

SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF VISUAL IMPAIRMENT STUDENTS OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM IN IKIP SILIWANGI**Novi Widiastuti**

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on adult education for special needs students of community education study program in IKIP Siliwangi. Education in this perspective covers not only the methodological problems and learning methods, but also the learning problems faced by various students. There are two categories of human characteristics: physical characteristics and mental characteristics. In physical characteristics, there are students who have different physical conditions compared to others, such as being blind or visually impaired. Nowadays, a lot of special needs students have applied inclusive learning which allows them to attend higher education. Thus, this study aims to uncover adults' education in facilitating and encouraging special needs students.

Keywords: *Special Needs Students, Learning Process, Inclusive Education, Adult Education*

A. INTRODUCTION**1. Background of the Study**

Humans are created in the most perfect shape compared to others, which makes no man a failure. Yet, Allah SWT only creates humans with different personalities and characteristics. Basically, humans are born from the single difference: adam and eve. Therefore, any assumption which classified human into normal and abnormal group is false and inhumane. There are only physical and characteristic classifications of human beings with different number. Thus, the variations of human beings are things that make us unique. Additionally, we should give some thought to the matter.

Meanwhile, a child with special needs (ABK in Bahasa Indonesia) is known as the substitute for the word disabled and handicapped. Special needs often described as different conditions of each child that should be given different treatment in regards to the needs, such as blindness or visual impairment. Despite their different needs, visual impaired people, in fact, deserve the same human rights as others, including education.

Regarding this, people with special needs are allowed to attend the nearest public school in their area. It does not have to be a special school due to uneven spread of special school and special needs students in Indonesia. Moreover, special needs students are allowed to enroll in higher level of education. It is possible because of the existence of inclusive education. Inclusive education does not

discriminate students and treats them equally.

According to Mudjito (mudjito, 2014), inclusive education is an educational system which enables special needs students, including blinds or visually impaired people, to attend the nearest public schools with other students. Inclusive education aims to achieve two things: first, to give the same opportunity in accessing education for people in general, and second, to fulfill an education system which respect students' diversities. Moreover, inclusive education is not limited to the basic levels education, higher level of education, such as university, is expected to do the same thing.

IKIP Siliwangi is one of Indonesia University which is open to the presence of special needs students in spite of no direct confirmation regarding IKIP as inclusive universities. One of their study programs which support special needs students is Community education Department, which has three special needs students in the class of 2017.

The problems concerning the situation are:

1. The problems concerning lecturer's teaching method
2. The unavailability of materials written in braille
3. The uneffective examination system for the special needs students
4. The assesment system for special needs students
5. Other students' attitudes concerning special needs students

Thus, this present study focuses on analyzing adults' education system for

special needs students in an inclusive university.

2. Research Questions

- a. How does an adult learning process affect special needs students?
- b. How does the educational students' need are fulfilled?
- c. What are the problems during the learning process?
- d. What are the lecturers' problems during inclusive learning?

2. The Significance of the Study

a. For lecturers

The result of the analysis is expected to help improving the inclusive system, particularly in the lecturing process

b. For Students

It is expected that the present study can enrich student's knowledge in showing their attitudes toward special needs students

c. For Educational Institutions

It is expected that the present study can help instutitions to develop their system into inclusive institution.

B. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

1. Blind or Visual Impairment Concept

a. *Blind Children*

According to (Hadi, 2007) blind or visual impairment refers to a condition when a person is suffering from a loss caused by problems that damage their eyes whether it is anatomically or physiologically. Meanwhile, (Suharmini, 2009) defines visual impairment as a state of being sightless, which lead people to use their touching, hearing,

and smelling abilities instead. To put it in another way, blind refers to a situation when someone cannot see clearly due to some damages caused by accident or genetic. Thus, it leads to different treatment toward special needs people.

Regarding this, (Widjaya, 2013) defines special needs student in educational perspective as someone who require seeing aids, methods, and special techniques during the learning process with or without the support of their functional seeing. That is to say, the supporting method is important to help student during class with or without the help of functional seeing abilities. The functional seeing abilities refer to all of the visible things for special needs students and how to help them use it effectively Davis in Thompson, 2012 (Rohmat, 2017)

In conclusion, visual impaired students refer to those who needs seeing aids and special learning techniques alongsides methods in order to help them during learning process. However, in this present study, special needs students refer to those with low vision and totally blind condition.

a. *Blind Categorizations*

According to (Pradopo, 1997) blind condition is classified into two different conditions: the cause and the abilities.

1. The Cause

- a) Perinatal onset, person who does not have seeing experienced
- b) Childhood onset, the person has visual experienced but it is easily forgotten
- c) Teenage onset, the seeing experience leaves a significant remark

- d) Adulthood onset, a person has the awareness to adjust to the situation
- e) Old age onset, a person has problem with the adjustment

2. The Abilities

- a) Partially sighted, people who have some visual problems
- b) Low vision loss, people who have severe visual impairment
- c) Total blindness, people who have no light perception

b. *Psychological Condition of A Visual Impairment Person*

According to (Hidayat & Suwandi, 2013), a visual impaired person does not only lack in seeing abilities, but also in doing something confidently. Therefore, a visual impaired person is also a lack of drive which caused the lost of the social skills

2. **Inclusive Education Concept**

Inclusive education is defined as a system aimed for special needs students and regular students. Inclusive education, as stated by Olsen in (Tarmansyah, 2007) refers to an educational system which aims to accomodate all children without questioning their physical condition, intelectual, social emotional, linguistic, or any other disadvantage, such as special needs children, autist, guttersnipe, and working children. Moreover, this system does not issue children from minority group and children from restriction group.

The purposes of inclusive education are:

- a. To improve their confidence
- b. To build their independence
- c. To help them communicate actively

- d. To help them in accepting differences

Alongside students, the educator also receives the benefit aspects from the program, such as:

- a. Inclusive education allows the educators to learn from their learning method
- b. Inclusive education trains the educator to be more skillful in presenting the lesson to different students
- c. The educator is capable in giving different facilitations to the entire students
- d. The educator is able to act positively towards parents, people in general and the students in various situations
- e. Inclusive education gives the experience of getting and developing different ideas through communication with their surroundings.

C. RESEARCH METHOD

The present study employs a case study with descriptive qualitative as the research method. There are three special needs students who majored Community education and five lecturers of IKIP Siliwangi Bandung involved in the study. Moreover, in obtaining the data, the researcher used interview and observation method.

D. DISCUSSION

1. The Learning Process in Community Education Program Study

Based on the interview with the lecturers, the researcher obtained the following results:

- a. Learning Method

The learning process is performed with regular method, like discussion, presentation, and question and answer session. All students can actively participate during the session. Yet, during the presentation, the presenters were speaking a little louder to help the special needs students. Moreover, sometimes, the situation becomes quite distracted due to the sound of braille typing tools. Meanwhile, the question and answer session are not effective at first. However, in the next session, the special needs students can adjust to the situation by sitting in the first row. Additionally, the presentation session is occurred effectively with other students help in the process of making the slides. The materials are read by one of the students before it is transformed into braille writing. Yet, the problem is the unavailability of the materials written in braille.

- b. Teaching Materials

The unavailability of the teaching material might become one of the problems. Yet, it can be solved for the time being with the existence of reader to help the special students writing down the materials. Regarding this, it is considered important to have legal reader so that the materials are delivered completely and can avoid some addition that might be provocative. At this moment, all the materials are learned with the help of a reader, while during the class, the lecturer explained the materials with concrete language in order to simplify the materials.

- c. Learning Media

Powerpoint is considered as one of the interesting media for students in general. Yet, it does not apply to special needs students. Due to this reason, the other students are encouraged to

explain the slides in a way to help the special needs students understand the materials.

d. Assignments System

The assignment is given with the help of technology. Regarding this, it is known that students are already familiar with the gadgets that support Talkback feature which produced sound when the keypad is touched. Through the application, the communication between students and lecturers can be done. It can be seen from students who have sent message via Whatsapp Application. Due to that reason, the assignments and mid term are given through the application. The result showed that there is no significant difference caused by the application. During the mid term, the special needs students could finish the exam on time.

e. Assessment System

At first, the assessment system turns out to be subjective due to some consideration of the students' conditions. It is already a great achievement for them to be able to do the same things as the regular students. However, the special needs students convey their disagreement regarding the system. They do not want to be treated differently, especially for their physical condition not their achievements.

Moreover, the result of the interview with special needs student is presented below. The interview is performed through whatsapp and text applications.

"In my opinion, the learning process in IKIP Siliwangi is good since I already know much about my major. In this department, there are many study programs which can be developed in special worlds and IKIP Siliwangi has

always concerned in facilitating education for special needs people since a long time ago. Besides, there are no discrimination among students and the lecturer seems to be understanding towards our conditions. Yet, even though the condition of the university slightly challenges our movements, we can deal with that problem with the help of people around us, including people from higher levels to the lower levels, especially the students who come from the same study program or outside of our study program. My suggestions for my lecturer are, I apologize, without trying to be disrespectful, I would like to send my gratitude to you first for your great work in teaching us, my suggestion is that the lecturers should be stricter towards us, special needs students, and especially me, so that we can get the grade based on our works not from the pity. Moreover, to make the learning easier, it is better if the materials are made into ebook or printed by using braille. That is the only thing that I can say, I do apologize if there is any mistake." (said student A)

The interview results are concluded into several points, namely:

a. Learning Method

The current learning method is already helpful with the support of powerpoint and student's explanation, so that the special needs students are able to write down the materials.

b. Teaching Materials

The materials are understandable; yet, the special students need additional materials written in braille or audio.

c. Learning Media

It is expected for the media to be accessible for all of the students, including special needs students. The

PowerPoint media should be audible, yet, at the time being, they still need the reader.

d. Assignment System

The assignment has been done so far with several special conditions, such as the mind map task is handed in the form of narration.

2. The Educational Needs of Special Needs Students in IKIP Siliwangi

Several special students necessity are:

- a. Written references in Braille
- b. Audio media to help them understanding the materials
- c. Verbal and online exams
- d. An audible accessible website

3. The problems faced by special needs students

- a. The ability to adjust with the lecturers
- b. The lecturers are lacking in understanding their needs
- c. The less communicative lecturer which hamper the learning process
- d. The difficulties in accessing the latest information regarding the universities by themselves without other help

4. The problems of the lecturer during inclusive class

- a. The difficulties in understanding the students due to lecturers' backgrounds that are outside special education program
- b. The limitation in managing inclusive class

E. Conclusion

An educational institution is expected to facilitate every people despite their conditions without exception. As one of the university in Indonesia focusing on teaching and education, IKIP Siliwangi has a mission to be the the model university in terms of educational innovation. Therefore, the present study focuses on learning process, which has been expected by the students, especially by special needs students.

Despite the teaching and learning methods that have already been accepted, there are several problems related to the exams and some assignments. Concerning this, the students wished to be facilitated with the supported medias which have audio features to help them understands the materials. Moreover, the institution is also expected to give the special needs students some supported public facilities.

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