4)

Have lots of friends

Six participants stated that they had many friends. Here is an example of a face-to-face interview with a study participant on aspects of many friends:

"Since I have been studying in UUM I have made many friends, such as in classes, co-curriculars, in the boarding house, I have known many new friends, with many of my friends learning as much as culture from Indonesia, languages, and more"(Participants 6)

Communicate

Five participants stated that they could communicate with others. Here's an example of a face-to-face interview with a study participant on the communication aspect:

"Of course I can communicate well with friends, like when my group assignment is being asked for a group assignment, or chatting with other friends about the same hobby, our communication is so smooth that we can joke around".(Participants 1)

One participant stated that they were less able to communicate with others. Here is an example of a face-to-face interview with a study participant on the communication aspect:

"I am less able to communicate because I have Cerebral Palsy, which is not good when I talk, so I have to plan and talk to my friends over and over".(Participants 3)

Admire

Six participants said they were admired by other students at UUM. Here are some examples of face-to-face interviews with study participants on aspects of admiration:

"I didn't know that I was admired by my friends, because I didn't know how to rate it, but my friend used to say I was great because with my limitations and inability, I was able to study well and get good PMK, besides friends I feel proud of myself, because I can act like a friend with disabilities".(Participants 5)

Have leadership skills

Six participants indicated that they had a leadership attitude. Here is an example of a face-to-face interview with the study participants on leadership aspects:

"I used to be the head of group assignments, at the time I had to lead a good working relationship with a group friend, so that our group could get good marks, and our results were successful".(Participants 2)



Solution of problems

Six participants indicated that they could solve the problem. Here is an example of a face-to-face interview with a study participant on the problem-solving aspect:

"The problem I always face is campus facilities, we are told that we have mobility disabilities, so we have to be careful when walking or sometimes we have to wait for friends to help us". (Participants 3)

The characteristics of interpersonal intelligence in this study refer to the seven characteristics of interpersonal intelligence presented by Gardner (1983), and McKenzie (2000). The findings of this study indicate that disabled students have the characteristics of interpersonal intelligence, such as working with friends, understanding (empathy) with friends, having many friends, being able to communicate and talk even when disabled students need to talk to peers, students with disabilities at UUM is also admired by peers, because of their inability to engage with other students, students with disabilities are also able to demonstrate leadership in group assignments, besides disabled students in UUM when faced with problems, students with disabilities are able to solve the problem.

These findings are in line with the studies of Durie (1998), and Armstrong (2008), who state that interpersonal intelligence is important and begins with the group. As Vygostky (1993) pointed out, interpersonal intelligence develops when interacting with others. Students with disabilities with strong interpersonal intelligence are more likely to cooperate than work independently (Williams & Williams, 2011; Gardner, 1983; McKenzie, 2000).

The findings of this study are in line with Gardner (1983) assertion that interpersonal intelligence is the ability to understand others and empathize. This study is also supported by McKenzie (2000), Campbell (2006), that a person with interpersonal intelligence can feel what the person around them feels. Safaria (2005), found that interpersonal intelligence is the ability to create, develop and maintain a

healthy and mutually beneficial personal (social) relationship.

Furthermore, the element of admiration that is one of the characteristics of interpersonal intelligence indicates that students with disabilities in UUM are admired by peers. This finding is in line with Gardner (1983) finding, that a person with interpersonal intelligence demonstrates the nature of rules and norms that can be admired by others.

Similarly, the leadership qualities displayed by disabled students at UUM can lead a team, work in a team, and lead a team well. These findings are in line with those suggested by Campbell (1990), saying that interpersonal skills often favor team leadership, whether they are older or younger and sometimes stand out in group or collaborative work.

The interpersonal characteristics of students with disabilities in UUM in terms of solving their own problems or group problems are also demonstrated by students with disabilities from their experience. The findings of this study are in line with the studies of Nurul wahida (2011), and Zaidatun Tasir (2002), who stated that someone with interpersonal intelligence can solve problems.

Generally, the findings of this study show that disabled students in UUM have interpersonal intelligence so that they can survive in their daily life, in addition to the interpersonal intelligence that disabled students have in UUM, enabling them to better understand the importance of interpersonal relationships in life.

b. Social Interaction of Students with Disabilities at Universiti Utara Malaysia

Based on face-to-face interview results show the following results:

| Get together | Involved in | Keeping Interaction | Positive feelings | Build relationships | Follow the rules | Created the same Opinion |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Participants 1'2'3'4'5'6 | Participants 1'2'3'4'5'6 | Participants 1'2'3'4'5'6 | Participants 1'2'3'4'5'6 | Participants 1'2'3'4'5'6 | Participants 1'2'3'4'5'6 | Participants 1'2'3'4'5'6 |

Source: face-to-face interviews and observations





Get together

Six participants stated that they were able to gather with friends in UUM. Here is an example of a face-to-face interview with a study participant on the aspect of getting together with friends at UUM:

"Getting together with friends at UUM of course I can do, like in class in group assignments and co-curriculars, while getting together makes me more excited to study with my peers".(Participants 5)

Involved in

Six participants indicated that they could engage with peers in UUM. Here is an example of a face-to-face interview with a study participant on the aspect of engaging with peers at UUM:

"Yes, I've always been involved in activities like I used to join the JKM seniors program last semester, in co-curricular activities, activities, kayaks, my purpose in participating in the program to enhance my experience".(Participants 3)

Keeping interaction

Six participants stated that they could maintain interaction with peers in UUM. Here is an example of a face-to-face interview with participants on the aspect of maintaining interaction with peers at UUM:

"Of course I keep my interactions with my peers so that I can survive in UUM activities, considering I'm disabled so I have to really keep up with my peers, usually to keep my relationships with my peers by being together if I have time, or whether I'm being asked to think about assignments, etc".(Participants 1)

Positive feelings

Six participants indicated that they had positive feelings in peer groups. Here is an example of a face-to-face interview with a study participant on the positive aspects of peer groups:

"Yes, I always think positively about my peers, as in an assignment group, remembering that I am different from my peers but I always think positive that my friends can understand me or that I understand my friends. Other examples are when my friend asked me to do a certain part of the assignment and I didn't understand, so I had to do it again and again until my friend could accept what I was doing. It does not make me angry or sad, but it does make me think positively that I do the assignment over and over again so that I can better understand the assignment".(Participants 4)

Build relationships

Six participants indicated that they could develop relationships for peer group success. Here is an example of a face-to-face interview with a study participant on aspects of building relationships for peer group success:

"Yes, I've always been very passionate about building a successful group, which is what I do when I get commission from friends to do certain parts, even though I have to do it over and over again, because sometimes I need to be explained so I can understand that's right".(Participants 2)

Follow the rules

Six participants indicated that they could follow peer group rules. Here is an example of a face-to-face interview with a study participant on the aspects of peer peer regulation:

"Of course I follow the rules of my peer group, in the classroom, in the boardroom, in the co-curriculum, and I make sure that I maintain good relationships with my peers, so that they do not create conflict".(Participants 4)

Created the same opinion

Six participants stated that they could create similar opinion with peer groups. Here is an example of a face-to-face interview with a study participant about aspects of creating the same opinion as peer groups:

"Yes, as well as committing to group assignments together, and as part of our senior program as I did last semester, all I did was give the idea that our program could work, and work together to make a joint decision for our group to succeed".(Participants 3)



Based on face-to-face interviews with disabled students at UUM, it shows that disabled students at UUM can gather and engage in activities with their peers, in addition to engaging with peers as well as maintaining interpersonal relationships so that they can survive in of each of their activities. The social interaction of students with disabilities at UUM shows that there is a relationship between individuals. Which is a social interaction process. Slamet Santoso (2010) states that Social interactions are complex events, including behaviors that are both stimulus and reaction, and that may have one meaning as a stimulus and another as a reaction.

Students with disabilities in UUM in social interaction also exhibit positive behaviors in

caring for their peers, this is done to appreciate each other in maintaining relationships with peers. This is done to build relationships with peers. In activities with groups of students with disabilities in UUM also carry out a customized arrangement within the group, so that they can create the same group within the group. Findings of Santosa (2010) Social interaction is a process of interdependence between individuals and groups, which in turn can lead to conditions of mutual interaction. Social interactions can enhance individual social behaviors, so that individuals are more mature in social behavior with other individuals in the opposite social situation (Gillin & Gillin, 1954; Weber, 1970).

c. Problems Facing Students with Disabilities at Universiti Utara Malaysia in Social Interaction

The Problems Facing Students with Disabilities in UUM in Social Interaction are as follows:

Problems Facing Students with Disabilities in UUM in Social Interaction

| Your own inability | UUM Facility |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Participants 1'2'3'4'5'6 | Participants 1'2'3'4'5'6 |

Source: face-to-face interviews and observations

Your own inability

Six participants stated that the problem faced during social interaction was their own inability. The following are examples of face-to-face interviews with study participants regarding aspects of their disability during social interactions:

“In fact, our own disability or disability often causes us to interact with our friends, such as walking around here and finding refrence in the library, while we sometimes struggle, and we have to do it over and over again. , but we are grateful that we can still be understood by our friends”.(Participants 2)

UUM Facility

Six participants stated that the problem encountered during social interaction was the UUM facility. Here is an example of a face-to-face interview with a study participant regarding the UUM facility aspect:

"UUM facilities are also a problem for us in social interaction, especially in our movement for mobility, because when we go to class and distance, it gives us a little effort and hardship, so we have to be helped by friends".(Participants 1)

Based on the findings of the interviews through face-to-face interviews with UUM students, two key issues faced are the challenges of the student's own disability and the UUM facility that has disabled students in the movement, respondents reported that they are sometimes dependent on peers. close to assist them in attending lectures for students with physical and visual impairments. To improve the quality of services and facilities for students with disabilities at UUM, among the suggestions submitted by the respondents of this study

were efforts to increase the awareness and understanding of all campus staff about their challenges and needs, and to establish a body that can communicate their needs to the administrators. universities and take action that can create a more positive physical and social environment to reach their full potential.

The findings of this study are in line with the study of Hasnah, Hanafi, Mokhtar and Norasuzaini (2010) that students with disabilities experience movement difficulties during college and move from one place to





another, specifically for the visually impaired, physically, and hearing impaired. This finding in line with Tinklin and Hall (1999), Sanmargaraja, Shalini & Seow, 2011 found that barriers faced by disabled students in Public Higher Education Institutions are due to four sources namely physical environment, the process of entry into higher education, access to information during the course of study and finally the low level of awareness in academic support and support.

Conclusion and Implications

Based on the conclusions of the study, overall students with disabilities at UUM demonstrate good interpersonal intelligence in terms of working together, understanding peers, having many friends, being able to communicate, admire, have leadership, follow rules and create common ground. with peer groups to be effective in their social

interactions in activities at Universiti Utara Malaysia.

Students with Disabilities in UUM are one of the target groups in the implementation of enrichment activities in UUM. Therefore, one of the implications of this study's findings to students with disabilities at UUM is that they can identify the strength distribution of interpersonal intelligence traits possessed by disabled students that have an impact on their social interactions. By knowing the characteristics of interpersonal intelligence, disabled people at UUM can assure themselves that individuals have a wide range of intelligence, especially interpersonal intelligence that can be used in their daily life. The findings of this study can serve as a guide to the implications of the University administration, the administration needs to provide better facilities especially the disabled-friendly facilities to enhance the capacity and expand the potential for disabled students in UUM and other universities.

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