

Students' awareness Towards People With Special Needs and Implication of Its Learning Technology Development

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the level of students' awareness towards people with special needs in inclusive school and to develop the awareness learning technology towards people with special needs. Questionnaires survey was conducted on 115 undergraduate students in Padang. The survey was conducted to collect awareness information of the respondents and type of desired learning media to learn about people with special needs. The research found students reflecting a lack of awareness towards people with disability. Drawing on the research findings, this paper made several recommendation for improving awareness of undergraduate students towards people with special needs through learning technology which desired by students.

Keywords : awareness, people with special needs, learning technology.

I. INTRODUCTION

The inclusive education in Indonesia has been implemented in all schools including primary school, secondary school, high school and university. Inclusion is a philosophy that unites students, families, educators, and communities to create schools and other social institutions based on the principles of acceptance and togetherness (Rose, 2008). Effective inclusive education has sensitivity principles and accepts individual strength and challenges also differences (Salend, 2011). Educators, students, and families must be sensitive towards inclusion that prior acceptance, justice, and collaboration that are sensitive to individual differences (Forlin, 2008; Sapon-Shevin, 2008; Voltz, Sims, Nelson, & Bivens, 2005). Inclusive education taught them to respect differences and learn about the similarities and differences of one another (Black-Hawkins, Florian, & Rouse, 2007; Sweeden, 2009)

Indonesia is one of the countries that supports inclusive education by held inclusive schools. An evidence of Indonesia's support for inclusive education is Law No. 8 of 2016 about disability. Article 10 of Law No. 8 of 2016 states that the right to education for people with disabilities includes the right to get quality education at education units in all types, lines and levels of education in inclusive and disability. Based on the law, students with special needs have the right to get education with other students in inclusive schools.

The right of get educated to the university level allows students to have friends with disability. Disability children are children with special characteristics that are different from normal children (Smart, 2010). Differences in characteristics possessed by children with disability can be a new thing to learn for students but can be conflict among students (Salend, 2011). The source of learning is giving a new perspectives to the students about differences, while the conflict is a negative view so students react negatively such as fear or ridiculous.

Creating a school that accept differences, also allow students to becomes friends with extraordinari students. Good social life requires understanding the differences, being positive, and behaving well towards disability student. The ability to understand, feel something and flexibility in behavior is social sensitivity (Lohmann, Zenger, & Weschler, 2015; Wechsler et al., 2004). The positive attitude and empathy of normal students towards disability students is a form of sensitivity to children with special needs (Foley, Tindall, Lieberman, & Kim, 2007). Based on the opinions, sensitivity towards disability children make people realize about the effectiveness of inclusive school.

Sensitivity to children with disability is important because it is a cure for students and teachers in understanding the strength and challenges of students with special needs (Fittipaldi-Wert & Brock, 2007). Sensitivity to children with special needs can help to reduce negative social attitudes and the assumption that children with special needs is disorder (Mullen, 2001). Otherwise, if regular students do not have sensitivity towards children with special needs, conflict due to lack of understanding of different characteristics can interfere with the realization of inclusive schools effectiveness. This is reinforced by the findings of Siperstein, Parker, Bardon, & Widaman, (2007) research states that many students have misconception and

stereotype on students with special needs that impact to limited interaction between normal students and students with special needs.

Therefore, a study was conducted on the sensitivity of students to children with special needs, and the type of learning media that students want to learn how to treat children with special needs properly. It is expected that the findings of this study can be continued to further research in developing learning media that can help students improve their sensitivity to children of special needs.

II. METHOD

2.1 Participants

Participants were 115 undergraduate students of three university in Padang. Participants included are 51 undergraduate students who have friends with special needs and 64 regular students who do not have friends with special needs

2.2 Measures

Instrument used in this preliminary research is a awareness scale instrument included of four aspects, namely knowledge, attitude, behavior and development of learning media towards people with special needs.

2.3 Data analysis approach

Descriptive analitic approach was used to analyze the data. Value of knowledge, attitude and behavior questionnaires divided into three categories: low, fairly and high. Data collected through questionnaires was then processed to be distributed on each aspects. While the development of learning media about people with special needs data was described as indicators for developing the learning media.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

Based on the results of students' awareness data towards, the results are as follows:

1. Interacting with people with special needs

The results of the data on the level of interacting with people with special needs can be seen in Figure 1.

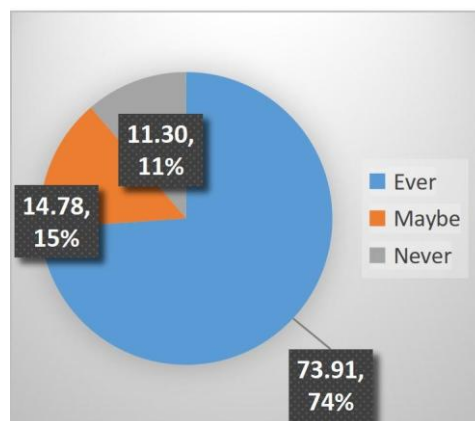


Figure 1. Level of interacting with people with special needs

Based on Figure 1, it is known that out of one hundred and fifteen respondents, 85 of respondents have interact/ communication to people with special needs. It showed that respondents know who people with special needs is, generally.

2. Skill in behave or help people with special needs

Skill in behave or help people with special needs is measured through indicator question "Do you know how to behave or help towards people with special needs?". The results of skill in behave or help people with special needs can be seen in Figure 2.

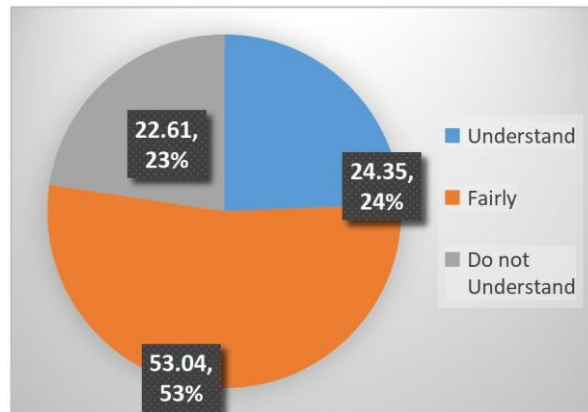


Figure 2. Skill in behave or help people with special needs

Based on Figure 2, it is known that out of one hundred and fifteen respondents, 87 of respondents do not know how to behave or help people with special needs.

3. Learning about awareness towards people with special needs

The learning about awareness towards people with special needs is measured through question “Do yo want to learn about how to behave or help people with special needs?”. The results of learning about awareness towards people with special needs can be seen in Figure 3.

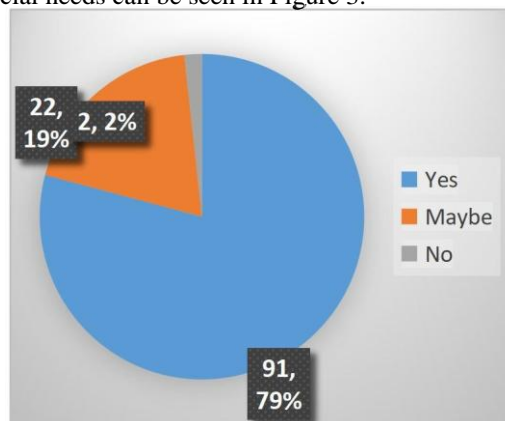


Figure 3. The learning about awareness towards people with special needs

Based on Figure 3, it is known that out of one hundred and fifteen respondents, 113 of respondents want to learn about how to behave or help people with special needs.

4. Learning media desired by students to learn about people with special needs

Learning media desired by students to learn about people with special needs is measured through indicator question “What kind media that you desired to learn people with special needs?”. The results of learning media desired students can be seen in Figure 4.

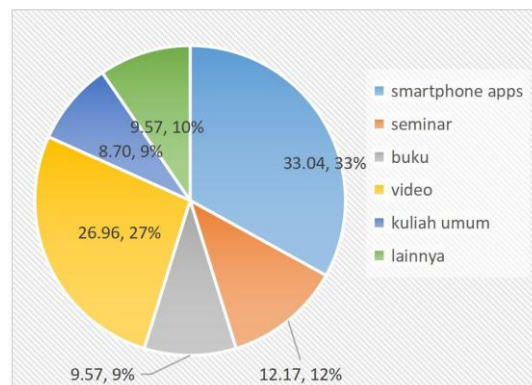


Figure 4. Sign language learning media desired by society

Based on Figure 5, it is known that out of one hundred and fifteen respondents, the highest learning media chosen by students is a smartphone app.

Discussion

The findings suggest that students have awareness toward people with special needs at low level. From the survey findings, it is obvious that students have knowledge, attitude, and behaviors at low level, which is showed by they know wo people with special needs is, have communication with them, but do not know how behave or help them in a right way. It is often presumed that negative attitudes and behavior come from people not having adequate knowledge (Staniland, 2009). That statement shows that students have attitude and behavior towards people with special needs at low level because of their knowledge about people with special needs also at low level. Beside it, many students enter school holding misconceptions and stereotypical views about persons the perceive as different, which can affect students' self-identities and friendship (Siperstein et al., 2007; Zambo, 2009)

From the findings, the awareness of students need to promoted. To further promote awareness of students towards people with special needs should consider strategy that fosters acceptance towards people with special needs. Fostering acceptance individual differences should consider the strategy to accept individual differences related to disability through learn about how to treat people with special need use something that easy to use in daily activity.

Based on the findings, it is known that students want technology-based learning media such as applications on smartphones. In the era of globalization and information, the use of Information Technology (IT) based learning media is necessary and demand, but the implementation is not easy. In using these media must pay attention to some ways so that the media used can be use optimally and not deviate from the media's objectives. Sadiman, (2006) states that in terms of procurement readiness, the media are grouped into two types, namely ready-to-use-media because it is a trade commodity that is widely available in the market in a state of ready use (media by utilization) and media design that needs to be designed and prepared specifically for particular aims and objectives.

By learning media on smartphones, what students expected is learning about children of special needs because this technology used daily. Moreover, if learning media is available daily with no change of daily activities, students will learn voluntarily and repeat it everyday with no force. Therefore, the implication of this research is the need for the development of learning media on how to treat children of special needs for students that can accessed interesting features on their smartphones.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the discussion, it can be concluded that the students have awareness towards people with special needs at low level. Students know who people with special needs is, have communication with them, but do not know how behave or help them in a right way. However, people haven't got the learning media to learn about how to behave or help people with special needs which fit with the daily activity. The students wants a learning media that can help students learn people with special needs effectively, namely through a smartphone application that is close with students' life.

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