

Parents' Perception on the Capacity of Self-Determination in Students with Disabilities

Melissa Wong Yick En

Faculty of Education, Languages, Psychology &
Music, SEGi University, Malaysia
melissaaaawong@gmail.com

Pang Jee Ching

Faculty of Education, Languages, Psychology &
Music, SEGi University, Malaysia
pangjeeching@segi.edu.my

ABSTRACT

Self-determination is prominent for students with disabilities to attain tremendous success in academic achievements and higher quality of life with better employment that generally leads them to be independent. Research reported students with disabilities typically have aptitude for self-determination due to the lack of opportunities given by the parents to practice self-determination. This study investigates the parents' perception of the capacity for self-determination in their adolescent child with disabilities. This study employed a quantitative research method with the adoption of the AIR Self-Determination Scale parent form to examine 64 parents' perceptions towards their child's capacity of self-determination through an online survey questionnaire. The finding of this study disclosed parents have a moderately low perception of the capacity of self-determination in their child with disabilities. Furthermore, there is no relationship between family income and parent's perception of the capacity for self-determination in their adolescent child with disabilities. In addition, most of the parents in this study used encouragement and support to promote the self-determination skills of their children with disabilities. The findings from this study implied the need to guide children towards independence and collaborate between parents, children, teachers and professionals to develop a plan to enhance self-determination and emphasize emotional support toward a child's goal attainment. Last but not least, the limitation of the study and recommendation for future research has also been discussed in this research study.

Keywords: *Self-determination, parents, capacity, opportunities, students with disabilities*

1. Introduction

Self-determination is the ability to govern one's life in a way that devotes and owns a satisfying life. Self-determined people behave autonomously by deciding and choosing goals freely without someone meddling (Burke et al., 2018). Shogren, Little and Wehmeyer (2017) claimed people develop self-determination skills throughout their life with replicated opportunities to engage in self-determination such as controlling their fate (Cheak-Zamora et al., 2019).

Providing students with skills, attitudes and opportunities to play an active and prominent part in their learning and future planning is the current best practice in the special education field. Self-determination skills are essential for students with disabilities as many researchers reported highly self-determined students with disabilities to have tremendous success in academic achievements, higher quality of life, and better employment that leads them to independency and be financially independent (Wehmeyer & Palmer, 2003; Chao & Chou, 2017; White, Flanagan & Nadig, 2018; Paradiz et al., 2018; Chao, Chou & Cheng, 2019). In Malaysia, Zainal (2020) reported students with disabilities have low working ability and self-management skills in the job environment even after attending a career transition program. Consequently, low self-management skill is related to the ability to be independent and self-regulating needed to cope with real-life situations. The elements of self-determination also consist of self-regulation and the empowerment of being independent. Low self-regulation and independency contribute to the factors that prevent them from having successful career transitions.

Most parents whose children/students have disabilities hope that their children/students could engage in decision making situations, be more self-regulating like being able to control their own emotions and engage in activities with their peers or the community (Chu, 2018). Kim et al. (2019) states that parents hope their children/students are self-determined that they are able live independently, aware of discriminating and harmful situations, expressing opinions and feelings, developing problem-solving skills to fulfil their own needs. However, the absence of self-determination within children/students with disabilities is due to parents 'lack of understanding on the concept of self-determination is a barrier in the family (Sabe, Aquilar & Carreras, 2020, Chu, 2018a; Chu, 2018b; Kim, 2020)

Therefore, to address these unfavourable circumstances for students with disabilities and help them to achieve a successful future, the development of self-determination for students with disabilities is essential.

2. Literature Review

The development of self-determination skills is derived from the level of support from the family (Cavendish, 2016). Parents play a crucial role in developing self-determination for the student with

disabilities from young (Zheng, Maude & Brotherson, 2015; Chu, 2018a; Chu, 2018b; Taylor, Cobigo & Ouellette-Kuntz, 2019; Sabeh, Aguilar & Carreras, 2020; Kim et al., 2020). Chu (2018b) research compares the number of choices and opportunities given by the parents in promoting self-determination skills for their child with disabilities and revealed that most parents dominate their student's (or children?) decision and choice-making in their daily life. This indicates that parents have higher control over their student's decisions and provided fewer opportunities to practice self-determination because self-autonomy is one of the components of self-determination (Zheng, Maude & Brotherson, 2015; Sabeh, Aguilar & Carreras, 2020; Kim et al., 2020). As a result, the student lacks competence in self-autonomy and emotional and functional independence. Despite the studies emphasis on the importance of parents' roles in developing self-determination skills, there are still barriers faced by the parents of a child with disabilities in the attempt to employ the strategies of self-determination.

Parents' belief that the capabilities of their student's self-determination (SD) is affected by the demographic backgrounds of the families such as household income, parents' educational experience and the student's severity of disabilities (Chu, 2018a; Chu, 2018b). According to Chu, low income family could influence the numbers and quality of opportunities and support such as financial resources and support from the parents through the environment given to the child to develop SD skills. Li, et al., (2020) affirmed that financially disadvantaged students have lower access to resources related to promoting SD. Moreover, Chu (2018b) reported that 81% of the parents displayed improper behavior management at home by exerting discipline or using punishment to address the student's inappropriate behavior. It was their strategy to teach the student to self-regulate. In Taiwan, a mother reported that she would use physical punishment, such as slapping the child's hand, if the child still does not know her wrongdoing because the mother wanted to treat her child as a typical normal child where disciplining is concerned (Chu, 2018a). In another incident, parent would give a timeout or not address the child's misbehavior because he wanted negative attention by disrupting his sister to gain his parents' attention. In contrast to the example given by Zheng et al. (2015) study, some of the parents would resort to compassion and comfort the child to calm their student down by giving a hug or a pat on the child's head. The child would eventually calm down after the parents' comforting words or gesture. However, there are also parents who rather ignore the child or enforce physical punishment in Zheng et al. (2015) study. Consequently, the various parenting styles would affect the development of self-determination in the children.

When parents have the desire to develop SD skills at home, they tend to struggle with the balance between the child's rights in making decisions and parents' concern for the child's capacity to make reasonable decisions as well as the consequences of the decision made by the child (Curryer et al., 2019). Due to their child's level of maturity and ability of reasoning not corresponding to their biological age, there were times that the child's emotions overruled the child's ability to be rational when making decisions. Parents have difficulty persuading their children to make reasonable decisions when

emotions like anger trigger the child. A similar scenario echoed in the study by Taylor, Cobigo and Ouellette-Kuntz (2019) that the parents have difficulties balancing independence and intervening in the child's decision. The parents were ambivalent as to the extent they could give their child in practicing freedom, such as deciding without external influences. They were concerned about the child's safety and health since the child's decision often does not consider the aspects of safety because they are unable to make safety judgment on certain situations. The parent's worries arise from having the responsibility of bearing the consequences of the child's decision, which causes the child's to exhibit emotions like anger and distress toward their parents (Curryer et al., 2019). The problem might be compounded when an adult's parents fear the adult may have committed a crime where the parents need to be involved in the legal situation. The dilemma of giving the child too much control and choices was the familiar parents' concern in managing their child in the home setting.

Parents positively provide a significant number of opportunities to their students with disabilities to develop self-determination skills (Taylor, Cobigo & Ouellette-Kuntz, 2019). The strategies included setting and attaining goals and teaching and scaffolding their child's daily living skills. As an illustration, the short-term goal can be letting the child work in a work setting with parental guidance, while the long-term goal will be for the child to work independently in the environment. While working on the child's dreams, parents evaluate and praise the child's progress. The plan of short- and long-term goals could help the child feel less overwhelmed as they start with incremental steps to pursue a bigger purpose. The parents also acted as an influencer by giving little feedback when the child needed advice when planning their goal-setting (Curryer et al., 2019). Moreover, parents demonstrated various approaches that unintentionally promoted SD skills to their children, although they may not fully understand the term SD (Chu, 2018a). One approach parent used was providing limited options to their child with disabilities when they have difficulty choosing something they prefer. This could help the child learn basic skills in making a decision. Giving control to the child will also increase their interest in something they are engaged in. On the contrary, some parents describe that their child was either incapable or hesitant to make choices even though they offer autonomy to their children in choosing their preferences (Curryer et al., 2019). Each parent employs approaches suitable based on the child's condition by incrementally guiding them daily. They encourage the child to make choices starting from more practical and concrete decisions such as choosing food to eat or clothes to wear and slowly guiding the child to comprehend and experience the abstract options that could be complicated. This will help them be aware of the consequences of every decision that they make. Thus, it shows that parents do make an effort to guide the child based on daily interaction with them - exploring available information on the goals and options.

Students with disabilities with higher self-determination have better academic achievement. Evidence shown in Gaumer et al. (2015) study proved a highly positive relationship between SD and academic achievement in reading skills and mathematics among adolescents with intellectual

disabilities. Students with higher self-determination performed better in reading and math across all family income, city-state and gender categories. This finding, combined with another latest research carried out by Chao & Chou (2017) support the hypothesis that students with disabilities, including students with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and multiple disabilities from junior high school in Taiwan with a higher level of self-determination have improved in academic performance. Better academic performance will lead to a successful transition in receiving higher education and getting employed in later life (Chao, Chou & Cheng 2019).

In the school context, the students should practice the skills of SD by giving them the opportunities to take charge of their own educational planning meetings with guidance from the teachers (Tichá et al., 2018). One will play a role of leadership in making personal choice that reinforces the development of goal setting, self-advocacy and problem solving when planning education pathway such as choosing the field of studies which eventually build up SD skills for the students with disabilities. In recent research, the self-determined approach intervention, the Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction (SDLMI) proves to have a positive impact on the academic achievements of students with disabilities and it is developed for teachers in schools to use it as a tool to facilitate students in developing SD (Garrels & Palmer, 2019). This intervention teaches students to select a self-chosen goal, develop an action plan to achieve the goals, and then make amendments to the plan or goals set. While working on the goal, the students will be guided on problem-solving by identifying the problem of the action plan, possible solutions to solve the problem, potential barriers and the consequences of each solution. Teachers play a role in guiding to support students in goal attainment. When students are equipped with the skills for goal attainment, they will be able to be self-determined such as being a problem solver and able to choose and achieve selected goals that leads to their academic achievement.

A partnership between parents and teachers to support students' self-determination skills has proven to improve students' self-determination in a few research studies (Chu, 2018a; Martinez-Tur et al., 2018; Palmer et al., 2019). Chu (2018a) study mentioned that professionals are able to provide more support for the families on two ways communication when parents shared more information with the professional and participated in their student's education. Consequently, the parents gain awareness to promote their student's success as they receive helpful information and resources to help their students improve at home. Martinez-Tur et al. (2018) also reported the importance of parents building relationships with professionals by having high mutual open communication about self-determination to help their children with Intellectual Disabilities. Moreover, teachers-parents communication on the child's strengths and needs by setting goals within routines at school and home has supported the student to improve their self-determination skills. This includes self-regulation and more engagement in daily activities because both parties are committed to the same goal setting (Palmer et al., 2019).

Despite the availability of various professionals sharing the same goal to assist students with disabilities, the existing research on the multidisciplinary approach would have been more helpful if they had focused on the limitation of a multidisciplinary approach. Dillenburger et al., (2014) have debated that professionals in a multidisciplinary team often experience a lack of agreement regarding the pathway after the client's diagnosis, considering that each professional has a different expert field. Without a doubt, the parents in the study of Runswick-Cole, Mallett, & Timimi (2016) have demanded the professionals in the multidisciplinary team to specify the services for their child with ASD and wanted their ideas heard by the multidisciplinary team. Hence, one way to overcome these issues is to shift this approach towards a transdisciplinary approach (TA) that emphasizes on collaborative work among the professionals with the client and the client's family. Recent research has demonstrated that applying the transdisciplinary approach increases the level of trust in the team with confidence and is equipped with strategies to handle conflict among the various disciplines in a group (Weiss, Cook & Eren, 2020).

3. Methodology

Research Design

The present study employed a quantitative research method. The quantitative research method aimed to describe the current phenomenon and explain the cause-and-effect relationships between variables by observing the opinions, attitudes and trends of the population of interest through extensive data collection (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2017; Mertler, 2018). Hence, this study investigated parents' perception of the capacity of self-determination of their child with disabilities at a selected PPKI secondary school in Puchong, Selangor. The research questions are designed as follows:

1. What is parents' perception of the capacity of self-determination of their children with disabilities?
2. Is there a relationship between family income and their child's level of self-determination?
3. What are the strategies of parents in developing their student's self-determination skills?

Research Participants and Sampling

Eighty parents of students with disabilities with a minimum age of 11 from a selected secondary school with integrated special educational needs program (PPKI) in Puchong, Selangor to participate in the online survey based on the research questions. Sixty-four parents of student with disabilities responded to the survey. Convenience sampling is employed and it does not require the sample to be familiar with self-determination. The benefit of this sampling method is that it is not expensive and saves time due to reaching the participants that are ready and available rather than targeting unknown individuals (Taherdoost, 2016).

Research Instrument

This study included one research instrument to collect data, comprising 27 items in the survey questionnaire for the participants. Section A and Section B asked close-ended questions, whereas section C asked open-ended questions with short answers. Section A contains the demographic information of the parents and their children. Section B items adopted from the survey instrument AIR (American Institute for Research) Self-Determination Scale for Parents (Wolman, Campeau, DuBois, Mithaug & Stolarski, 1994). The respondents answered to a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 - Never, 2 – Almost Never, 3 – Sometimes, 4 – Almost Always and 5 - Always. The scale indicates the frequency of the behavior occurring in the student with disabilities perceived by the respondents in section B, which refers to parents' perception towards the capacity of self-determination in the student with disabilities. There were three sub-sections with six items on each sub-section under section B, namely: (a) things that the student does; (b) the opportunity given to the student to practice self-determination at home; (c) the opportunity is given to the student to practice self-determination at school. In this section, the items will be added up to calculate the level of self-determination of the student with disabilities perceived by the parents. Lastly, section C consists of 2 semi-structured questions, which require the respondents to share the goal/plan that the student is working on and what strategy was used to help the student achieve the goal/plan.

Data Collection Procedure

The quantitative data on the parent's perception of self-determination in the students with disabilities will collect through an online survey questionnaire via Google Forms. To collect these data, the researcher obtained the consent from the principal of the selected PPKI secondary school before distributing out to the parents of the students with disabilities. The link to the online survey was shared in the WhatsApp group to the participants to complete the survey questionnaire. On the first page of an online survey questionnaire, the participants were informed about the purpose of the study, a description of the online survey form and a selection of the language they preferred to use. Then, the participants were asked to consent to participate in this survey voluntarily. The online survey can be done individually, as each section includes detailed instructions for the participants to read before responding to the items.

Data Analysis

The collected quantitative data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The demographic data of parents and students (see Table 4.1 and Table 4.2) questions with rating scale responses such as the level of self-determination skills of the student, parents' evaluation of their student's capacity of self-determination and the amount opportunities are given to the student to practice self-determination at home and school were analysed using descriptive statistics to obtain means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentage. The research question on finding out the

relationship between family income and children's level of self-determination perceived by parents was analysed using correlation analysis which is one of the analyses of inferential statistics. The correlation analysis has two variables: family income and parent's perception of the capacity of self-determination of students with disabilities, which has a significant relationship and vice versa. Content analysis answers the last research question on assessing parents' strategies for developing the student's self-determination skills. The researcher had to quantify the frequency of certain words mentioned in the parent's answer by determining the coding categories and producing a pie chart reporting the types of answers written for this research question.

4. Results

Table 4.1

Demographic Characteristics of Parents

Race/Ethnics	<i>n</i>	%
Malay	36	56.3
Chinese	22	34.4
Indian	6	9.4
Total	64	100.0
Highest Educational Background of Respondents	<i>n</i>	%
High school (SPM) or lower	38	59.4
College completion or higher	26	40.6
Total	64	100.0
Family Income (Per Month) of Respondents	<i>n</i>	%
Less than RM2,500 (B40-1)	30	46.9
Between RM 2,500 - RM4,849 (B40-4)	18	28.1
Between RM 4,850 - RM 10,959 (M40)	13	20.3
RM 10,960 and more (T40)	3	4.7
Total	64	100.0
Respondent's Relationship to Student	<i>n</i>	%
Father	9	14.1%

Mother	53	82.8%
Caregiver/Guardian	2	3.1%
Total	64	100.0

Note. The total n=64 represents the total respondents participated in the study.

Table 4.2

Demographic Characteristics of Students

Characteristics	<i>n</i>	%
Student's age		
11-13 years old	13	20.3%
14-16 years old	26	40.6%
17-19 years old	22	34.4%
20 years old and above	3	4.7%
Student's category of special needs		
Visual Impairment	0	0%
Hearing Impairment	1	1.6%
Speech Impairment	2	3.1%
Physical Disabilities	4	6.3%
Learning Disabilities (Down Syndrome, Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADHD, Dyslexia, GDD etc.)	48	75.0%
Multiple Disabilities	9	14.1%
Perceived Disability Level of Student		
Require low support needs	31	48.4%
Require high support needs	33	51.6%

Parents' Perception on the Capacity of Self-Determination (SD) in their Child(ren) with Disabilities

Table 4.3

Mean and Standard Deviation of the Capacity of Self-Determination in Students with Disabilities

AIR Self-Determination Items	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Capacity to be self-determined		
My child knows what (s)he needs, likes, and is good at.	3.72	1.031
My child sets their own goals to satisfy wants or needs. (S)he thinks about their abilities when setting goals.	3.16	1.087
My child figures out how to meet goals alone. S(he) makes plans and decides what to do independently.	2.86	1.139
My child begins work on plans to meet his/her own goals as soon as possible.	2.92	1.131
My child checks their progress after completing their plan, then asks others for feedback on his/her progress.	2.33	1.183
If my plan doesn't work, my child tries another one to meet my goals.	2.55	1.154
Total Capacity to be self-determined	17.53	5.185
Opportunity to be self-determined at Home		
At home, people listen when my child talks about what (s)he wants and is good at.	3.64	1.132
At home, people let my child know that (s)he can set his/her own goals to get what (s)he wants or needs.	3.47	1.126
At home, my child has learned how to make plans to meet their own goals and to feel good about them.	3.20	1.042
At home, my child is allowed to act on their own plans right away.	3.44	1.037
At home, my child has someone to tell them when (s)he is meeting their own goals.	3.44	1.332
At home, people understand my child when (s)he has to change plans to meet his/her own goals. They offer advice and encouragement.	3.59	1.231
Total Opportunity to be self-determined at Home	20.78	5.119
Opportunity to be self-determined at school		

At school, people listen when my child talks about what (s)he wants and is good at.	3.33	1.113
At school, people let my child know that (s)he can set his/her own goals to get what (s)he wants or needs.	3.34	1.130
At school, my child has learned how to make plans to meet their own goals and to feel good about them.	3.27	1.288
At school, my child is allowed to act on their own plans right away.	3.16	1.042
At school, my child has someone to tell them when (s)he is meeting their own goals.	3.22	1.133
At school, people understand my child when (s)he has to change plans to meet his/her own goals. They offer advice and encouragement.	3.42	1.110
Total Opportunity to be self-determined at school	19.73	5.550
Overall Score of Self-Determination	58.05	13.214

Note. M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation. Total N = 64 parents were asked to rate their child's capacity of self-determination. Mean: High = 80-100; Moderate = 60-79; Low = 0-59.

Table 4.3 shows that the highest mean score among the three components is the opportunity given to students with disabilities to be self-determined at home ($M = 20.78$, $SD = 5.119$). The second component with the highest mean score is the opportunity to practice self-determination at school ($M = 19.73$, $SD = 5.550$) while the lowest mean score among the three components is the capacity of students with disabilities to be self-determined in general ($M = 17.53$, $SD = 5.185$). Lastly, average mean score on the parent's rating on the overall score of self-determination in students with disabilities is moderately low ($M = 58.05$, $SD = 13.214$).

The Relationships between Family Income and Capacity of Self-Determination (SD) in Student with Disabilities Perceived by the Parents

Table 4.4

Correlations between Family Income (per month) and Capacity of Self-Determination (SD) in Student with Disabilities Perceived by Parents

		Family Income (per month)	Capacity of SD in Student with Disabilities Perceived by Parents
Family Income (per month)	Pearson Correlation	1	.011
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.930
	N	64	64
Capacity of SD of Student with Disabilities Perceived by Parents	Pearson Correlation	.011	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.930	
	N	64	64

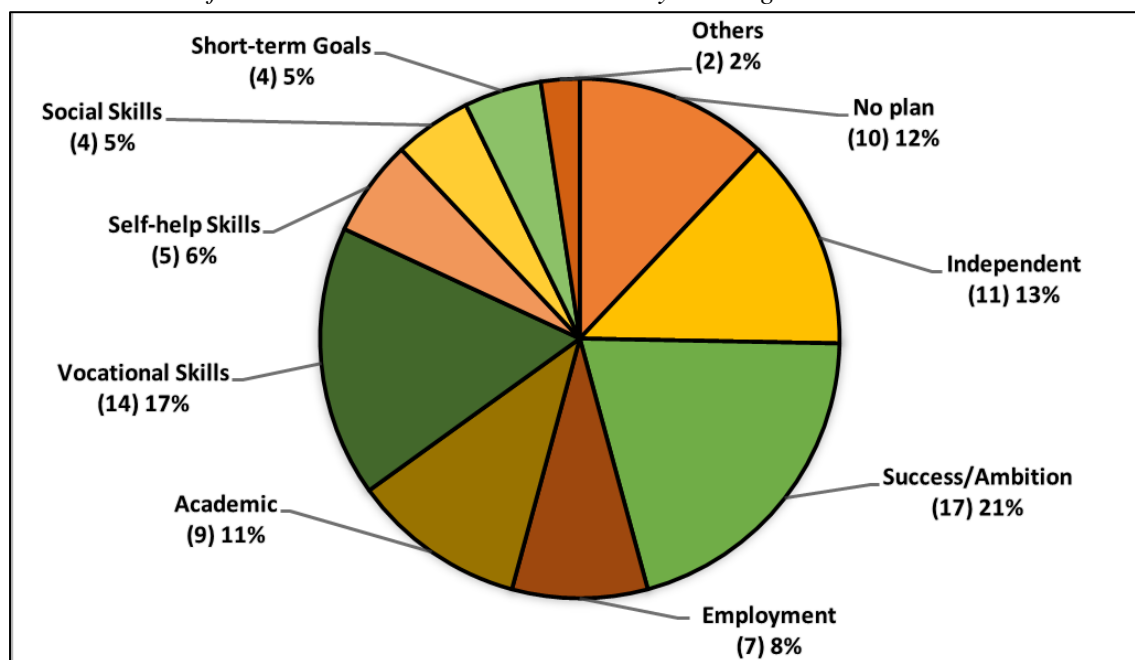
Note. r = Pearson correlation, Sig. (2-tailed) = significance/probability, N is the total number of parents in the study.

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient examines the relationship between the two variables. Table 4.4 presents the relationship between the family income of the parents and the capacity of self-determination in students with disabilities perceived by the parents. The result showed the Pearson correlation $r = .01$, which implies no correlation between these two variables as the r value is close to 0 while the Sig. (2-tailed) value, $p = .93$, is interpreted as no statistically significant correlation between the two variables since $p > .05$. Hence, the interpretation of these data can conclude that there is no significant relationship between the family income of the parent and the capacity of SD in students with disabilities perceived by the parents ($r = .01$, $n = 64$, $p = .93$).

Parents' Strategies in Promoting Self-Determination for Student with Disabilities

Figure 4.1

The Goal/Plan of the Student with Disabilities currently working on

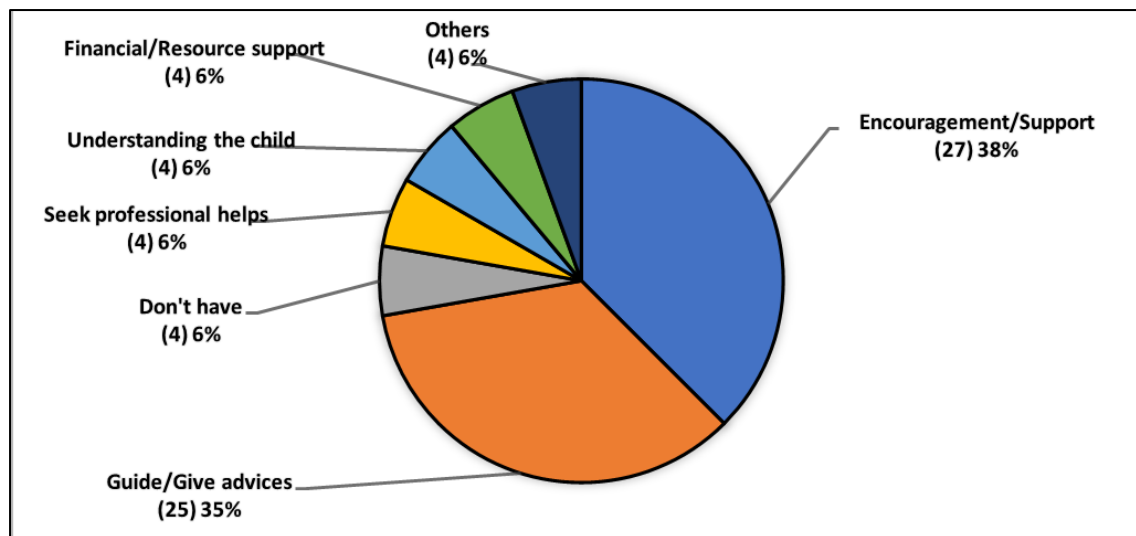


Note: There was a total of 83 responses category count reported by the 64 parents. The number in bracket indicated as the frequency of keyword appeared on each category.

Figure 4.1 shows the frequent keywords that appear in the parents' responses on their children with disabilities goals or plans that they were currently working on. It shows that most of the goals of students with disabilities are to be successful in life or achieve the ambitions they desire, with 21%. As an illustration, they ambition to be police, chef, painting artist and be successful in the skills they are currently learning. Moreover, the second majority of the responses are acquiring vocational skills such as cooking, sewing, cup stacking sports and taking a vehicle license, which comprise 17%. The third majority of the student's goals is to be independent, which constitutes 13%. Furthermore, 12% of the responses describe that 10 out of 64 parents of children with disabilities do not have any goals or plans for their child with disabilities. Additionally, 11% of the responses focus on the child's academics, such as counting, reading, and language skills. Then, 8% concentrate on the student's employment after completing their studies in secondary school, and 6% respond on acquiring self-help skills such as managing themselves. The same percentage of the keywords report on short-term goals, such as buying a roller shoe and developing social skills to communicate with people around them is 5%. The last category was others, comprising 2%, who have the goal of sleeping early or on time and waking up early.

Figure 4.2

Strategies used by the Parents to Promote Self-determination in Students with Disabilities



Note. There is a total of 72 responses on category count reported by 64 parents. The number in bracket indicate the frequency of keyword that appears on each category.

Figure 4.2 shows the strategies parents use in developing self-determination for their children with disabilities. Most parents employ the technique ‘to encourage and provide mental and moral support for their child with disabilities to achieve the goals or plans which comprises 38% of the total response category count. Next, parents mainly provide guidance and advice to their child with disabilities to achieve goals or plans with a percentage of 35%, which is 25 out of 72 of the total response category count. On the other hand, 4% of the responses state that parents do not have ‘strategies to help a child achieve his/her goals or plans’. Furthermore, the responses, such as ‘seeking professional help’, ‘understanding the child’, and ‘financial or resource support’, share the same percentage from the total response category count, which is 6% for each response category. For the response ‘category on others’, some parents' responses are irrelevant to the item on ‘strategies to help students with disabilities achieve the goals or plan such as stating the goals or plans’ instead of ‘the strategy to support the child achieve the goals or plans’.

5. Discussion

Intentional guidance toward child's independence

The finding has confirmed that parents have a relatively low moderate perception of their child's self-determination skills. Parents with children with disabilities faced obstacles in providing opportunities to promote self-determination skills in their children in the home setting. Mumbardó-Adam et al. (2016) found that the chances of practicing SD at home can affect the ability to self-determination in students with disabilities. Moreover, most parents emphasize guiding their child's planned goals, which is the second most employed strategy to promote self-determination by the parents. Findings show that parents do not properly train their children to be independent in planning goals which are critical in developing self-determination. For instance, to promote self-determination in a child with disabilities at home, the parents perceive that their child does not know how to make plans to meet their goals and feel good about them. This item was reported as the lowest score among the six items in this component. This implies that most parents directly answer or provide a solution for the child when they face obstacles instead of having the child develop problem-solving skills to solve the problem. As discussed by Sabeh, Aguilar & Carreras (2020), these parents lack belief in their child's ability to be independent. Hence, it is common to note that most of the parents of a child with disabilities require high support needs. This resulted in lower parents' expectations of their children with disabilities.

The argument is if the parents often doubt their child's independent ability, when will they have the opportunity and capability to be independent when they become a young adult or have completed secondary school education? Hence, it is crucial to encourage aspiration for parents to properly guide the child instead of directly giving the solution to the problem. This allows the child to equip themselves with the skills of problem-solving to achieve their planned goals. This also allow the child to acquire the capacity and capability to find information independently related to their goals as well as to categorise bigger goals into smaller goals. Curryer et al. (2019) suggested letting the child feel overwhelmed with the primary goals as the parents can reassure the child that they can do it by making the significant goals into smaller goals with incremental steps of progress that could lead to success in attaining the goal intentionally. This shall allow the child to be self-regulated when addressing the challenges toward independence (Shogren et al., 2017).

Workable plan to develop Self-Determination (SD)

This study has described that the overall score of the capacity of SD is moderately low, which can infer that parents overly depend on the role of schoolteachers to guide their child in finding the child's interest and instilling hope in their life. Due to the teacher's nature to instruct and guide the students with disabilities to be self-determined. Curryer et al. (2019) reported that parents did not take extra steps to further assist the child in developing the skill of SD despite the knowledge of their child's incapability

to identify their preferences. As a result, parents do not try to determine their child's goals. Most times, they leave the obstacle of their child to the school teachers or even other professionals. The finding shows that parents resolve to send their children to tuition to improve their academic skills. This has caused the school to have more opportunities to practice SD with students with disabilities than at home (Mumbardó-Adam et al., 2016). Hence, the parents should collaborate with the teachers at school and other professionals to enhance the child's SD. This can include various disciplines to form a transdisciplinary team that involves the parents and the child to decide and implement their goals underpinning the child's needs. (Weiss, Cook & Eren, 2020). The self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction (SDLMI) is a teaching model to effectively guides students to develop problem-solving skills and short-term goals while attaining the most prominent goal (Hagiwara et al., 2020). Another approach Cannella-Malone & Sabielny (2020) mentioned is to help the child find their preferences when selecting plans based on their choices by providing them with various exposure.

Family income does not affect child's self-determination

The result of this study indicates that there is no significant relationship between family income and capacity of SD in child with disabilities as perceived by the parents. This has indicated that the family income does not affect the parent's perception towards their child's level of SD. However, this outcome is contrary to Chu (2018a) study that discussed family demographic background includes family income. According to Chu (2018a), the factor of family income affects parent's belief towards the level of SD in their child with disabilities. The reason being that the lack of financial resources for the family to support and provide opportunities to the child to develop SD (Chu, 2018a; Chu, 2018b; Shogren et al., 2018; Li et al., 2020). Moreover, the evident in another study by Shogren et al. (2018) explored the effect of socioeconomic status on the SD scores of students with and without disabilities. The study claimed that students with financial disadvantages have low level of SD

Emotional support vital for a child's goal attainment

The present study has discovered a prominent finding that could contribute to promoting a child's SD skill in goal attainment. The majority of the parents in the present study highlighted the strategy for providing encouragement and advice for paving the child's road to success in achieving the planned goal. This phenomenon implies that the parents believed this strategy is significant for the child's completing the intended goal. There is sufficient evidence in previous studies on the impact of offering emotional support toward the child's goal attainment. Curryer et al. (2019) claimed the role of parents in being supportive and encouraging their child with disabilities enable the opportunities to be self-determined in terms of the enhancement of choice and control where autonomy is with the child itself. However, Curryer et al. (2019) study is contrary to the present study, where one of the parents mentioned that the child has the ambition of becoming police, but the parents wanted him to become a

teacher. Parents thought that being a police officer was much riskier than becoming a teacher despite this parent's strategy to encourage.

On the other hand, 6 out of 10 parents in the current study still need a realistic goal for their child. Their strategy is positively related to giving encouragement, advice, and support. It can be seen whether parents have or do not have a current goal for their child, presented the strategy of encouraging and providing guidance to their child as they believed it would positively impact them. This implication may be supported by the theoretical framework of the development of SD based on the current literature review which has proposed by Shogren et al. (2017). They have related the child's basic psychological needs have to be fulfilled, then the child will have internal or external motivation. This has caused the parents unintentionally help to generate the child's motivation externally by encouraging and supporting the child either during the exploration of goals or pursuit to attain the goal. This implies the importance of emotional support in developing SD in children with disabilities.

Conclusion

Parents have a moderately low perception of the capacity of self-determination (SD) in their adolescents with disabilities. This study shall provide an avenue for the community to understand parents' challenges in promoting SD to their child at home by providing emotional support and advice to the child when attaining a goal. It is hoped that parents can intentionally guide the child to equip SD skills towards their independence, given that most parents restrict the child from developing problem-solving skills, self-regulation and other SD skills when attaining a plan/goal. A transdisciplinary approach collaboration between the parents, child, teachers and other professionals to develop an effective work plan for the child to develop SD skills is recommended to enhance the knowledge and coping strategies of the parents so that they are more confident to develop the child's SD skills towards a more independent and meaningful life. Future research may include other predictors such as the student's characteristics, parents' educational background and parents' view on the importance of SD that will influence the parents' perception on the capacity of SD for students with disabilities. It is also recommended that future research investigate the effectiveness of interventions such as Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction (SDLMI), which pursues to help children with disabilities to develop SD especially in Malaysia. Most studies were conducted in other countries and the current study has shown the lack of opportunities for interventions and that parents are not encouraging their children to practice SD at home.

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