Needs and Problems of Students with Physical-Motor Disabilities in Transportation, Communication, Bullying and Leisure-Time

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ABSTRACT--- A proper respond to the needs and problems of boys students with disabilities, requires the identification of their needs and problems. This study aims to determine the needs and problems of students with physical-motor disabilities in the components of bullying, transportation, communication, and leisure-time. This is a descriptive study. The samples consisted of 150 boys students with physical-motor disabilities from exceptional schools in Tehran, Iran, selected by available sampling method, in the academic year academic year of 2014-2015. The instrument employed in this study was Needs and Problems of Disabled Girls and Women Survey. Investigating the needs and problems of students with physical-motor disabilities generally reveals their priorities in each area. Priority problems related to bullying are neglect and aggressive behavior. Transportation priority problems include inappropriate sidewalks and streets, public transportation inappropriate to their circumstances and needs. Examples of leisure-time priority problems are lack of travel services, specifically to the sports venues and financial problems for using them. Communication priority needs examples include to raise people’s awareness of the capabilities of the disabled and their limitations, causing them to be treated as normal people, receiving no pity from others. Transportation priority needs include improving sidewalks and public places and travel services which are specifically tailored to different types of disability. Finally, leisure-time priority needs examples are specific venues for the disabled sports, and entertainment venues for use by disabled people. The final results of this study showed the diversity of the problems and the needs of students with physical-motor disabilities and the necessity of giving attention and taking action plans to address these needs.

Keywords--- Bullying, Communication, Leisure-time, Needs, Physical-motor disabilities, Problems, Transportation

1. INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization (WHO) has defined disability as a functional problem at three levels, namely the physical level, the personal level and the social level, in one or more areas of life, experienced by an individual as a result of interaction with certain environmental and underlying factors (Schreuer, Sachs & Rosenblum, 2014). One kind of disability is physical-motor disability, which refers to any cause of disability in individuals with weakened, impaired or inability in motor system, or even any kind of need for mobility aids (Brown & Turner, 2010). Students with disabilities are widely considered as one of the most vulnerable groups in schools and in society. Various studies consistently show that these students are exposed to experience adverse academic, psychological, and social conditions (Humphrey, Lendrum, Barlow, Wigelsworth & Squire, 2013). The present research aims to study different dimensions of
communication, bullying, leisure-time, and transportation in students with physical-motor disabilities. All these dimensions are important aspects, which influence the lives of these students and can have profound consequences. Hence, the value of each will be discussed.

The majority of people around the world recognize that the ability to communicate is one of the basic human needs. Communications in students, apart from facilitating their social, cognitive and emotional development, can lead to feelings of well-being, a component of a very high life quality and social competence( Hartley & Wirz, 2002). Several studies have shown that the participation of physical-motor disabled students in social environments is very limited compared with that of normal students(Law, Petrenchik, King, Hurley, 2007; Stevens, Steele, Jutai, Kalnins, Bortolussi, Biggar, 1996). Other studies have attributed the impediments of this limited participation in these students to several reasons such as lack of communication skills(Haidarpour, Dokanaifar, Bahari, 2009), shyness and social phobia(Izgiç, Akyuz, Dogan, Kugu, 2004), low self-efficacy(Gilak, Zadehmohammadi, Bagheri, 2013), low self-concept(Ferro, Boyle, 2013), low quality of life(Ju, Lee, Lo, Wang, Chu, Lin, 2006), the phenomenon of stigma and humiliation(Goffman, 1963), and social segregation(Mihaylov, Jarvis, Colver, Beresford, 2004). Additionally, other researchers have mentioned other reasons for the limited participation by disabled students, such as the environmental factors, urban impediments and low public services (Law, Petrenchik, King, Hurley, 2007; Mihaylov, Jarvis, Colver, Beresford, 2004; McManus, Michelsen, Parkinson, Colver, Beckung, Pez, et al. 2006).

Recent global reports on disability, suggests a very high physical bullying toward people with disabilities, and this is a major risk factor for their health(Khalifeh, Howard, Osborn, Moran, Johnson, 2013). It seems that students with disabilities are more vulnerable to interpersonal bullying as compared with ordinary students. Different meta-analysis findings on the prevalence of bullying against disabled students indicate that the prevalence of different kinds of combined bullying against the disabled students is 26.7%, physical bullying 13.7%, and sexual bullying 20.4%. Studies also have indicated that students with disabilities are three to four times more likely to be victims of various forms of bullying. However, based on gender, different patterns of bullying are at work(Jones, Bellis, Wood, Hughes, McCoy, Eckley, et al. 2012). The male physically disabled are more abused and neglected than their female counterparts, while girls with disabilities are more sexually abused(Lin, Lin, Lin, Wu, Li, Kuo, 2010). High risk of bullying in physical-motor disabled students may be due to several factors such as deprivation of education and employment, need of family help in everyday life, low physical and psychological defenses, communication impediments and problems, social stigma and segregation(Hughes, Bellis, Jones, Wood, Bates, Eckley, et al. 2012).

Leisure or enjoyable activities at school provide opportunities for enjoyment, relaxation, recreation, self-determination, identity finding, and personal and social growth. Additionally, participation in meaningful leisure-time has a high positive correlation with students’ well-being and quality of life, especially if they fit the skills and interests of students, particularly in relation to people with various disabilities (Schreuer, Sachs & Rosenblum, 2014). Students with physical-motor disabilities participate less than their normal peers in diversified entertainments, while they are more engaged in passive leisure activities (such as watching television). Studies also have shown that people who are less involved in their daily activities are more likely to spend their leisure time passively (e.g., reading, watching TV and video, and listening to the radio). They are less likely to spend time on social entertainment (e.g., theater, culture, and social events) compared with normal children(Pagán-Rodriguez, 2014; Longo, Badia, Orgaz, 2013). Furthermore, besides personal factors (e.g., age, sex, motivation, lifestyle, and educational level), participation in leisure activities by students with disabilities may be determined by impediment factors associated with the disability itself. These impediments include lack of transportation services specific to the sport venues, financial difficulties, and lack of disabled sports and entertainment venues(Badia, Orgaz, 2011). In any case, knowing the proper methods of leisure-time for the disabled and explaining its impact on their physical and mental health and happiness are of great importance and require more attention.

According to Article 2 of the Comprehensive Act of Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, all ministries and organizations, institutions and public companies as well as public institutions are required to design, manufacture, and construct buildings, public places, streets, and equipment in such a way as to provide access and benefit services for all people with disabilities. On the one hand, in Iran, noncompliance with technical standards for the construction of streets and public buildings and lack of attention to the public use of educational, health, working environments has not only caused the disabled and veterans but also sometimes, healthy people to be limited to their homes, isolated, and kept away from others(Safdarzadegg, 2014). Therefore, municipalities have been somewhat unsuccessful to make such environments appropriate for the disabled and veterans. On the other hand, keeping these groups of people away from the society and using their actual and potential abilities needs a number of measures, such as making appropriate actions to upgrade urban transportation and the transportation system. The access to public buildings and equipment, transportation, recreation and tourism centers by the disabled will not only be beneficial to allow them to
use their talents and capabilities, but also will be beneficial as a new form of preventing disabilities (Bezi, Kiani, & Afrasiabirad, 2011).

In conclusion, the elimination of any kind of discrimination against youth and students with physical-motor disabilities and the provision of plans and grounds for their participation in society and enjoying equal opportunities will not be possible, except through understanding their true needs and problems using their first hand experiences. Iranian studies on the issues and problems of the disabled are mainly restricted to MA or PhD dissertations in the fields of rehabilitation and social-work and to a lesser degree the studies conducted by interested academic researchers (Sharifiansani, Sajjadi, Toloee, & Kazemnezhad, 2006). The most relevant research in this regard so far, is the research done on a sample of 216 girls and women with disabilities about their needs and problems. The results showed the diversity of the problems and needs of girls and women with physical-motor disabilities in the fields of education, employment, bullying, marriage and family, traveling, treatment and rehabilitation, communication, and leisure-time (Sharifiansani, Sajjadi, Toloee, Kazemnezhad, 2006). The present study examines each of the four dimensions of communication, bullying, leisure-time, and transportation in male students with physical-motor disabilities. Therefore, given that the evaluation of the needs and problems together can provide a clear picture for future research, while at the same time can help identify the needs and problems of this group; which will have effective consequences on official policies. So this study aims to determine the needs and problems of students with physical-motor disabilities in the components of bullying, transportation, communication, and leisure-time.

2. METHODS

This study is a descriptive research conducted on male students with physical-motor disabilities in the academic year of 2014-2015. Our statistical research community consisted of all boy students with physical-motor disabilities in exceptional boys’ high schools in Tehran, Iran. Of these, 150 students were selected using available sampling methods.

For data collection, Needs and Problems of Disabled Girls and Women questionnaire was used (Sharifiansani, Sajjadi, Toloee, Kazemnezhad, 2006). The questionnaires were completed through face-to-face interviews by trained interviewers. The questionnaire contains 82 items, including two subscales: current situation (status quo) and assessment of the needs and problems. The assessment of the needs and problems subscale measures are variables such as employment, education, marriage, communication, transportation, leisure-time, economy, and bullying. Cronbach’s alpha reliability was 76% and its content validity was confirmed by experts (Sharifiansani, Sajjadi, Toloee, Kazemnezhad, 2006). At the beginning, three exceptional boys’ high school (Soroush, Emam-Ali and Haj-Babaei Exceptional Education Complexes) with a sufficient sample size for the study (at least 50 students) were selected. After receiving permission from the Exceptional Education Organization of Tehran, and coordinating with educators, and gaining the parents and students’ satisfaction (including a written informed consent), the interviews were conducted and the questionnaires were distributed to the students with physical-motor disabilities. After obtaining a license from the Ethics Committee of the Welfare and Rehabilitation Sciences University, the study was launched. Then, all the subjects were informed about the nature, the purpose, and the confidentiality of the results. Furthermore, the subjects were ensured that they have the right to withdraw from the study whenever they want, and there is no force or obligation for them to participate in the study against their will. The subjects’ names and identities and group information will remain confidential. The results obtained will be provided to persons and organizations only with the consent of every subject of the group studied. For the final analysis, the collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

3. RESULTS

The results can be examined in two parts, first the information that draws an overall picture of the population in the various dimensions, and then the findings that show the priority needs and problems of the studied group. However, the present study only examines four areas of Needs and Problems of Disabled Girls and Women Questionnaire (bullying, transportation, communication, and leisure-time) in boy students with physical-motor disabilities.
Table 1: Demographic Data of the Studied Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall picture of people with disabilities in various aspects</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quantity of the received services</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>Most frequent cause of disability due to illness</td>
<td>50.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Services</td>
<td>3.54%</td>
<td>Quality of the services received</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical complications due to disability</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Lack of disease or physical/mental problems except for physical-motor disability</td>
<td>65.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are other people with disabilities in the family</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good or very good health</td>
<td>41.12%</td>
<td>Lack of progressive disability</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad or very bad health</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
<td>Consanguineous parents</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly satisfied with the current situation</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>Average health status</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports activities</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>Moderate satisfaction with the current situation</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged from 20-23</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Low and very low satisfaction with the current situation</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate to severe disability</td>
<td>60.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belonging to lower socio-economic classes</td>
<td>%75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 1an important issue is the cause of disability and its onset time (mean = 4.8 years) and that the highest percentage for the disease was 50.1%. On the other hand, 29% of the study population had another disabled person in the family and 66.6% of the parents were consanguineous. Then, 30% of respondents stated that they have suffered complications from their physical-motor disabilities. Another point is the importance of educating the society on how to treat students with physical-motor disabilities. This need has been given much attention in most items of the questionnaire.

Table 2: Main Problems and Needs of the Students Studied

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problems</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>- Inappropriate sidewalks and streets</td>
<td>%91.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Improper travel services specifically tailored to the circumstances and needs of the disabled</td>
<td>%70.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure-time</td>
<td>Neglect</td>
<td>- No specific transportation service for the use of sport venues</td>
<td>%39/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aggressive behavior</td>
<td>- Financial difficulties for the use of sport venues</td>
<td>%29.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure-time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 2each of the priority problems and needs were identified in two dimensions and four areas. First, bullying priority problems were considered in two dimensions, namely neglect and aggressive behavior. Second, leisure-time priority problems were considered in two dimension, namely lack of travel services specific to the sport venues and financial problems for the using them. Third, transportation priority problems were considered in two dimensions, namely inappropriate sidewalks and streets, public transportation inappropriate to their circumstances and needs.

Another dimension of this research was the priority needs of students with physical-motor disabilities for communication. Therefore, communication priority needs were considered in two dimensions, namely raising people’s awareness of the abilities of the disabled and their limits even though they have been receiving a normal treatment with
no pity from others. Leisure-time priority needs: specific venues for the disabled sports, and entertainment venues for use by disabled people. Transportation priority needs: improving sidewalks and public places and travel services specifically tailored to different types of disability.

4. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study is to determine the needs and problems of communication, leisure-time, bullying, and transportation in boy students with physical-motor disabilities. After collected data were analyzed each of the priority problems and needs were identified in two dimensions and four areas. First, bullying priority problems were considered in two dimensions, namely neglect and aggressive behavior. Second, leisure-time priority problems were considered in two dimension, namely lack of travel services specific to the sport venues and financial problems for the using them. Third, transportation priority problems were considered in two dimensions, namely inappropriate sidewalks and streets, public transportation inappropriate to their circumstances and needs. Although studies in this field are limited, the results obtained for this section of the present study are consistent with the results of the nearest study to our research, with little change in the proportion of each priority problems, see(Sharifiansani, Sajjadi, Toloee, Kazemnezhad, 2006) for example.

Another dimension of this research was the priority needs of students with physical-motor disabilities for communication. Therefore, communication priority needs were considered in two dimensions, namely raising people’s awareness of the abilities of the disabled and their limits even though they have been receiving a normal treatment with no pity from others. Leisure-time priority needs: specific venues for the disabled sports, and entertainment venues for use by disabled people. Transportation priority needs: improving sidewalks and public places and travel services specifically tailored to different types of disability. The results of this section of the present study are also consistent with the results of the nearest study to our research, with little change in the proportion of each priority need(Sharifiansani, Sajjadi, Toloee, Kazemnezhad, 2006)

Some results in this study need to be highlighted and discussed further. An important issue is the cause of disability and its onset time (mean = 4.8 years) and that the highest percentage for the disease was 50.1%. On the other hand, 29% of the study population had another disabled person in the family and 66.6% of the parents were consanguineous. These issues pointed out the importance of first level prevention in many cases. Then, 30% of respondents stated that they have suffered complications from their physical-motor disabilities, which pointed out the importance of second and third levels of prevention. Another point is the importance of educating the society on how to treat students with physical-motor disabilities. This need has been given much attention in most items of the questionnaire, which means that students need others to be aware of their abilities to deal with the limitations besides being treated as a normal person and having to tolerate merciless behaviors from others. Therefore, the results of this study not only indicated the greater importance of removing social impediments compared with focusing on the limitations the disabled individuals suffer from. This result should provide an opportunity for policy makers and planners with practical measures to overcome these obstacles and take steps to facilitate the participation of the disabled individuals in society. To explain the results, the study found that cultural and attitudinal differences in different societies, could be seen as one of the discrimination factors faced by individuals with disabilities(Sharifiansani, Sajjadi, Toloee, Kazemnezhad, 2006). Furthermore, the negative attitude toward people with the disability(Henry, Long-Bellil, Zhang, Himmelstein, 2011; Scheid, 2005) and lack of awareness of the capabilities of individuals with disabilities(Falkmer, Henriksson, Gregersen, Bjurulf, 2000) are other reasons for the delayed and limited attention to their presence in the society.

The first field in the present research was the need of boy students with physical-motor disabilities to communicate with others. The greatest priority in this area was related to the issue that the disabled students needed others to be aware of their abilities to deal with the limitations, besides their having to bear the normal and merciless behaviors from others. This finding is consistent with the corresponding finding of Sharifian-Sani and colleagues(Sharifiansani, Sajjadi, Toloee, Kazemnezhad, 2006). The social model of disability assumes that disability is made by the society, and it happens when the society fails to provide access and basic measures to address individuals’ specific needs. The main problem here is social education; almost all the disabled students when responding to the questionnaire stated that look of pity normal people gave them really hurt them. Instead, they wanted normal people to emphasize their strengths and talents. So, the field of social education should provide and produce educational, artistic, entertainment and media programs using the capabilities of people with physical-motor disabilities. These efforts may help change the attitude of the society and their families. In addition, they should also provide educational brochures which inform people about specific training courses for general practitioners and health care professionals about the necessary precautions in handling and providing services to disabled individuals (Sharifiansani, Sajjadi, Toloee, Kazemnezhad, 2006). On the other hand, these findings are consistent with those of Lau and colleagues(Law, Petrenchik, King & Hurley, 2007) about parents’ views regarding the environmental impediments to the participation of students with disabilities in recreational activities, in society, and in schools. Lau and colleagues suggested that parents may be aware.
of their disabled children’s low self-esteem, and this is causing parents to feel doubtful to permit their children to study in ordinary schools and participate in social activities. They want to avoid their children from feeling discriminated and excluded from other normal students because of their disability. This shows that parents are concerned about how their child reacts to these negative behaviors.

With regard to bullying, most of the problems are related to neglect and aggressive behavior. This is in line with the results of Sherifian-Sani and colleagues (Sharifiansani, Sajjadi, Tolooee, Kazemnezhad, 2006), but not consistent with other research such as (Hughes, Bellis, Jones, Wood, Bates, Eckley, et al. 2012; Jones, Bellis, Wood, Hughes, McCoy, Eckley, et al. 2012). In these studies, the main problems related bullying, were physical bullying, sexual abuse or bullying, hatred and crimes against disabled individuals. One of the most likely explanations for this inconsistency is related to cultural differences. In most cases, Iranian people refuse to express their problems and needs for cultural reasons. Such cases include the reluctance to reveal the occurrence of physical bullying and sexual abuse. This seems to be the main reason why there is a lack of reported cases. Researchers explained that these findings suggest that the majority of bullying against individuals with disabilities occurs in low-income and middle-income countries. So, there is a major gap that needs to be addressed because these countries generally have high rates of disabled individuals, higher levels of bullying, and lower levels of supporting services as compared with high-income countries (Jones, Bellis, Wood, Hughes, McCoy, Eckley, et al. 2012). However, other researchers have faded the above-mentioned manifestations of bullying. They believe that in many cases there are no legal principles and practices around the world to address bullying against disabled individuals. Even in high-income countries, there is strong evidence showing high rates of bullying against individuals with disabilities (Hughes, Bellis, Jones, Wood, Bates, Eckley, et al. 2012).

The main transportation priority problems are related to improper sidewalks and streets, and inappropriate public transportation according to the circumstances and needs of the disabled. This is consistent with the findings of Sherifian-Sani and colleagues (Sharifiansani, et al. 2006), except for their priorities. In Sherifian-Sani and colleagues (Sharifiansani, Sajjadi, Tolooee, Kazemnezhad, 2006), main transportation priority problems were related to improper public transportation due to the circumstances and needs of the disabled, and the second priority was inappropriate sidewalks and streets. To explain the main transportation priority problems, lack of architectural standards for the disabled, weak enforcement of the existing standards and the existence of inefficient policies can be listed. Furthermore, Sherifian-Sani and colleagues (Sharifiansani, Sajjadi, Tolooee, Kazemnezhad, 2006) examined a nonstudent female population, while the present study investigated physical-motor disabled students, which may have differences in the prioritization of transportation problems.

Leisure-time priority problems are related to lack of travel services specific to the sport venues and financial problems for the using them. Result from this study is in line with the result of Sherifian-Sani and colleagues (Sharifiansani, Sajjadi, Tolooee, Kazemnezhad, 2006). The explanation of these priorities can be traced back to obstacles or limitations on the participation of students with disabilities in leisure-time and enjoyable activities, especially for people with more severe disabilities. This matter demonstrates the weak policies and lack of resources, infrastructures, and basic principles for planning and giving attention to vulnerable groups in society. Studies have showed that leisure-time-related problems explain the higher participation of disabled adolescent students in passive joyful activities (e.g., watching TV and video, listening to radio, and reading) and lower social participation (e.g., attending theater, cultural and social events) compared with their peers without disabilities. Furthermore, the variety and intensity of their participation were low (Pagán-Rodríguez, 2014). To explain their findings, the studies concluded that given that students with disabilities need more time to be provided with medical care, rehabilitation, participation in activities, or even to perform daily activities (e.g., personal care, cleaning, shopping, cooking, going to work) they will even have less leisure-time on weekends as compared with normal students. However, various studies have suggested that the inclusion of students with disabilities in nonsegregated schools can improve their participation in leisure-time activities and social support networks outside of school (Longo, Badia, Orgaz, 2013).

Another dimension of this study relates to the needs of physical-motor of disabled students for transportation, which include improving sidewalks and public places and travel services specifically tailored to different types of disability. The research findings in this dimension are consistent with those of Sherifian-Sani and colleagues (Sharifiansani, Sajjadi, Tolooee, Kazemnezhad, 2006). In this regard, if individuals with disabilities can be provided with due access to public buildings, equipment, and passages in accordance with their disability, and enjoy convenient transportation network, and recreation and tourism centers, it gives some grounds for using their talents and potentials. Thus it can also provide some chances of avoiding or reducing of the occurrences of new disabilities and the worsening of the their disabilities (Bezi, Kiani, Afrasibirad, 2011).

Leisure-time priority needs include specific venues for the disabled sports, and entertainment venues for use by disabled people. These findings are again consistent with those of Sherifian-Sani and colleagues (Sharifiansani, Sajjadi,
The authors would like to express their appreciation to the students who participated in this study. It is hoped that this research has provided a further step for attracting attentions of individuals, research institutions, and governmental organizations to the boy students with physical-motor disabilities.

9. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The present study with focus on the problems and needs of male students with physical-motor disabilities, examined each of the four dimensions of communication, bullying, leisure-time, and transportation. Leisur-time priority problems were lack of travel services, specifically to the sports venues and financial problems for using them; Priority problems related to bullying were neglect and aggressive behavior; Transportation priority problems include inappropriate sidewalks and streets. Communication priority needs examples include to raise people’s awareness of the capabilities of the disabled and their limitations; leisure-time priority needs examples were specific venues for the disabled sports; Finally, Transportation priority needs include improving sidewalks and public places and travel services which are specifically tailored to different types of disability

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10. REFERENCES


