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Special Accommodation Facilities for the Disabled in Universities

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ABSTRACT: Owing to their special academic needs, college students with disabilities develop and use methods to facilitate their learning experiences. The goal of this research was to distinguish the importance of transparency for college students with disabilities in relation to the methods they invoke when looking for accommodations by using a semi-structured interview method to gather data and a technique focused on grounded theory to evaluate this data. The research showed three fundamental patterns similar to the participants who were academically active disabled college students' accommodation-seeking strategies. These topics include: scripting one's disability disclosure; discussing faculty accommodations; and downplaying one's disability status.

KEYWORDS: Disabled students, Accommodations, Education sector, Basic facilities, Guidelines.

I. INTRODUCTION

People with disabilities constitute a population of college students that has tripled and quadrupled over the last twenty-five years, according to some figures. Despite being traditionally underrepresented, the student body has expanded significantly. Legislation, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Persons with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), has been widely credited with improving access for people with disabilities to higher education, as well as developments in assistive and medical technology. Disability, under the ADA, refers to a physical or mental disability that significantly limits one or more of an individual's major life activities[1]. The term "special needs students" may refer to people with disabilities, but also includes students with other forms of special needs, such as reduced English proficiency or students who may be considered homeless or transient.

The 1990 ADA needs higher education establishments to have adequate lodging in areas such as course programming, tests and exams, employment, and leisure facilities. As such, in higher education institutions, students with disabilities (SWDs) represent an emerging demographic whose views and expectations in higher education are ultimately influenced by their classroom and other collegial experiences. However, amid these improvements in the enrollment of this student population, many students with SWD disabilities struggle to complete their schooling effectively[2]. There have been many theories proposed as to why SWDs are leaving higher education. One explanation cited was the lack of recognition of this particular student demographic among higher education institutions. Greenbaum et al observed that a lack of comprehension and collaboration between faculty and administration was the most prominent institutional obstacle cited by SWDs. SWDs also reiterated this feeling, stating that faculty and administrators are largely unhappy with the degree of awareness and comprehension about their problems and concerns.

In reviewing current research on faculty attitudes towards SWDs, Rao concluded that there is a "need to be better informed about disabilities and students with disabilities" among faculty and staff. Therefore, the incorporation of these students into collegiate cultures can be considered impeded by stereotypical attitudes and biased behaviors of both teachers and fellow students due to this lack of awareness and expertise on the part of faculty and workers[3]. SWDs do not optimize the

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benefits entitled to them, including regulatory provisions compelling higher education institutions to accommodate SWDs along with offering information about disability accommodation. SWDs do not optimize services in two ways by examining the literature: not finding out these services, or seeking out these services too late. Disability support agencies have estimated that while 9% of full-time college students report disabilities, only 1% to 3% of all students actively request disability-related services. Analysis has shown that these students may be concerned about finding housing and therefore unable to address their academic needs, or may actually wish to claim a new identification and freedom upon accessing higher education.

A possible reason for these students not leveraging the benefits entitled to them may be that, unlike primary and secondary schools, higher education institutions are not expected to take affirmative action in the pursuit and recognition of SWDs[4]. In order to secure housing, SWDs must take affirmative action to access disability assistance facilities to request suitable accommodation[5]. As a result, SWDs also do not seem to be willing to request higher education accommodation. This lack of planning has caused disabilities support providers and higher education coordinators to express "disappointment with how well high school employees informed students of the services available at college level for SWDs". When accommodation is required, on-campus disability accommodation offices normally offer a letter of accommodation (LOA) to SWDs after assessing their eligibility for services.

A student with a disability must first have full and accurate disclosure to be eligible for benefits and therefore acquire a LOA in order to access services from their on-campus student disability office. This disclosure requires appropriate physical and/or psychological verification of their disability, as evidenced by a series of approved assessments performed by an appropriate licensed specialist (usually specified in the institutional application materials). SWDs must apply their individual LOAs to their teachers upon being found to be eligible for benefits in order to obtain accommodations accepted by their respective disability accommodation offices. Of course, teachers can provide accommodation without a LOA, but they are not necessary to do so. A declaration in itself by the pupil of any kind of debilitating disability involving accommodation in the classroom is the physical act of giving a teacher a LOA.

Obviously, the declaration of the disability of a pupil does not stop physically giving a letter of accommodation to a teacher, but is accompanied by inquiries from staff members. These issues can vary from deeply personal to impersonal issues related only to meeting a need for accommodation[6]. Disclosure means different things for different individuals, especially for people with disabilities, as there are different costs and advantages involved with disability disclosure. The self-disclosure process was described by Cozby as an individual process involving "any information that Person A verbally communicates to Person B". This description does not include details, such as disability status, that one communicates non-verbally. Olney and Brockelman noted that college SWDs are mindful that the dissemination of information about their impairment status, verbal or nonverbal, could affect others' actions towards them. Wheelless and Grotz offer a self-disclosure concept that encompasses "any message about the self-communicated by an individual to another", thereby incorporating nonverbal messages. For Jourard, disclosure is a mechanism in which the individual decides the degree of intimacy with another that they want to attain. Related to the conceptualization of Jourard, Petronio's act of disclosure is the individual's method of controlling privacy limits.

The actual communicative act of disclosure is stressed by Petronio and reflects on the internal, psychological mechanism that follows the capacity of a person to reveal[7]. For most people, sharing intimate, private knowledge about oneself is a slow and continuing process, regardless of how you interpret the process of disclosure, depending first and foremost on who one is interacting with and under what way. Most individuals do not share personal and private details anywhere with just everyone and particularly not when they first meet them. The request for classroom space for SWDs includes the disclosure, often with little to no prior introduction, of personal and private information to faculty members[8]. Depending on a number of reasons, sharing knowledge about one's condition can be relaxed and therapeutic for one person with a disability, but an uncomfortable and sometimes threatening experience for another. The SWD institutional accommodation

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process moves out of the domain of traditional interpersonal conversation, as the process entails revealing to an important outsider, a faculty member, what would ordinarily be confidential and privileged knowledge.

II. FACULTY PERSONAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS DISABLED STUDENTS

A great deal has been written about attitudes and activities towards people with disabilities, particularly faculty attitudes towards post-secondary students with disabilities. The relation between attitudes and actions of faculty will support or impede disabled students[9]. Indeed, a Bourke et.al survey found that the views of a faculty member about the usefulness of and the need for accommodation would impact the provision of accommodation. In most cases, faculty members are respectful of disabled students and have positive views towards disabled students. Faculty members, however, may be afraid that accommodation decreases intellectual credibility[10]. While faculty members typically agree that offering accommodation for students with disabilities is equal for students without disabilities, there are faculty members who believe that, There are other faculty members who view accommodation as unacceptable to students who do not have disabilities, such as certain test accommodations and changing graduation standards. In reality, faculty members are more hesitant to have accommodation that alters the format of an exam or assignment. Differences in views towards disabled students based on faculty and student traits often tend to impact the ability of the faculty to offer appropriate accommodation.

III. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the present research discussed how SWDs are designing and using methods to facilitate their learning activities with regard to their particular higher education academic needs. The analysis revealed three fundamental patterns that represented the participants who were academically active college students with disabilities' accommodation-seeking techniques. These subjects included: scripting disclosure of one's condition; negotiating faculty accommodations; and downplaying one's condition of impairment. These themes offer useful insight as to how the process of seeking and obtaining accommodation is navigated by individuals with disabilities who have advanced in higher education. The current research provides teachers, disability support providers, and other appropriate higher education administrators with information on which methods to guide SWDs to invoke that have proven effective in learning how these students who have been academically successful handle this process.

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