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Teacher's Social Support To Students With Intellectual Disability During Distance Learning

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Abstract: Students with intellectual disabilities need teacher support to participate in learning. This qualitative study examines teachers social support to students with intellectual disability in distance learning during a pandemic. The results showed various forms of teacher support for students with intellectual disabilities. First, emotional support is given through direct communication with students and composing interesting and fun learning. Also, parents are involved in playing with students while studying at home and providing indirect reinforcement. Second, esteem support is given through adapting learning to students' characteristics and abilities and working with parents to praise their progress. Third, tangible or instrumental support is given through understanding how students carry out assignments by conducting home visits, presenting interesting lessons, and communicating diligently. Fourth, informative support is provided by sending information through short videos, explaining online using video calls, and asking parents for help. Fifth, network support is provided through video conferencing with friends and creating social media groups. Furthermore, social support is provided through direct virtual through face-to-face or indirectly through messages and the environment.

Keywords: Social Support, Intellectual Disability, Distance Learning.

Introduction

The change from face-to-face to distance or online learning makes everyone in the education system panic and stressed, especially due to the rapid spread of Covid-19. Therefore, teachers and students must adopt new learning methods quickly without stopping due to circumstantial changes. The Covid 19 pandemic has disrupted students' lives differently, depending on their course of study and their program levels (Daniel 2020). However, the disruption in the learning process and its outcome should not continue because it inhibits students' learning progress. According to the Tiongkok report, the sudden preparation of teachers for online education raised concerns among all school administrations in China (Chen 2020). This requires the teachers and students, including students with intellectual

disabilities, to adapt quickly for the learning process to progress.

Teachers adapt quickly because they are mature physically and psychologically. In contrast, students with intellectual disabilities are significantly limited in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior, covering many social and practical skills. This disability originates before they are aged 18 (AAIDD 2020), making them unable to adapt quickly.

The online teaching and learning process during the Covid 19 pandemic has provided students with intellectual disabilities with new similar experiences when they first attended school. Initially, they had less positive school experiences, indicated by multiple indices of adapting to school (Mcintyre, Blacher, and Baker 2006). When students with intellectual disabilities are

exposed to new situations, they quickly show less positive adaptation and need social support from their environment. The teacher is responsible for their learning process and must provide social support to learn successfully.

Kaplan, Cassel, and Gore stated that social support is the gratification of a person's basic social needs by interacting with others (Hobfoll, 1986). Furthermore, Bozkurt (2013) and Okyayuz (1999) defined social support as material and moral aid which enables an individual to cope with stress in difficult times. The support protects them from negative situations (Tuna and Aslan 2018) and involves helping others meet their basic needs. The first view of social support is the situation-specific view, which involves coping with particular stress (Cohen, 1985). The second view is the developmental approach, which contributes to personality and social development (Rolling & Thomas, 1979, Pierce et al., 1996)

Taylor et al. stated that social support could be emotional, esteem, tangible or instrumental support, and informative (Aulia & Agustini, 2018). Conversely, Sarafino (1998) stated that support could fulfill many different functions in life. For instance, emotional support is generated from others through love, empathy, and security. Also, people receive esteem support when they know they are valued for their personal qualities and ideas and are accepted despite their faults. Practical help from others, such as financial assistance in chores, is tangible or instrumental support. Moreover, informational support includes advice, suggestions, or feedback and is helpful during a new situation or problem. Network support creates a sense of membership in a group sharing similar interests or social companionship.

Research on social support was conducted by Aulia and Agustini (2018). However, this study focuses on the independence of students with intellectual disabilities and teachers' learning support during the Covid 19 pandemic. It intends to determine teacher supports for students to joyfully and comfortably study from home.

Methodology

This study explores teacher support on the learning of students with intellectual disabilities while studying from home during the Covid 19 pandemic. Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers using information technology media. The first interview question was based on emotional support. It concerned attention, care, and empathy to students' problems to ensure their comfort while studying from home. The second question was on appreciation support. It determined how to encourage students to learn to feel important, competent, and valuable while at home. The third interview question addressed empirical or instrumental support. This determined the provision of direct assistance to students in completing learning responsibly. The fourth question regarded informative support. It concerned the steps taken to help the students understand the current situation of learning at home. The fifth interview question was about network support. It determined the measures taken to make the students understand they are not alone because teachers and friends help.

The study participants comprised one male and nine female teachers representing ten special schools of students with intellectual disabilities. The researcher made an appointment for a convenient time to conduct in-depth interviews, which lasted between 30 and 45 minutes. All interviews were recorded for qualitative analysis.

Findings

Emotional support

Emotional support from teachers to students with intellectual disabilities is provided through attention, concern, and empathy to problems in studying from home during the Covid 19 pandemic. According to Abdin, students are not burdened with complicated tasks and are motivated to learn at home. Moreover, they are encouraged by teachers that studying from home is fun and could still attain better grades. Maryati stated that they organize fun and entertaining learning that also involves parents. Furthermore, Nurdayati asks students about their well-being to ensure that their attention at home is similar to that at school. Another teacher,

Mastini, does not burden the students with tasks or assignments or force them to understand the material taught quickly. Also, the teacher praises them when they complete assignments, making them feel confident. Nurhayati incorporates playing into learning, while Nursyamsu provides lessons OL consistent with the student's ability and learning interest. Similarly, Sri provides learning according to the theme outlined with enjoyment without psychology. Syamsiah ensures interesting learning for students, while Umi ensures teacher-parent communication. Additionally, the teacher ensures that students are present and feel cared for and supported. They ensure the student receives the same treatment at home as though they are at school. Yusliati inquires about students' well-being, suggests cleanliness, wearing masks, and keeping a distance.

The analysis and interview results show that the teacher's emotional support for students with intellectual disability is provided by:

1. Communicate directly with students
2. Compiling interesting and fun learning
3. Involving parents
4. Playing while studying at home
5. Indirect reinforcement

Esteem support

Esteem support is provided through learning motivation for students to feel valuable and competent while studying from home. For instance, Abdin encourages active students by providing a learning model that directly involves them. This includes packaging the subject matter through games, making the students play while learning. Maryati always gives thumbs up after the online learning process. Similarly, Nurdayati motivates students through assignments or tasks according to the student's ability. For instance, they provide homework, daily activities or help parents when the student sends an assignment. Mastini appreciates their work and praises them even when wrong, such as giving a thumbs up or encouraging words. According to Nurhayati, appreciation support could be verbal and

non-verbal. Furthermore, empirical and instrumental support assist the students directly in their assignments, making them responsible. Nursyamsu encourages students through their moods, Sri Ayu appreciates the student's positive work, while Syamsiah praises. According to Umi, understanding is given to parents and students studying from home, in which they achieve the same results as in school. Yusliati controls and supports the learning process via phone or video calls, providing value, albeit with a description.

Social support through rewards from the teacher to students with intellectual disabilities is given by:

1. Adjust learning to the students' characteristics and abilities
2. Praising to student labor
3. Providing direct or indirect support
4. Cooperating with parents to praising their students

Tangible or instrumental support

Abdin guides students to complete the task independently and avoid dangers when the assignments are inconsistent with their abilities. Also, the teacher helps them understand that the task is their obligation to pronounce well. Maryati limits the work for the students to complete the task responsibly and on time. Moreover, Nurdayati visits the student at home to ensure their assignment is completed. Mastini ensures attention using picture alerts and songs, while Nurhayati calls and directs the student through difficult tasks. Also, the student may ask for help from parents at home. Nursyamsu provides a delivery time limit for students to complete their tasks on time responsibly. Moreover, Sri Ayu controls the learning to ensure it is not finished quickly by reminding the students that they still have time. Syamsiah guides the learning process. Umi provides a book, colored pencils, and patterns for students to draw, while Yusliati uses diligent communication.

The real or instrumental support from teachers to students with intellectual disabilities is given by:

1. Understanding the duties
2. Home visits

3. Attractive learning presentation, such as pictures, audios, and videos
4. Diligent communication with students

Informative support

In providing informative support to students, teachers may assist them in understanding the current situation of learning at home. For instance, Abdin describes the current situation to enhance direct understanding using short videos. Subsequently, students know the possible dangers in case they continue to learn face-to-face. Maryati helps the students understand why the teaching and learning process is carried out at home. Moreover, Nurdayati explains that this disease could be transmitted directly through close contact, making it necessary to study from home. Mastini sends short animated pictures and videos about the dangers of Covid-19 when studying face-to-face. Also, the teacher helps the students understand how to recognize and prevent the virus in the current situation. According to Nurhayati, this situation does not allow studying at school, while Nursyamsu asks parents to explain to students why they study from home. Sri conducts video conferences with students and patiently helping them understand. Additionally, the teacher encourages parents to help convince their students about the current situation. Syamsiah explains the current situation, advising students not to panic, while Umi teaches them about the current pandemic, encouraging them to make the bed together. Also, according to Yusliati, students should be helped to understand why the teaching and learning process is carried out from home in the current conditions.

Teachers provide informative support to students with intellectual disabilities by:

1. Sending information through short videos
2. Explaining online using video calls
3. Asking parents to help provide information

Table 1: Support from Teacher

No	Kind support	Support from teacher
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Network support

Internet support is provided to make the students understand that they are not alone, but teachers and friends help. For instance, Abdin uses virtual learning to ensure a face-to-face meeting with students through video conferences. This way, students see their friends directly and feel motivated and enthusiastic about learning. Furthermore, the role of parents is important in assisting students in every lesson. For this reason, Maryati created a WhatsApp group for parents, enabling students to know that teachers and other friends could assist them with their assignments. Nurdayati conducts online learning with friends, while Mastini motivates and helps students understand the current condition. Also, teachers communicate online with several students, fostering togetherness. According to Nurhayati, students could perform activities according to their abilities". Also, Nursyamsu stated that students with intellectual disabilities could call the teacher in case of difficulty in learning. Sri Ayu assists in learning besides the help from their parents. They guide each learning task for the students to feel cared for and enthusiastic towards work assignments. Furthermore, Syamsiah controls students' activities, while Umi invites them to communicate with parents and teachers through social media, teleconference, or cold videos. Yusliati provides understanding to parents about assisting their students from home.

Teachers provide network support to students with intellectual disabilities by:

1. Conducting a video conference with friends
2. Creating social media groups
3. Contacting the student individually
4. Allowing the student to ask teachers, parents, and other family members in case of difficulties.

Table 1 summarizes the conclusions of each form of social support.

1	Emotional support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communicating with students directly 2. Compiling interesting and fun learning 3. Involving parents 4. Playing while studying at home 5. Providing indirect reinforcement
2	Esteem support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adjust learning to the students' characteristics and abilities 2. Praising student labor 3. Providing direct or indirect support 4. Cooperating with parents to praise their students
3	Tangible or instrumental support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understanding duties 2. Making home visits 3. Presenting attractive learning, such as pictures, audios, and videos 4. Diligently communicating with students
4	Informational support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sending information through short videos 2. Explaining online through video calls 3. Asking parents to help provide information
5	Network support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conducting a video conference with friends 2. Creating groups on social media 3. Contacting the student individually

Sumber: Data Adapted from Bastiana, 2020

Result and Discussion

This study contributes to understanding the social support by teachers to students with intellectual disabilities when studying from home. Intellectual disability is a culturally defined and often fluid concept. However, individuals with this condition risk isolation and low school expectations (Hanreddy and Östlund 2020). Students with intellectual disabilities must avoid these problems through teachers' social support, especially during this pandemic. The teacher provides the best support in various ways amid limited knowledge and rapid changes in the teaching and learning process. They must ensure that students with intellectual disabilities learn comfortably from home during the Covid 19 pandemic.

The analysis of teachers' emotional support to students with intellectual disabilities shows that help is provided directly during teaching. Also, it is provided by creating a fun learning process at home. Making students happy is a teacher's success in preparing and structuring their learning. In this regard, the fun learning process is systematic, focused, enthusiastic, communicative, and effective (Mulyadi, 2017). These results showed high emotional support that was significantly positively

related to emotional intelligence (Atoum and Al-Shoboul 2018). Positive emotional support was shown by engaged reading, positive feedback, and encouraging facial expressions. In contrast, negative emotional support was shown by inflexible students' perspectives (Anu et al., 2016).

The teacher should create a positive environment for joyful learning using effective media, such as pictures or videos, that enhance fun (Bhakti, Ghiffari, and Salsabil 2018). The availability of technology and information at home enables the students to use diverse technologies to request help and observe family practices (Plowman, Stephen, and McPake 2010). Joyful learning is not only using media creating entertaining learning proses for family members. Furthermore, the involvement of parents in students' learning is much needed. In line with this, Pomerantz and Wang found that parents are involved cognitively and intellectually by assisting the students in homework. This improves the psychology of students that previously considered themselves academically incompetent. (Kristiani 2013). This means that the instructional objective designed by teachers is achieved when parents actively

accompany their intellectually impaired students.

Research shows that the appreciation by the teacher increase students' motivation and activity. According to Utari, prizes affect students' motivation in learning English Structure by filling them with joy, fun, and enthusiasm (Utari and Djazari 2019). Teachers have not changed even during this pandemic, the only difference being the way they are given. Some teachers reward using a thumbs-up image through communication media when students finish learning, while others do this directly.

Instrumental support from teachers to students during this pandemic is given directly by making home visits or phone calls. This ensures that students have no difficulties while studying from home. Therefore, although given at different success levels, teacher support, including instrumental, is essential for the students (Wong et al., 2018).

Teachers provide information support about Covid-19 to students beyond the knowledge provided by other people, such as parents. Students receive much of the information and emotional support from their peers or teachers (Väisänen et al., 2017). In this case, student confidence increases when teachers and peers convey the information. Therefore, the teachers' creativity in conveying information ensures the students' interest and understanding during Covid 19.

The support of network connections gives the students a sense of togetherness even during distance learning. The results showed the significant effects of Learning Together on students' mathematics achievement and attitudes. Moreover, the teachers' perception of implementing Learning Together was positive (Hobri, Dafik, and Hossain 2018). A sense of togetherness is gained when teachers create online learning through virtual meetings. As a result, they are seen by the students and their friends in the learning process. Moreover, teachers need to conduct home visits or call and interact with the students in case of difficulties in learning. However, the

home visits should follow the rules of Covid 19.

Many studies have examined the social support by teachers, showing that a strong social support network increase overall health and well-being. Students and adolescents need to develop socially and emotionally (Hapke 2015). The quality of social support refers to supportive interpersonal relationships that serve particular functions. This includes the interactive process by which emotional, instrumental or informational support is obtained from one's social network. Additionally, it entails companionship, feeling cared for and valued, communication with others, and feelings of belonging and trust. Measures of social support seek information about a person's perception of the availability or adequacy of resources provided by others (Instrumental Support A Brief Guide to the PROMIS© Instrumental Support Instruments 2017).

Conclusion

Teachers' five forms of support to students with intellectual disability include emotional, esteem, tangible or instrumental, informative (informational), and network. The support could be provided directly through face-to-face (home visits) and virtual face-to-face (via video calls) or indirectly via messages. These results could be grouped directly and indirectly. Direct support involves calling or via the WhatsApp application and asking students about their condition or motivating them. Indirect support involves arranging interesting and fun learning, involving parents, playing while learning at home, and providing indirect reinforcement.

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