

Academic Adaptation Ability of Students with Disabilities in Higher Education

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Article History

accepted 08/08/2024

approved 15/08/2024

published 25/08/2024

ABSTRAK

Beradaptasi dalam proses perkuliahan merupakan tantangan bagi mahasiswa disabilitas di perguruan tinggi. Kesulitan beradaptasi di perguruan tinggi akan berpengaruh terhadap kenyamanannya saat berada di kampus, pencapaian prestasi akademik, partisipasi/ keaktifan sebagai mahasiswa. Tujuan penelitian adalah memaparkan kemampuan adaptasi pembelajaran pada mahasiswa disabilitas semester dua di Universitas Lambung Mangkurat melalui metode kualitatif. Subjek penelitian berjumlah sembilan orang dengan berbagai kondisi disabilitas. Data dikumpulkan melalui teknik wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi, selanjutnya dianalisis secara deskriptif. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa kemampuan adaptasi mahasiswa disabilitas dipengaruhi oleh berbagai faktor yaitu kepercayaan diri dan penerimaan terhadap kondisi yang dialami, fasilitas kampus yang belum sepenuhnya aksesibel, lingkungan pertemanan, dan dukungan orang tua. Layanan di Universitas Lambung Mangkurat masih perlu ditingkatkan agar memberikan kenyamanan, kepercayaan diri, dan kemudahan dalam mengikuti perkuliahan bagi mahasiswa disabilitas dapat terpenuhi.

Kata kunci: *kemampuan adaptasi, akademik, mahasiswa disabilitas, perguruan tinggi*

ABSTRACT

Adapting to the lecture process is a challenge for students with disabilities in higher education. Difficulty adapting to higher education will affect their comfort while on campus, academic achievement, participation/activeness as students. The purpose of this study was to describe the learning adaptation ability of second semester students with disabilities at Lambung Mangkurat University through qualitative methods. The research subjects were nine people with various disability conditions. Data were collected through interview, observation, and documentation techniques, then analyzed descriptively. The results showed that the adaptation ability of students with disabilities was influenced by various factors, namely self-confidence and acceptance of the conditions experienced, campus facilities that were not yet fully accessible, friendship environment, and parental support. Services at Lambung Mangkurat University still need to be improved so that providing comfort, confidence, and ease in attending lectures for students with disabilities can be fulfilled.

Keywords: *adaptability, academic, disabled students, college*



INTRODUCTION

The first year of college is a transition period and is a critical period as a student coinciding with various social and emotional changes and psychological challenges (Grama, 2018). New students are expected to have the ability and speed to adapt so they can play an active role in completing various course assignments. The adaptation period is not easy for first semester students (Setiawaty et al., 2019) because the learning process is much different compared to senior high school.

The transition process influences the beginning of a student's experience in higher education and determines the course of engagement that often continues until graduation (Moriña, 2017). Various kinds of problems can arise when new students fail to adapt to new situations well (Nyimas & Rulangi, 2022). Students who are unable to adapt to learning life on campus will experience problems in interacting with lecturers, fellow students and the campus environment which can hinder their learning process (Setiawaty et al., 2019). Adaptation to the lecture environment can be a challenge for students with disabilities, this is due to various factors including adequate campus support/facilities, acceptance of the social environment, self-perception, parental care, and guidance from the surrounding environment. If these factors are not met, it will affect student activity, academic achievement, self-confidence and self-motivation, as well as social adaptation in the campus environment.

There are several studies that have examined the adaptation abilities of students with disabilities, namely: (1) Research Alam (2023) with the title challenges and adaptation strategies of students with disabilities in higher education in Bangladesh. The results show that students with disabilities still face various challenges on campus, however, to overcome these challenges they apply adaptive strategies such as the use of assistive devices, bilingual books, and the help of friends. (2) Kokhan et al., (2023) entitled inclusive higher education as a factor of socio-psychological adaptation of special students. This research aims to study and analyze the social adaptation of students with disabilities towards educational success at university. The research results show that a large number of respondents expressed satisfaction with physical accessibility as an implementation of inclusive education and an increasing number of regular students did not mind the presence of students with disabilities. The identified adaptation difficulties and obstacles can be considered as aspects to improve the university's inclusive environment such as coordinating communication from various parties to create a friendly lecture environment as well as the need for university teacher-psychologist support for the second group of students due to existing psycho-emotional experiences and low stress tolerance during training period. This research is different from previous research because it focuses on finding out the adaptability of students with disabilities in the academic realm including supportive campus facilities, their perspectives on studying, and views on acceptance and involvement.

METHOD

The research was carried out using a qualitative approach, namely research that examines the natural setting of various social events that occur (Kaharuddin, 2021). There were nine research subjects as primary data sources who were selected through purposive sampling with the criteria of second semester students with disabilities at Lambung Mangkurat University. Implementation of qualitative research according to Sudjana & Ibrahim (2001) is as follows:

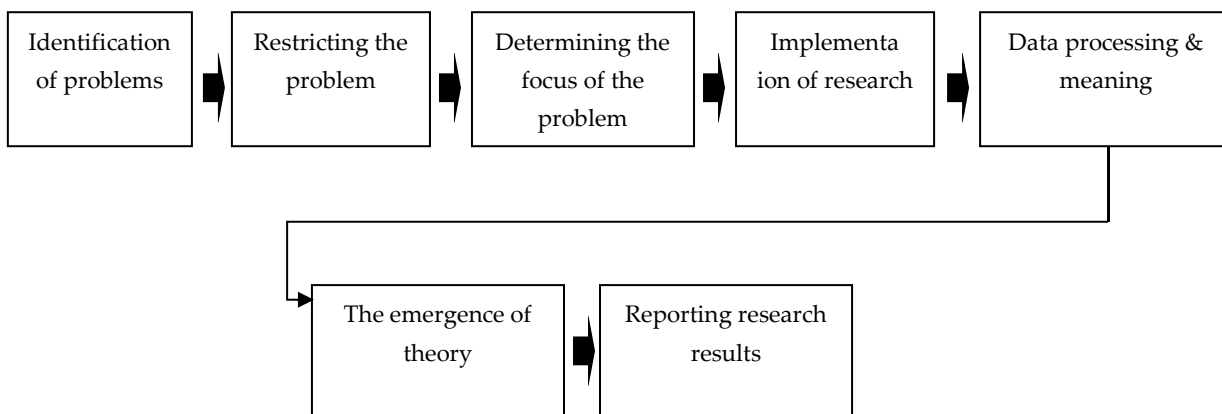


Figure 1. Research Stages

Data collection was carried out through questionnaires, interviews and observation techniques to determine the adaptation abilities of students with disabilities. The data findings were then analyzed using the stages of reduction, display and drawing conclusions. Next, data validity testing is applied using technical triangulation to determine the validity of the data based on the various techniques used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following are the results of the Likert scale regarding the adaptability of students with disabilities in higher education, namely:

Table 1 Likert Scale Results of Adaptability of Disabled Students in Higher Education

Realm	Statement	Agree (3)	Less Agree (2)	Disagree (1)
Use of facilities	There are campus facilities aimed at students with disabilities	4	4	1
	There is socialization about services for students with disabilities in higher education.	5	4	
	I understand how to use simari to view courses, download materials, and upload assignments.	5	3	1
	Availability of voluntary during lectures.	9		
	I need a volunteer during exams	8	1	
	Volunteers really help me understand the lecture process.	8	1	
	Volunteers can communicate tasks and explain other things well.	8	1	
Lecture process	I easily understand the explanation of the material by the lecturer.	2	7	
	I am often confused by the lecturer's explanation.	4	5	
	I attend lectures regularly.	8	1	
	The way the lecturer teaches makes it easier for me to socialize and cooperate with my classmates.	5	4	

	Lecturers give me the opportunity to be actively involved during lectures.	9		
	I feel frustrated/struggling/uncomfortable with coursework.	4	3	2
	I lack the enthusiasm to study.	1	1	7
Acceptance and engagement	Friends and lecturers are often encouraging.	8	1	
	I actively ask lecturers or friends about course materials/assignments.	4	3	2
	Friends and lecturers accept my presence.	8	1	
	I dare to initiate communication with peers.	7	2	
	It's easy for me to understand conversations and engage in communication with friends.	6	2	1
	I feel less involved in working on individual tasks.	5	3	1
	I am involved in group work.	9		
	It is difficult for me to make friends with others.		6	3

DISCUSSION

Lambung Mangkurat University demonstrates a commitment to accepting students with disabilities. Students with disabilities are more likely to face difficulties in accessing information during lectures (such as note-taking), participating in class (such as group work), and completing assignments (presentations, written exams, or papers). (Fuller et al., 2004). Lecture barriers faced by students with disabilities can occur on or off campus to access various special services or facilities. In the statement "there is socialization about services for students with disabilities in higher education", four people agreed and four people disagreed. In the realm of facility use, not all students with disabilities stated that "there are campus facilities available to them". This is evidenced by 4 people agreeing with the statement, 4 people disagreeing and one person disagreeing. Socialization of facilities (the presence of volunteers) has been carried out since students with disabilities have been accepted at Lambung Mangkurat University but has not fully become a solution because various second semester students have various types of obstacles. Voluntary assistants for students with disabilities are classmates of students with disabilities so that when lectures take place voluntary assistants must focus on students with disabilities who are accompanied and access lecture material for themselves. The lack of proper accessibility for students with disabilities can have various impacts, namely students with disabilities do not understand the material, tend to take longer to do assignments, assignments do not meet expectations, and low academic achievement.

Students with hearing impairments are one of the groups that often have difficulty accessing lectures due to the lack of understanding of lecturers, volunteers, and other classmates in sign language. Students with hearing impairments require lecture modifications in the form of increasing visual teaching materials, not turning their faces when communicating, students with hearing impairments sit at the front, avoid sentences that are too fast and complex, it is recommended to use demonstration, demonstration, or direct practice methods, students with hearing impairments are allowed to explain their thoughts using sign language and / or writing, and provide sign

language interpreters (Kemenristekdikti, dalam Aulia et al., 2019). This is the basis that not all students with disabilities feel special facilities that are suitable for their conditions. The number of students with physical-motor barriers is only one person, special facilities provided for students with disabilities are the presence of volunteers to assist during lectures and exams and the existence of scooters for students with physical-motor barriers that can be used while on campus. The existence of scooters that have been available is able to meet the needs of students with physical-motor barriers in carrying out mobility in the campus environment. This is also in accordance with one of the learning needs for students with physical-motor barriers, namely the physical environment and classroom equipment arranged and allowing wheelchair users to carry out mobility (Kemenristekdikti dalam Aulia et al., 2019).

In the realm of the lecture process, 8 people stated that they "attend lectures regularly" while one student disagreed because sometimes he attended due to health factors and activities that were followed outside the campus as an athlete. This indicates that students with disabilities have a good commitment to attendance even though during lectures there are often obstacles in accessing material. This is supported by the statement "I easily understand the explanation of the material by the lecturer", which was agreed by two students and disagreed by seven students.

Assignments for students are often group rather than individual, and students with disabilities are generally in groups with volunteers. On the statement "I feel less involved in individual assignments" five people agreed, three people disagreed, and one person disagreed. On the statement "I am involved in working on group assignments" all respondents agreed. On individual assignments, sometimes there are lecturers who allow students with disabilities to work on assignments together with their volunteers and the results of the assignment include two names, on the other hand there is a pattern of lecturers who regulate that on individual assignments students with disabilities are only directed by volunteers and do not work together). Lecturers have an important influence in determining the success of students with disabilities in following each lecture material. (Feriani, 2017). In fact, not all lecturers have in-depth knowledge of students with disabilities and are highly motivated to implement services that are appropriate to each student's disability. For example, for students with visual impairments, lecturers must speak in clear and non-interpretive language. Lecturers who do not have a deeper understanding of disabilities tend to be intolerant and generalize everything. (Feriani, 2017).

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that various parties have a big role in accommodating the success of lectures for students with disabilities. The Disability Services Unit has a major role in implementing socialization, increasing the competence of lecturers and staff, and increasing awareness and involvement of regular students in supporting lectures for students with various disabilities. Future research related to this study is that researchers can conduct more in-depth studies such as the involvement of various parties, supporting academic success, challenging students with disabilities in higher education or other things in order to become a source of literature that supports the fulfillment of lectures for students with disabilities.

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