

Education Support for Independence of Students with Special Needs

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Abstract The purpose of this study was to explore the importance of education support for independence of students with special needs in their everyday lives. The research used mix method approach with conducting a Focus Group Discussion with seventeen special school teachers and observed twenty students with special needs from seventeen special schools. These teachers were asked questions about their experiences in teaching activity daily living programs for student with special needs, that is whether the aspects of activity daily living taught to each child are the same or different, whether the curriculum that has been prepared has answered student's problems or not, and what challenges the teachers face when teaching activity daily living for student with special needs. These four issues are discussed from the perspective of a special teacher who teaches students who have various needs, such as student with intellectual disabilities, student with autism, and students with others needs. Students with special needs were observed to know their independence in daily living activity before and after supported by activity daily living education program. The results of the discussion are then documented, reduced and concluded so that an educational service perspective can be obtained which is able to increase the independence of student with special needs. Data collected from observing the students also analyzed quantitatively. The results showed that independence of students with special needs improved after teacher implemented daily living program. Furthermore, although every student with special needs has different ways in increasing their independence, there are aspects of independence that are the same in every student that can be improved so that it is useful in their future lives.

Keywords Independence, Student with Special Needs, Special Education

1. Introduction

A special need or disability in a person is a condition that impacts on that person's life. The main symptoms that student with special needs have are usually disrupting their daily activities [1], [2]. The example regarding this is someone with mild special needs, he or she has the possibility to be involved in education, work, and the community, while student with more severe special needs may have less opportunity to join their community. This in turn can have implications for social, family and economic conditions and themselves are more likely to experience social isolation and poor health [3].

Independence is a psychological construct that refers to actions that are caused by oneself (vs others) [4]. Independence determines one's own destiny based on his own will [5]. In this case, it is necessary for student with special needs to be able to determine their fate and independence so that they do not always depend on others even though they have physical, intellectual and social obstacles. Based on the [6], it is known that the ability of activity daily living and independence is only obtained by 15% of student with special needs. Meanwhile, according to the American Community Survey (ACS), it is known that the prevalence of activity daily living ability in individuals aged 5 to 17 years with disabilities is 0.9%.

Therefore, it is clear that student with disabilities need access to opportunities and resources to maximize their independence.

Special school is a place that can facilitate student with special needs to train their independence in everyday life. Through activity daily living programs, student with special needs can learn how to care for themselves, avoid dangers and care for their health. The main background of this is the aspect of independence related to health aspects, and other backgrounds, which are related to the socio-cultural maturity they will have later. Some of the daily routine activities that need to be taught include activities or skills for bathing, eating, brushing teeth, and going to the toilet (toilet training); where these activities are closely related to aspects of one's health. Activities or skills in mobilizing (mobility), dressing and grooming are not only related to health aspects but also socio-cultural aspects. From a socio-cultural point of view, clothing is a means of communicating with other humans [7]. Thus, it is clear that clothing is not only used to meet material biological needs, but also to fulfill social psychological needs. Dressing to suit or match, both with himself and his surroundings, can give confidence in oneself.

Based on the examples above, it can be said that the activity daily living program is an appropriate learning activity for student with special needs. Student with intellectual disabilities are more likely to need extra support in daily activities than their peers. If other students learn daily activities simply by observing their parents, student with intellectual disabilities need many methods that should be carried out step by step to help them understand these activities [8].

Nowadays, Indonesia implements activity daily living as a special program in school for student with intellectual disabilities, autism, and physical disabilities. Nevertheless, there is no continued research which focuses on the implementation of education support for special needs students' independence. Therefore it is worth exploring the education support through activity daily living program for improving independence of student with special needs. Things wanted to be known from this research is related to the teacher's experience in teaching activity daily living program programs for student with special needs, such as student with visual, hearing and other impairments. In addition, the author wanted to know whether the aspects of self-development taught to each child are the same or different, whether the curriculum that has been prepared has answered student's problems or not, and what challenges are faced by teachers when teaching activity daily living for student with special needs.

2. Method

The approach used in this research was a mix method

approach which combines quantitative and qualitative data. This exploratory research was carried out by the author to get an overview of a topic for further research later [9]. In this case, the topic to be studied more deeply was the activity daily living program program as educational support for student with special needs. The sample in this study was seventeen teachers in special schools and twenty special need students. Seventeen teachers teach student with various levels of need, namely student with visual impairments, student with intellectual disabilities, student with autism, student with hyperactive, and student with physical disabilities.

This research was conducted through focusing discussion technique related to topics that have been prepared based on guidelines regarding: 1) the teacher's experience in teaching activity daily living programs for student with special needs, 2) whether the aspects of activity daily living taught to each child is same or different, 3) whether the compiled curriculum has solve the student's problems or not, 4) challenges faced by teachers when teaching activity daily living for student with special needs. Besides, the quantitative data collected by observed twenty students with special needs. The observation techniques used for knowing the independences of students. The results of the focus group discussion were then reduced, analyzed and concluded so that it could be seen the importance of independence for student with special needs in their daily lives. The quantitative data from observed the students were analyzed with descriptive quantitative to know the level of students' independence.

3. Results and Discussion

Based on the results that have been collected from interview techniques with seventeen teachers who teach student with special needs as resource persons, the following data were obtained:

- a). Seventeen teachers agreed that the activity daily living program was not only for student with intellectual disabilities but also for student with other special needs, such as student with Visual impairment, student with hearing impairments, student with physical disabilities, student with autism, student with ADHD, even student without special needs also needs to get activity daily living programs. These results are based on the experiences and feelings of the teachers while teaching in schools. Almost every student with special needs has different potentials and needs, including the need for activity daily living and independence.
- b). According to the experience of teachers, curriculum of school only included materials about making the bed, making up, personal hygiene, and how to eating and drinking properly in arrange activity daily living

program. However, based on the results of discussion with teachers, it shows that there are other aspects that must be added to the activity daily living program in schools, including aspects of sex education and saving themselves from natural disasters and dangers. Teachers agreed that sex education is an aspect that needs to be taught as well. Because there are cases of sexual abuse of student with special needs occurring in the environment of student that harm student. Ironically, sexual abuse suspects do not receive any punishment. Teacher said that this can be prevented by providing sex education to student, so that they understand what parts of the body should not be shown to others, understand the changes and hormonal changes in their bodies.

- c). Apart from sex education, aspects of saving themselves from disasters and dangers are also needed. Although student, pregnant women, seniors and student with special needs are the main priorities to be saved, the ability to understand that there is a disaster and how to save themselves from the disaster is something that student with special needs should know. Thus, the things taught can at least be useful and help themselves when a disaster occurs. This aspect is important to be included in special education programs for activity daily living, especially in areas that have a high potential for disasters. Furthermore, these two aspects indirectly answer the question of the whether the curriculum applied in schools is suitable with the learning needs, that these two aspects need to be added so that students can learn when the activity daily living skills program is implemented.
- d). The teacher's challenges in teaching activity daily living programs include:
- 1) Limited teaching materials. The teaching materials available in schools are only limited to books programmed by the government. In fact, there are many problems in the field where the learning materials and programs are not written in the book,
 - 2) The understanding of the analysis task is not well mastered. Teaching activity daily living can not be separated from the task of analysis where detailed stages are needed, so that learning can be understood and applied by student properly. Related to this, unfortunately there are still teachers who do not understand how the stages of the analysis task are, which makes it difficult for them to teach activity daily living skills program and makes the learning objectives not achieved.
 - 3) Activity daily program was not continued at home by the parents. Activity daily living learning is learning related to daily activities at home. When this learning is not repeated at home, the learning carried out at school will be ineffective and easily forgotten by student.

- 4) There are obstacles in this learning related to limited materials and reference books that have limited material about activity daily living learning. Moreover, during the pandemic, learning in schools was transformed to learning at home. Teachers hope that online learning or home learning is supported by reference books that can be accessed online easily, especially by parents.
- 5) Students show their independence after teacher teaches them activity daily living program. Sixteen of twenty students are able to repeat their independence of preparing lunch, drinking by their self, preparing their self, and remembering which parts of their body that should be shown to other people. Even though teacher needs to help them, but this program makes the students understand about activity daily living.

Activity Daily Living (ADL) is often called basic daily activities, including basic skills that are usually needed to manage basic physical needs, which consist of the following areas: personal care/ hygiene, dressing, toileting/ sanitizing, ambulating, and eating. These functional skills are mastered by student from the beginning of life and are relatively more preserved. Basic ADL is generally categorized separately from more complex activities related to independent living in the community (for example, managing finances and medicine).

Daily life activities in relation to the education of student with special needs, are related to self-development which is based on activities that have an impact on human relationships [10]. According to this term, self-development means fostering, building, perfecting, his condition without the help of others so that individuals can meet their own needs and relate to others. Self-cultivation is not only a basic skill in taking care of oneself but also the ability to adapt and achieve independence.

These daily activities are not always able to be mastered by all student. Student with mild cognitive impairment and early dementia, for example, are student who have not been able to participate in ADL activities well [11]. If the child cannot carry out daily activities independently, the child's life will depend on other people. In fact, dependence in terms of daily activities is correlated with a poorer quality of life [12], [13], it will have an impact on increasing health care expenditure, an increased risk of death [14] and institutionalization [15], [16]. The ability to perform ADL depends on cognitive abilities (e.g. reasoning, planning), motor (e.g. balance, agility), and perceptual (including sensory). There is also an important difference in an individual's ability to complete a task (physical and/ or cognitive abilities) versus the ability to recognize that a task needs to be done without prompting (cognitive ability).

Therefore, self-development needs to be taught to student who have obstacles both functionally and cognitively, due to helping these student achieve independence. In terms of special education, the characteristics of student with special needs cause student to experience obstacles in fulfilling their personal needs and problems in dealing with other people. Thus, in the education of student with special needs, self-development learning is needed which is included in special programs in schools. Student with special needs who need to be taught self-development also varies. Not only student with special needs with cognitive challenges, but also student with special needs with other obstacles as long as the student are not able to carry out daily activities independently.

4. Conclusion

Based on the result and discussion, it concluded that activity daily living skill is one of the skills which could improve the independence of special need student. It is not only about how to dress, eat, and drink, but also about sex education and saving themselves from natural disasters and dangers. In implementing the activity daily living program, schools need to prepare according to the curriculum. There are some challenges in implementing the activity daily living program, moreover in the pandemic situation. Education for students with special needs has a principle to teach students repeatedly in school and home settings. By this means if students only learn the activity daily living at school and not repeat at home, the skill will not be improved. So, the suggestion to help the activity daily program conducted at home and school is to make an learning media about activity daily living which can be used in school and home.

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