SPECIAL EDUCATION REQUIRES LEADERSHIP OR CONVERSELY

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ABSTRACT

Discussions related to special education have always been a hot topic among researchers either locally or abroad. Special education began to gain attention with the birth of disabled athletes who became world and paralympic champions. Basically, special education is not a new branch of special education in Malaysia. It has existed for a long time, even before the country achieved independence. In tracking the success of students with special needs or people with disabilities, special education is the focus in the development of their talents and abilities. Studies related to their success at the school level focus on the extent to which the school can provide the best service for them. Therefore, the school needs quality and effective leadership in leading special education in schools. This brief study was conducted to explore the qualities that special education leaders need to have in order for them to be successful like other branches of education. The findings of this study are expected to be able to provide an initial picture related to the need to lead special education properly.

Keywords: Special Education Unique Leadership Theory, Educational Leadership, special education

I. INTRODUCTION

The need to implement good management and leadership in organizations and the use of materials is expressed in many studies across various fields (Mohd Ali et al., 2021; Parimala et al., 2021; Siti Jamilah et al., 2021; Nor Fauziyana et al., 2021; Noel et al., 2021). Many researchers have stated that facility management and application of certain materials can facilitate human daily work (Ahmad Shafarin et al., 2021; Junaidah et al., 2021; Farah Adibah et al., 2021; Ahmad Shakani et al., 2021; Muhamad Amin et al., 2021; Muhamad Amin et al., 2021). Therefore, every thing that is to be carried out, must be accompanied by efficient management of resources and facilities to meet the needs of its effectiveness (Santibuana et al., 2021; Nor Diana et al., 2021; Zarina et al., 2021; Khairul et al., 2021; Rohani et al., 2021).

Nevertheless, all of these management need to be handled well through effective leadership and management in an organization (Abdul Jalil et al., 2021; Mohd Noh et al., 2021; Mustafa et al., 2021; Roszi et al., 2021; Tumisah et al., 2021). Efficient management and leadership can create a good atmosphere as well as be able to address this issue (Irma et al., 2021; Suzana et al., 2021; Rohanida et al., 2021; Nazrah et al., 2021; Shahrulliza et al., 2021). All available facilities such as infrastructure and facilities should be utilized as much as possible in assisting good management (Mohd Arafat et al., 2021; Sumaiyah et al., 2021; Hifzan et al., 2021; Shahrul et al., 2021; Helme et al., 2021).

II. BACKGROUND STUDY

Effective leadership can determine the success of a special education program. Many of the leaders in schools with special education programs are less aware of the real needs of teachers and students in special education. Some of them see special education in schools only as a complementary program, and does not contribute to the success of the school. This situation needs to change because special education has the potential to succeed in a different field than the success of education in the mainstream. Several theories have been established in
discussing the relevance of special education leadership. Nevertheless, the unique leadership of special education may serve as a basic guide in implementing special education leadership in schools.

**Norazmi Special Education Unique Leadership Theory**

In maintaining the success of the special education program, the welfare of teachers and SNS needs to be taken into account (Norazmi, 2020). Therefore, the basis for this theory of leadership is based on leadership those focuses on:

i. The Welfare of Special Education Teachers

ii. Achievement of Special Education Students

To achieve this, leadership needs to control the task load of teachers and inculcate teachers’ job satisfaction, so that SNS achievement can be enhanced. As a result, school administrators need to have five uniqueness in their leadership:

i. First Unique: Unique Leadership Style

In leading a school organization or program involving special education, a school leader must have uniqueness in their leadership. This means that the style of leadership practiced should be consistent with the guidelines for the implementation of the work and scope of the special education teacher's duties. In addition, their leadership must also be special in considering the needs of the SNS. In other words, the practice of leadership needs to be consistent with the acceptance of special education teachers and students. In order to make the leadership relevant, it is sometimes necessary to emphasize things that involve teacher work performance and student achievement. This unique leadership style is at the center of the autocratic and democratic leadership styles.

ii. Second Unique: Unique Knowledge

Knowledge of leadership is very important in managing special education. The uniqueness of this knowledge is that their knowledge must be meticulously as bottom up process. School leaders need to have knowledge of basic education fundamentals such as policies, scope rules and so on. Then, knowledge also needs to be satisfied regarding each of the features of SNS and their capabilities. This knowledge of SNS is important to prevent school leaders from setting goals beyond their SNS capabilities. After that, the knowledge of special education teachers should be taken into consideration. Their basic background, their service, their way of working, their commitment to the school and so on. On the top level, knowledge about leadership is needed in deciding what kind of leadership needs to be implemented.

iii. Third Unique: Unique Attitude

In addition to leadership styles and knowledge, school leaders also needs to have a unique attitude toward leading special education. Attitudes are concerned, empathy, love and more are at the discretion of deciding something for teachers and SNS.

iv. Fourth Unique: Unique Experience

The experience of managing special education is a unique and meaningful journey. In order to succeed in effective leadership, a leader leading a special education program needs to have direct experience with special education. This means that the leader must be in the special education program, in the special education teacher condition and in the SNS abilities. Keep in touch with them, hear them, experience the learning process with special education teachers and SNS. Gain experience by engaging in activities with a special education community at school or outside of school.

v. Fifth Unique: Unique Qualification

In order to become a leader who is qualified to lead a special education program, one must place themselves at the ready with the hustle and bustle of special education. Not only academic requirements, but management
qualifications, community engagement, always wanting to find special education related knowledge, ready to serve special education and always bear the responsibility of special education.

The theory introduced is in support of existing leadership theories and adapted to the situation in special education. In line with the findings of this study and previous studies, this theory is an attempt to make special education more consistently through competitive and responsible leadership. It is hoped that this theory will help the school leadership to implement leadership focused on special education.

III. METHODOLOGY

This brief needs study uses a qualitative approach in collecting and analyzing data. Interviews were conducted with 11 special education teachers in Batu Pahat district. The interview sessions lasted for 15 to 30 minutes with discussions focused on the characteristics of special education leader. The sessions were recorded and then transcribed for data analysis purposes. Thematic analysis was conducted on the resulting transcripts. The themes derived from the analysis became the findings of this study. These themes are also indicators of the results of this study.

FINDINGS

Table 1: Characteristics Of Special Education Leader

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Table 1 shows the resulting themes related to Characteristics Of Special Education Leaders through recorded interview transcripts from respondents. Through the table, it can be seen that, caring nature is the most important quality that a leader should have in special education. The statement was proven when all 11 respondents agreed on the nature of caring. In addition, the nature of responsibility is in the second position supported by 10 respondents. The third nature is concerned who recorded nine agreements from the respondents. Sensitive and considered was in third place with eight statements. While accountability is in last place with the support of seven respondents.
Figure 1 shows the Percentage related to Characteristics Of Special Education Leader through the first finding above. If examined, loving traits dominate 25% of the overall traits that special education leaders should have. While the nature of responsibility is in second place with 23%. With a record of 20%, the concerned trait became the third highest trait. Two other traits are in the fourth and fifth position, namely sensitive and considerate (18%) and accountability (14%).

**IV. DISCUSSION**


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