

Perception of Students with Disabilities Toward Faculty Willingness to Provide Academic Accommodation

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Abstract

The needs for educational accommodations have become more salient since students with disabilities are often under presented in higher education setting in which have led these marginalized groups to unequal opportunities to participate in activities on campus thus, hindering their intellectual and psychological growth. The aim of the study was to identify the perception of students with disabilities toward faculty willingness to provide academic accommodation. A descriptive research design has been utilized in the study. 19 students with disabilities at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) were involved in the study. Based on the findings of the study, students have reported that the lecturers' willingness to provide accommodation were moderate. Decreased motivation in learning, communication difficulties with the lecturers (faculty), and difficulty in accessing information and materials/sources related to academics were among the impacts of lack of academic accommodation on students with disabilities. Therefore, it is imperative for the faculty to identify the students' academic accommodation needs because they would receive more information on how to improve their teaching and learning in the class especially when they deal with students with disabilities.

Keywords: Students With Disabilities; Academic Accommodation; Faculty.

1. Introduction

Positive faculty attitudes regarding the provision of academic accommodations are related with the academic success of students with disabilities. Research has shown that negative faculty attitudes and lack of awareness have become the barriers for students with disabilities' learning (Dowrick et al., 2005). Some faculty perceived the academic accommodation provision would set an unfair advantage to students with disabilities (Cook et al., 2009). Though the provision of educational accommodation is reinforced through the establishment of the related Acts and regulations, some students have reported experiences with faculty who were unwilling to provide appropriate accommodations (Kurth & Mellard, 2007).

Students' perspective of using academic accommodations is also paramount because it influences their academic performance and development. According to Kranke et al. (2013),