

Resident Directors' Views on Disability: A Theoretical Assessment Disability-Related Interactions with Higher Education Housing Professionals

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ARTICLE INFO

Received: 20 Aug 2024

Revised: 21 Sep 2024

Accepted: 10 Oct 2024

ABSTRACT

The point of view and attitudes of resident directors (RDs) on interactions involving housing professionals in higher education and disabilities are investigated in this paper. It underlines especially how important these findings are for creating inclusive living quarters on campus. Based on theories of disability and social roles, this study aims to find how effectively resident directors in college identify, grasp, and meet the particular needs of students with disabilities living on campus. To gather data for this quantitative study, a representative sample of RDs from several Chinese universities answered standardised questionnaires. The results show that depending on training, communication, attitudes, institutional policy clarity, past experience with disability-related events, awareness and reaction vary significantly. Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses reveal that institutions with well-established disability training programs for housing personnel often have more flexible and proactive approach. The study also shows that companies offering housing and disability services should work together to develop support models and training programs. Through advocating structural changes in RD training, institutional standards, and policy execution, this paper adds to the increasing corpus of studies on disability inclusion in higher education. The findings of the research could be used by higher education authorities to offer particular suggestions for improving accessibility for students with disabilities all during their stay on university.

Keywords: Resident directors, disability inclusion, higher education housing, disability awareness, institutional support, disability interactions.

1. INTRODUCTION

The residential life staff, especially RDs, greatly influences the design of good and inspiring university settings. More and more students with disabilities seek higher education, hence colleges have to make sure their living quarters can fit them. Although resident directors often serve as a middleman between students and housing specialists, their knowledge of disability and communication style greatly affects the degree of assistance given. While professional departments often oversee disability services, daily interactions and adjustments might rely on the knowledge and reaction of home personnel, most especially RDs. Good coordination between RDs and housing specialists in higher education will help us to promptly discover suitable solutions for issues linked to disabilities. Still, not much research has been done on how RDs' opinions on impairments, experience, and prejudices impact this relationship. Students' social and academic experiences may be seriously affected by inappropriate aid resulting from ineffective instruction, poor communication, or misunderstandings. The main goal of the research is to find if and to what degree resident directors' awareness of impairments affects their interactions with housing personnel handling disability-related problems. A quantitative method will be used using standardised questionnaires to assess the relationship between RDs' frequency and quality of communication practices and their degree of disability awareness. The results will help us to know how institutional assistance and training could encourage inclusive views in college housing. This research aims to assist students with disabilities and improve their living experience by means of more inclusive, communicative, and responsive housing systems developed in higher education under identification of important areas for change (McCormick et al., 2023).

2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

People with disabilities still face physical, cultural, and social barriers, according to new studies on disability rights in four Asian nations. Even in school environments, structural changes are necessary to promote inclusiveness, according to the study (Chou et al., 2024).

When it comes to the availability of higher education for those with disabilities, China offers a fresh viewpoint. Confucianism, state-led reforms, and fast modernisation characterise China's higher education system's approach to disability. Support for efforts to include kids with disabilities in regular classrooms comes from both disability education statutes and the larger Confucian ideas that stress the need of societal harmony. The emphasis on academic success and social stigmas put students with disabilities at danger of marginalisation, especially those who attended residential schools. When it comes to accommodating students with disabilities in higher education, the survey found that rural regions still fall short compared to metropolitan areas. Human Rights Watch documented widespread discrimination against disabled students in Chinese schools in 2013, including the refusal to provide reasonable accommodations and exclusion from mainstream classes. Early learning experiences may impact both the student's perspective on disability in general and their residential college experience specifically. Despite the clear influence of cultural perspectives on disability on RDs' actions, research on RDs in Asia, especially China, is very limited. The results indicate that collectivist governments, like China's, prioritise the welfare of the community more than individual citizens. This can have both good and bad implications for initiatives aimed at assisting people with disabilities (Zhang et al., 2023).

The interplay between disability and other components of identity, such as gender, colour, and socioeconomic class, necessitates more nuanced approaches (Crenshaw, 2022).

It could be quite difficult for students with impairments to transition to a four-year university. There is a lack of research on the opinions and knowledge of RDs about disability in relation to their profession, even though RDs' job is crucial. Housekeepers without the necessary education, insufficient funds, and antiquated or non-existent infrastructure are all instances of such systemic problems. Particularly in Asian cultures, where disability is often seen as a sign of shame or ill luck, cultural attitudes and unconscious prejudices have an influence on persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities are even more marginalised in Chinese residential schools due to the school's focus on academic success and collectivism (Wang, 2025).

3. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of this study is to assess how knowledge of disability that resident directors have influences their interactions with housing experts at the university level on problems connected with disabilities. This quantitative study aims to assess resident directors' opinions on disability awareness, communication strategies, and the effects of inclusive support and residential accommodations on the degree of collaboration and decision-making between directors and students. These results could be included into institutional policies and training courses to improve the relationship between staff members serving persons with disabilities and those residing in university accommodation.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

Due to a lack of action, advocacy groups, and legal knowledge, the early implementation of disability rights was slow, notwithstanding the approval of these landmark legislation. The HEW delayed the release of the Section 504 rules until 1978 as a result of litigation and protests by groups advocating for people with disabilities. Despite the delayed impact of these first legal advances, higher education grew more inexpensive in the decades that followed due to increased enforcement, improved public awareness, and activism. With the aid of these advancements, more disabled kids may participate in all parts of school life, increasing the likelihood that they will graduate from high school and become independent citizens who do not rely on welfare. To ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to learn, schools are now required by law to provide reasonable adjustments for those with disabilities. The recent successes against disability discrimination and for equal educational opportunities for all kids, according to Rothstein (2009), prove that these battles were critical. From these analyses, a number of prospective policies, programs, and plans have arisen that show promise as ways to expand the availability of affordable housing. The quality of life for

people with impairments might be greatly enhanced by innovations like smart home technologies, experimental gadgets, smartphone apps, and house modifications. In addition to physically accessible dwellings, these therapies improve the quality of life for those with impairments, allowing them to live independently (Lindsay et al., 2024).

The number of disabled students attending four-year colleges is on the rise. Instead of concentrating on students' overall experiences, much research has concentrated on enhancing teaching techniques. Few studies have examined the role of on-campus housing in fostering academic and social engagement. All organisations should prioritise providing accessible, reasonably priced housing for a variety of requirements. By using constructivist grounded theory to the study of RD perspectives on disability on college campuses, this research sought to fill a gap in the literature and contribute to the growing body of work on disability inclusion outside academic contexts (Toutain, 2022).

5. RESEARCH QUESTION

5.1 What impact does resident directors' understanding of disability have on their communication with housing experts in higher education when it comes to issues related to disabilities?

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

a. Research Design

Using SPSS version 25, the data was statistically analysed. Using a 95% confidence interval and an odds ratio, we were able to ascertain the direction and intensity of the statistical association. The researchers established a p-value of less than 0.05 as a threshold for statistical significance. Descriptive analysis helped us identify the most important aspects of the data. Statistical analysis software Converted data, as well as data gathered from polls, questionnaires, or surveys, often need quantitative methodologies for analysis.

b. Sampling

After polling 20 Chinese participants, researchers poured their findings into a final sample of 620 consumers. An individual was approached at random and handed eight hundred questionnaires. Since 180 of the questionnaires were unfinished, the researcher did not include them in the analysis.

c. Data and Measurement

The majority of the information for the research came from a questionnaire survey. In the second part of the survey, after participants provided some basic demographic information, they were asked to rate several aspects of the online and offline channels using a 5-point Likert scale. The secondary data came from a plethora of places, the most common of which were online databases.

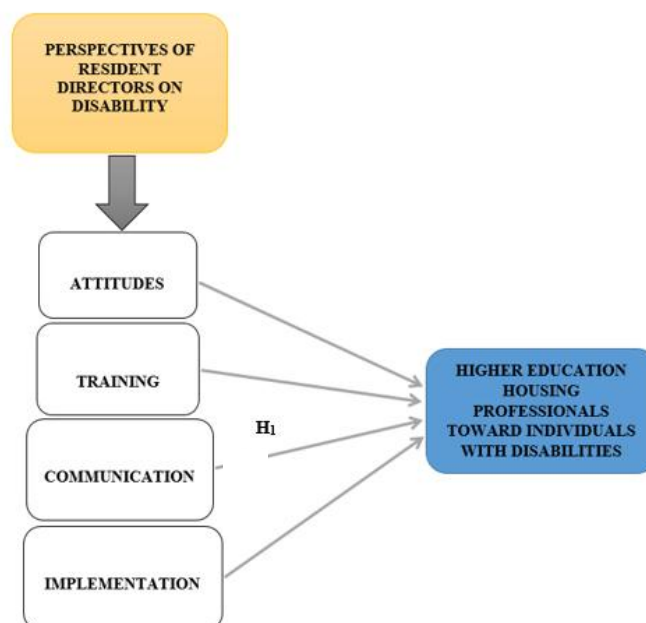
d. Statistical Software

The statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS 25 and MS-Excel.

e. Statistical Tools

To grasp the fundamental character of the data, descriptive analysis was used. The researcher is required to analyse the data using ANOVA.

7. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



8. RESULT

Factor analysis

Factor Analysis (FA) is often used to validate the underlying component structure of a collection of item measurements. Supposedly, judgements of the examined variables are directly affected by unseen influences. One method is to do accuracy analysis (FA) using models. This research aims to find relationships between overt events, their underlying causes, and measurement flaws.

You may use the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Method to determine whether the data is suitable for factor analysis. Every variable's sampling adequacy and the overall models are evaluated. The degree to which numerous variables may share variance may be ascertained by statistical analysis. Typically, factor analysis is the way to go when working with datasets that include smaller percentages.

A number between 0 and 1 is the result of running KMO. Any KMO value between 0.8 and 1 is considered sufficient for sampling purposes.

It is necessary to take action if the KMO is less than 0.6 because the sample size was insufficient. Although some writers utilise 0.5 like this, you should use your best judgement. From half a to half a point, that's the range. The relative importance of partial correlations over overall correlations increases as KMO approaches zero. It bears repeating that large correlations provide a significant challenge to component analysis.

Here are the requirements that Kaiser has set for admission:

Start at the pitiful 0.050 and finish at the 0.059.

Under-represented by 0.60 to 0.69 standard deviations

the 0.70 to 0.79 range is common for middle school students.

Quality points are measured on a scale ranging from 0.80 to 0.89.

It is rather astounding to me that the range is from 0.90 to 1.00.

Table: KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.935
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3252.968
	df	190
	Sig.	.000

To further validate the overall relevance of the correlation matrices, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was used. The sample adequacy as measured by Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin is 0.935. Using Bartlett's sphericity test, the researchers found a p-value of 0.00. The results of Bartlett's sphericity test were significant, proving that the correlation matrix was not a correlation matrix.

➤ TEST FOR HYPOTHESIS

❖ INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

• Perspectives of resident directors on disability

Here we have included the views and opinions of resident directors about disability, including their experiences with those who suffer from mental illness, sensory impairments, physical disabilities, or cognitive impairments. Each person's viewpoint is the result of a complex interplay of their own upbringing, family dynamics, educational background, and cultural standards and expectations. Decisions about disability accommodations and interpretation of disability legislation are made by college resident directors from these vantage points. With the right information and a positive outlook, you may be more empathetic, helpful, and proactive. Conversely, prejudice, neglect, or unintended exclusion could result from a limited or biased viewpoint. A key part of living in a residential community is having a resident director who looks out for everyone's needs and makes sure everyone feels welcome. Putting yourself in the shoes of students allows us to better regulate campus housing, raise awareness about disabilities, and provide fair opportunity for all backgrounds (Abes & Wallace, 2020).

❖ MEDIATING VARIABLE

• Communication

People employ a great range of oral, nonverbal, textual, and digital expressions in communication to send and receive knowledge. Apart from the data moving, the sender and the receiver actively interact in the exchange of meaning, objective, and feedback. In institutional settings such as universities, good communication is very crucial to promote inclusive policies and practices as well as cooperation and conflict resolution. Particularly in relation to residential life and student aid, "communication" explains the ongoing interactions between residential directors in higher education and housing specialists to satisfy the different needs of students, particularly those with disabilities. One must be kind, empathic, culturally sensitive, and aware of the particular challenges faced by students with disabilities if one wants to fit in this setting. Whether it comes to housing registration or participation of interdepartmental

meetings, formal norms as well as unofficial ties shape students' residential experience. Bad or non-existent communication might lead to misunderstandings, delayed accommodation, and a hostile environment. Thus, the degree of staff to resident contact dictates the success of disability support services in university housing. More than merely the ways of information distribution in this regard, the communication skills of the resident directors indicate their views, understanding, and responsiveness towards disability-related issues; these traits more define them. We have to use strong communication rules based on mutual respect and shared responsibility if we want to create residential communities where every student feels welcome and helpful (Römhild & Holleder, 2023).

❖ DEPENDENT VARIABLE

• Responses of higher education housing professionals toward individuals with disabilities

Responding to individuals with disabilities in college dormitories is often handled by residential staff members who are actively involved in campus life. The ways in which professionals communicate, the accessibility of housing, the passage of inclusive laws, and the development of inclusive communities all play a role in these solutions. They are influenced by a variety of factors, including attitudes, professional training, institutional restrictions, and student expectations. Some good qualities include empathy, good communication skills, and problem-solving abilities; some negative attributes include a lack of attention to detail, difficulty understanding others, and an inability to compromise. A child's disability, happiness, sense of community, and academic success are all profoundly affected by these interactions. In order to determine if current housing regulations are working and to guide efforts to make university housing communities more accessible, equitable, and inclusive, these remarks are essential (Biggs & Rossi, 2021).

• Relationship between communication and responses of higher education housing professionals toward individuals with disabilities

Regarding the building of inclusive and easily accessible university environments for people with disabilities, the interaction between communication and the attitude of housing experts in higher education is fairly important. Only timely and acceptable responses to meet the needs of children with disabilities are based on good communication. When resident directors are transparent and sensitive to disability-related issues, housing staff members are more suited to make necessary changes. Clear, polite, consistent communication facilitates the identification, discussion, and resolution of disability-related issues. This lowers the possibility of slow dissemination of help or misinterpretation. Students' residential experiences may suffer from inadequate or mismatched responses resulting from uncertainty, false information, ignorance, or denial of disability. Good communication will help the institution to be more inclusive and easily available, thereby fostering departmental collaboration and trust as well. By means of shared knowledge and responsibility among resident directors and staff members, it also promotes proactive problem-solving and policy execution. Simply said, good communication is the connection between disability knowledge and actual action; it determines the success of housing professionals' reactions and services for students with disabilities in higher education environments (Acar et al., 2025).

On the basis of the above discussion, the researcher formulated the following hypothesis, which was analysed the relationship between communication and responses of higher education housing professionals toward individuals with disabilities.

- ***“H₀: There is no significant relationship between communication and responses of higher education housing professionals toward individuals with disabilities.”***
- ***“H₁: There is a significant relationship between communication and responses of higher education housing professionals toward individuals with disabilities.”***

Table 2: H₁ ANOVA Test

ANOVA					
Sum					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	39588.620	207	4352.211	953.804	.000
Within Groups	492.770	412	4.563		
Total	40081.390	619			

In this study, the result is significant. The value of F is 953.804, which reaches significance with a p-value of .000 (which is less than the .05 alpha level). This means the ***There is a significant relationship between communication and responses of higher education housing professionals toward individuals with disabilities.*** is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected.

9. DISCUSSION

Results of this study emphasise the need of resident directors' disability awareness in influencing their interactions with university housing experts. The study linked better degrees of disability understanding with more proactive and communicative resident directors. This prevents the housing staff from reacting fast enough to meet student needs, especially those related to disabilities. The degree of training or experience resident directors had working with students with disabilities correlated with their ability to boldly address accommodation issues and give housing staff relevant information. Beyond the dissemination of facts, these findings support the theory that social networks, opinions, and experience of the individuals engaged define communication. One important observation of this study is the need of resident life departments offering integrated disability training programs. If institutions give their resident directors the tools and knowledge to significantly address people's disabilities, we could be able to find more flexible and easily accessible housing options. If departments are open with one another, students with disabilities could experience less uncertainty and delays. The studies suggest that institutional rules or appropriate channels of communication might not be in place to keep teams from collaborating successfully. By means of cross-departmental training and new policies, it is feasible to solve these structural issues and hence enhance responsibility and consistency. Future studies using a mixed-methods approach would help one better grasp the complexity of interpersonal interactions as well as the ways in which professional identities and cultural elements influence communication patterns. Overall, the results of the study show the need of resident directors in determining institutional responsiveness to disability requirements in campus housing as well as the need of effective communication regarding disabilities.

10. CONCLUSION

Results of this research emphasise the need of resident directors' understanding of constraints in enabling effective contact with participants of the housing industry. The findings show that resident directors who are aware of and comfortable addressing disabilities are more likely to participate in a manner that is clear, cooperative, and responsive, therefore generating greater support and concessions for persons with disabilities. This story suggests that inclusive behaviour as well as making institutions accountable depend on effective communication. As this article shows the link between disability awareness and communication efficacy, the housing systems of higher education need interdepartmental cooperation, explicit legislation, and focused training. Improving these facilities can let disabled students enjoy much better college life. Staff members in resident life should get first priority for communication training if institutions dedicated to diversity, equality, and inclusion want to establish friendly and happy homes. Future studies might look at student attitudes or provide qualitative analysis to direct us from our current state of affairs. Policy allows us to learn a lot about how to manage disability in university facilities; the results usually support the premise that open communication is essential to make campus more pleasant to all students.

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