

Exploring the Perspectives of Resident Directors on Disability: A Theoretical Evaluation Professionals in the Industry of Higher Learning and Interactions Related to Disability

Lin Lin¹, Sreemoy Kanti Das²

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 16 Aug 2024

Revised: 22 Sep 2024

Accepted: 12 Oct 2024

ABSTRACT

Within the context of contacts between housing professionals in higher education and individuals with disabilities, this research seeks to understand the perspective and attitude of resident directors (RDs). In particular, it highlights the significance of these results for the development of inclusive campus housing. The purpose of this research is to examine, via the lens of disability and social role theories, the degree to which college resident directors are able to recognise, understand, and accommodate the unique requirements of disabled students living on campus. This quantitative analysis relies on the responses of standardised questionnaires filled out by RDs from many Chinese colleges. Awareness and response differ substantially based on factors such as training, communication, attitudes, the clarity of institutional policies, and prior experience with disability-related occurrences. Results from descriptive and inferential statistics show that housing organisations with robust disability training programs tend to be more accommodating and proactive. Additionally, the research highlights the need for collaboration between housing and disability service providers to establish training programs and support models. In order to contribute to the growing body of research on disability inclusion in higher education, this study argues for systemic reforms in RD training, institutional standards, and the implementation of policies. Authorities in the field of higher education might utilise the research's results to provide targeted recommendations for making university life more accessible for students with impairments.

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

1. INTRODUCTION

The design of excellent and exciting university environments is heavily influenced by the residential life staff, notably the RDs. Colleges need to make sure their dorms can accommodate students with impairments since the number of disabled students seeking higher education is growing. Even though resident directors mediate between students and housing experts, the level of support provided is heavily influenced by their understanding of disabilities and communication style. Even though disability services are often overseen by professional departments, RDs and other house workers may need to depend on their expertise and reactions for daily interactions and changes. Finding appropriate solutions to problems related to impairments may be facilitated by good cooperation between RDs and housing experts in higher education. However, there is a lack of data on the effects of RDs' biases, experiences, and views on impairments on this connection. Inappropriate assistance as a consequence of inefficient teaching, inadequate communication, or misconceptions may have a significant impact on students' social and academic experiences. The primary objective of this study is to determine if and how resident directors' knowledge of impairments influences their interactions with housing staff who deal with issues connected to disabilities. In order to quantify the association between RDs' disability awareness and the frequency and quality of their communication practices, standardised questionnaires will be used. The findings will provide light on the ways in which institutional support and training might promote inclusive perspectives in university residence halls. By identifying key areas for change, this study seeks to enhance the living experience of students with disabilities via the development of housing systems that are more inclusive, communicative, and responsive (Könczei & Sándor, 2022).

2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Based on recent research on disability rights in four Asian countries, people with impairments continue to encounter social, cultural, and physical obstacles. Even at educational institutions, the research found that in order to foster inclusivity, systemic reforms are required (Chou et al., 2024).

China provides a new perspective on the accessibility of higher education for those with impairments. When it comes to students with disabilities, China's universities take a Confucian, state-led, and rapidly modernising stance. Complementing disability education laws is the broader Confucian principle of social harmony, which lends credence to the fight to mainstream students with impairments. Residential school children, in particular, are at increased risk of marginalisation due to the societal stigmas and academic performance standards. In comparison to urban areas, the poll indicated that rural regions still do not do enough to accommodate disabled students in higher education. Including the denial of reasonable modifications and removal from mainstream classrooms, Human Rights Watch found extensive discrimination against children with disabilities in Chinese schools in 2013. Students' views on disabilities and their residential college experience may be shaped by their early learning experiences. Very little is known about RDs in Asia, particularly China, despite the fact that cultural views on disability impact their behaviour. China and other collectivist regimes put the collective good ahead of individual residents' needs, according to the findings. The results for programs that help individuals with impairments might be mixed (Zhang et al., 2023).

More complex methods are required to address the complex relationship between disability and other aspects of identity like gender, race, and socioeconomic status (Crenshaw, 2022).

Transferring to a four-year institution may provide significant challenges for individuals with disabilities. Although RDs play an essential role in society, very little is known about their perspectives or understanding of disability as it pertains to their work. Some examples of such systemic difficulties include housekeepers who lack the appropriate education, inadequate funding, and outdated or non-existent infrastructure. Cultural attitudes and unconscious biases impact people with disabilities, especially in Asian countries where being disabled is sometimes seen as a sign of shame or bad luck. Chinese residential schools further marginalise disabled students because of their emphasis on academic achievement and collectivism (Wang, 2025).

3. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

This research aims to explore the points of view and understanding of disability held by resident directors in higher education housing, particularly with an eye on how these professionals engage students with disabilities and use support techniques for these students. This quantitative research seeks to determine if the reliability and quality of inclusive actions match the many points of view on disability held by resident directors in student housing surroundings. The major goal of the study is to investigate how different points of view influence the responsiveness of housing specialists and the availability of services related with impairments. Results should show the need of disability awareness and leadership on resident life teams by means of suggestions to strengthen the involvement of institutional housing support systems, staff training, and policy implementation.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

Disability rights were delayed to take effect in the beginning, despite the passage of these historic laws, because to inaction, advocacy organisations, and a lack of legal understanding. Legal action and demonstrations by disability rights organisations caused the HEW to postpone the publication of the Section 504 regulations until 1978. Higher education became more affordable in the decades after these first legislative victories, thanks to stricter enforcement, greater public awareness, and campaigning, even if the effects of these changes were slow to materialise. More impaired students will be able to take part in all aspects of school life with the help of these innovations, which will raise their graduation rate and their chances of becoming self-sufficient adults who do not need government assistance. Schools are now legally obligated to provide reasonable accommodations for children with disabilities so that they may participate fully in the educational process. These fights were crucial, as shown by the recent victories against handicap discrimination and for equal educational opportunities for all students (Rothstein, 2009). These studies have led to the development of many promising policies, initiatives, and strategies for increasing the supply of affordable housing. Innovations such as smart home technology, experimental devices, smartphone applications,

and home renovations have the potential to significantly improve the quality of life for those with disabilities. In addition to accessible housing, these treatments enhance the lives of people with disabilities and make it possible for them to live freely (Lindsay et al., 2024).

An increasing number of students with disabilities are enrolling in four-year universities. Many studies have focused on how to improve teaching methods rather than on students' experiences as a whole. There is a lack of research on how on-campus living affects students' ability to participate socially and academically. For a number of reasons, all groups should make it a top priority to provide affordable housing. In an effort to bridge a knowledge gap and add to the expanding corpus of scholarship on disability inclusion outside academic settings, this study used constructivist grounded theory to investigate RD viewpoints on disability on college campuses (Toutain, 2022).

5. RESEARCH QUESTION

5.1 How does the implementation of support strategies and the attitudes of housing professionals in higher education to students with disabilities differ depending on resident directors' opinions on disability?

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

a. Research Design

A statistical analysis was conducted on the data using SPSS version 25. The odds ratio and 95% confidence interval allowed us to determine the strength and direction of the statistical link. A p-value lower than 0.05 was set by the researchers as the cut-off for statistical significance. We were able to extract the most relevant information from the data by using descriptive analysis. Data analysis programs the use of quantitative approaches is common when analysing converted data and data obtained from polls, questionnaires, or surveys.

b. Sampling

A total of 620 customers were surveyed after researchers poured their results into a sample of 20 Chinese participants. By chance, we approached one person and gave them 800 surveys. The researcher did not include 180 incomplete surveys in the study since they were never included.

c. Data and Measurement

An online poll provided the bulk of the data used in the study. Following the inclusion of basic demographic information, the second section of the survey asked participants to score various characteristics of the online and offline channels using a 5-point Likert scale. The secondary data was sourced from a multitude of sources, with internet databases reigning supreme.

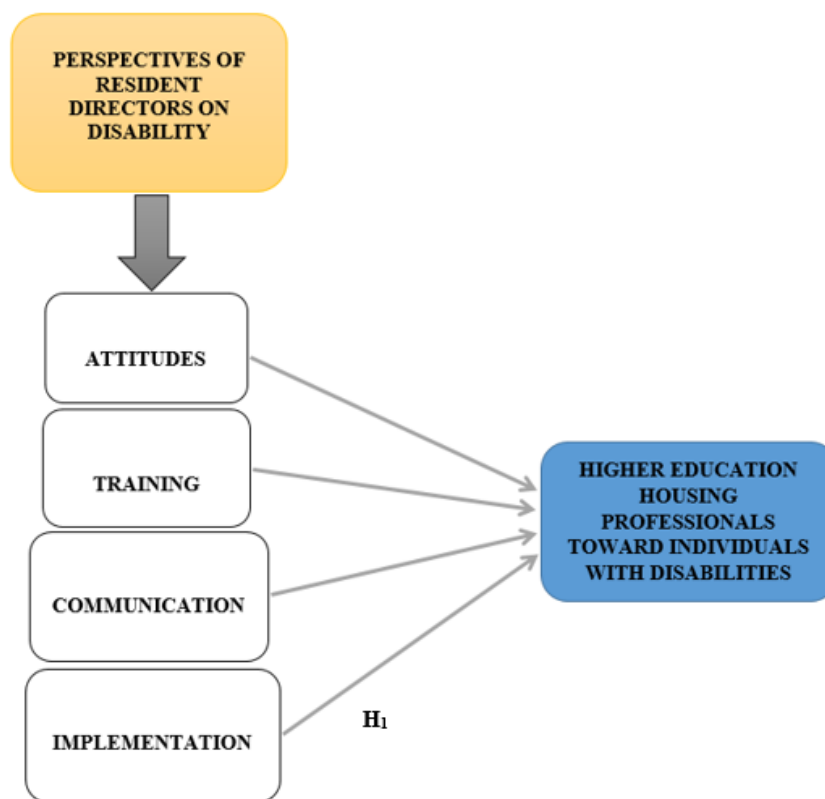
d. Statistical Software

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

It is common practice to do Factor Analysis (FA) in order to verify the component structure of a set of item measurements. Supposedly, invisible effects directly alter the assessments of the measured variables. As an example, you may use models to do accuracy analysis (FA). The overt events, their causes, and measurement errors are the focus of this study.

To find out whether the data is good for factor analysis, you may utilise the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Method. The overall models and the sampling appropriateness of each variable are assessed. It is possible to determine the extent to which many variables share variation using statistical analysis. Working with datasets that include lower percentages usually necessitates factor analysis.

The output of executing KMO is a value between zero and one. It is adequate for sampling purposes to have a KMO value between 0.8 and 1.

Because of the small sample size, intervention is required if the KMO is less than 0.6. You should exercise your discretion, even if some authors do utilise 0.5 in this way. The range is from sixty-five degrees to sixty-five degrees. As KMO closes to zero, partial correlations become more important than overall correlations. Component analysis is greatly hindered by high correlations, which has to be repeated.

Kaiser has established the following admissions criteria:

From the dismal 0.050 all the way up to the 0.059, begin.

For middle schoolers, the 0.70 to 0.79 range is typical, while under-representation of 0.60 to 0.69 standard deviations is usual.

On a scale from 0.80 to 0.89, quality points are assessed.
The range of 0.90 to 1.00 is rather remarkable to me.

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

The following are some of the resident directors' thoughts and feelings on the topic of disability, including their personal encounters with people who are physically disabled, have sensory impairments, mental illness, or both. The intricate web of influences that includes one's family relationships, educational background, cultural norms and expectations, and one's upbringing ultimately shapes one's perspective. From these vantage points, college resident directors make decisions on disability accommodations and the interpretation of disability laws. You could be more understanding, helpful, and proactive if you have the correct knowledge and a good attitude. A biased or restricted perspective, on the other hand, might lead to prejudice, negligence, or accidental exclusion. Having a resident director who watches out for everyone's needs and makes sure everyone feels welcome is an important component of living in a residential community. We can improve campus housing regulations, disability awareness, and access for all backgrounds by imagining what it's like to be a student (Abes & Wallace, 2020).

❖ MEDIATING VARIABLE

• implementation

"Implementation" is the general method used by a system or company to carry out its declared objectives, aims, or goals. Using a systematic manner, the process consists of many steps wherein real application of institutional decisions, theoretical frameworks, or procedural standards follows. This is especially important considering disability inclusion and student aid as "implementation" in higher education refers to integrating inclusive communication methods, concessions, and disability-related rules within student housing systems. Among the items on this list are guidelines for open communication, training for resident directors, and disability-specific support groups created. Planning, allocating resources—including stakeholders—and continuous monitoring and assessment define an

effective implementation. First priority is launching activities; they must match the situation, answer complaints, and change criteria. Preservation follows second. The best approach to make use of resident director and housing expert relationships is to make sure that understanding of disability concerns shapes service delivery. Moreover, we need a society that values readily accessible, just, long-term leadership. Thus, as it is a vital link between policy purpose and daily practice, implementation influences the daily experiences of disabled students in higher education institutions (Harpur & Szucs, 2025).

❖ DEPENDENT VARIABLE

• Responses of higher education housing professionals toward individuals with disabilities

Staff members who live on campus and are engaged in campus life often respond to people with disabilities in college dorms. Several factors contribute to these solutions, including the communication styles of professionals, the availability of housing, the creation of inclusive legislation, and the growth of inclusive communities. A number of things impact them, such as personal beliefs, educational background, institutional mandates, and student expectations. While empathy, strong communication skills, and problem-solving abilities are admirable traits, a lack of detail orientation, trouble empathising with others, and an unwillingness to compromise are traits that may need improvement. These relationships have a significant impact on a child's academic performance, happiness, feeling of community, and disability. The effectiveness of existing housing restrictions may be gauged and initiatives aimed at creating more accessible, egalitarian, and inclusive university housing communities can be directed by these statements (Biggs & Rossi, 2021).

• Relationship between implementation and Responses of higher education housing professionals toward individuals with disabilities

Creating accessible campus communities for those with disabilities depends on an awareness of the interactions among higher education housing specialists, legislators, and practitioners. How actively housing systems use rules, reforms, and communication strategies pertaining to impairments will define their effectiveness. After implementation is over and includes staff training, defined standards, and regular monitoring, professionals in the housing sector are more likely to respond fast, wisely, and compassionately to children with impairments. This guarantees that the institutional aim becomes a true reality by means of pragmatic efforts instead of hollow promises, therefore meeting the requirements of students with disabilities. On the other hand, delayed responses, misinterpretation, or unjust or insufficient application might cause problems in precisely spotting and helping children with disabilities. Because of their knowledge in disability issues and their ability to create inclusive policies, which significantly influence the degree of reaction from housing staff, a resident director is very important in this process. Including children with disabilities transcends words on paper as effective change strategies enable to combine knowledge with action. Current operational policies must be changed if university housing services are to be more equitable, responsible, and sensitive (Ristad et al., 2024).

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

- ***“H₀: There is no significant relationship between implementation and Responses of higher education housing professionals toward individuals with disabilities.”***
- ***“H₁: There is a significant relationship between implementation 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	224	5329.324	997.627	.000
Within Groups	492.770	395	5.342		
Total	40081.390	619			

In this study, the result is significant. The value of F is 997.627, which reaches significance with a p-value of .000 (which is less than the .05 alpha level). This means the ***“H₁: There is a significant relationship between implementation and Responses of higher education housing professionals toward individuals with disabilities.”*** is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected.

9. DISCUSSION

The views of resident directors on disability impact also the views of experts in higher education housing as well as the use of assistive solutions for students with disabilities. The results imply that when resident directors regard disability from educated, inclusive, and positive points of view, their support measures are more commonly and efficiently employed. Working with these directors, housing providers handle disability-related problems with more proactive, sympathetic, and responsive attitude. These findings expose the degree of reliance on team interactions and leadership viewpoints that operational policies of residential homes have. The study indicates that the use of support strategies helps to balance the opinions of resident directors as well as the responses of housing experts. Institutions whose implementation was planned, well financed, and routinely underlined for saw more consistent inclusive housing policies. In environments with either poor or unequal performance, staff attitudes were less positive and response times were slower. This emphasises even more the need of effective application of such principles for the provision of housing services to persons with disabilities, therefore supporting the perspective that personal values are essential. These findings would be very beneficial for training as well as for policies in higher education. Regular disability awareness workshops for resident directors and institutional accountability for carrying inclusive policies would help to improve professional attitudes and service quality among home staff. Future research might use qualitative techniques to better grasp the pragmatic consequences of these links and student perspectives. The study shows that an integrated approach combining knowledge with action and staff participation is crucial to enable students with disabilities readily accessible living quarters.

10. CONCLUSION

This study emphasises the need of resident directors' opinions on disability in defining the attitudes and actions of housing professionals in higher education towards students with disabilities as well as in the administration of assistance programs for these students. Better effects of support activities when resident directors have inclusive and well-informed viewpoints include increased responsiveness and more amicable contacts with housing personnel. Strong leadership, honest communication, and methodical implementation help to underline the necessity of inclusive university housing conditions as these stories show. Good implementation depends on constant training, policy execution, and interdepartmental coordination—all of which tie human attitudes to institutional conduct. Colleges and universities should support initiatives teaching resident directors about disabilities so they may better serve students with such requirements and ensure daily implementation of inclusive strategies is possible. Ultimately, encouraging disability-informed leadership in residential life will help to influence institutional solutions and improve quality of life for persons with disabilities.

REFERENCES

- [1] Chou, Y. C., Uwano, T., Chen, B. W., Sarai, K., Nguyen, L. D., Chou, C. J., ... & Nguyen, T. T. (2024). Assessing disability rights in four Asian countries: The perspectives of disabled people on physical, attitudinal and cultural barriers. *Political Geography*, 108, 103027.
- [2] Crenshaw, K. (2022). Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics [1989]. *Contemporary Sociological Theory*, 1, 354.
- [3] Zhang, Y., Rosen, S., Huang, S., & Han, L. (2023). Culture-based development model of inclusive higher education in Mainland China: history, current situation, and the future. *Handbook of Higher Education and Disability*, 115-128.
- [4] Wang, L. (2025). Human capital and the upward occupational mobility of rural migrant workers in China. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 95, 100997.
- [5] Lindsay, S., Fuentes, K., Rangunathan, S., Li, Y., & Ross, T. (2024). Accessible independent housing for people with disabilities: A scoping review of promising practices, policies and interventions. *Plos one*, 19(1), e0291228.
- [6] Toutain, C. (2022). *Higher Education Housing Professionals and Disability: A Grounded Theory Exploration of Resident Directors' Understandings of Disability* (Doctoral dissertation, Chapman University).
- [7] Abes, E. S., & Wallace, M. M. (2020). Using crip theory to reimagine student development theory as disability justice. *Journal of College Student Development*, 61(5), 574-592.
- [8] Strimel, M. M., Francis, G. L., & Duke, J. M. (2023). Higher Education Accommodation Decision-Making and Positionality: A Survey of Disability Resource Professionals. *Journal of Postsecondary Student Success*, 3(1), 80-100.
- [9] Ristad, M., Nguyen, K., Thompson, J., & Lawson, D. (2024). Studying disability: A multi-stakeholder perspective on requesting accommodation in higher education. *Social Sciences*, 13(3), 154.
- [10] Harpur, P., & Szucs, A. (2025). A disability-led disability inclusion strategy for the higher education sector. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*.
- [11] Könczei, G., & Sándor, A. (2022). Social innovation in higher education from a disability studies perspective. In J. Polese, R. Selznick, & A. Hashemi (Eds.), *Social innovation in higher education* (pp. 273–293). Springer.