

## Why Special Education Is Always In Our Hearts?

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**Abstract:** Being part of special education, has successfully shaped a teacher to be more patient, caring and motivated. Many of the special education teachers expressed their willingness to serve longer in special education. They are also willing to sacrifice time, energy and money to build a balanced and independent generation of special needs students. Special education also makes a teacher always resilient in the face of any challenge. Pupils involved with special education have also always been an aspiration to teachers. With the success achieved by the country's athletes with disabilities in world-class sports, has opened the eyes of many to the importance of special education. A brief qualitative study involving this questionnaire was conducted to survey teachers' views on their love of special education. The findings show that, factors such as the value of love for MBK, changes in the special education system, unique and entertaining MBK, good relationship with MBK and support from various parties have been the cause of their love. This study has good implications in helping teachers to remain consistent in providing the best service to special education.

**Keywords:** special education, unique leadership theory, qualitative approach

### INTRODUCTION

Special education is one of the branches of education practiced in Malaysia. Special education is an educational service provided specifically to people with disabilities (OKU) or referred to as students with special needs (MBK) in the context of schooling. Special education involves the specific placement of MBK in various categories such as visually impaired (BL), hearing impaired (BD) and learning impaired (BP). All these MBK categories are placed in three special education programs, namely special education schools (SPK), integration special education programs (PPKI) and inclusive education programs (PPI). These three programs have certain characteristics in providing services to MBK (Norazmi, 2020). SPK, for example, is more focused on the placement of MBK for the BL and BP categories. While for PPKI and PPI are more focused on placement for MBK BP category. However, due to the lack of number of MBKs registered from year to year, SPK has been opened to BP category MBKs (Fauziyana et al., 2021).

As a teacher, the MBK category and MBK placement have never been a complaint to provide the best service for these MBK children. Every special education teacher is always committed in carrying out their task of educating MBK with love (Zaid et al., 2021; Aminah et al., 2021). No matter how severe the category or level of MBK disability, teachers always give their best in imparting knowledge. As is well known, effective education for MBK is a meaningful education, not just geared towards the syllabus alone (Norazmi et al., 2019). Meaningful education for them is education that gives them equal opportunities in independent living and community life. Along with the uniqueness of special education itself, so is the uniqueness of teachers' love for the world of special education (Norazmi et al., 2020).

### BACKGROUND STUDY

Recently, many in the community have realized the importance of education for all, including MBK. Several successes of PWDs in the field of sports and education, have opened the eyes of many in paying attention to MBK and their level of education (Fauziyana et al., 2021; Roszi et al., 2021). Former minister of education Dr. Maslee Malik also once stated that special education is always in his heart and has placed special education among the important things for the ministry. Similarly, the statement by Tunku Mahkota Johor, Tunku Ismail Sultan Ibrahim after visiting a SPK in Johor Bharu. He expressed his concern for special education and also education for the people of Johor.

The attention and concern of these parties has made special education highly regarded by the community at this time. If before this there were people who did not know about the existence of special education in Malaysia, but today the average people are more sensitive to the disabled and also MBK. Researchers themselves as a

teacher have found that awareness is beginning to be felt by the community regarding special education. The researcher's teacher colleagues were also seen to be more enthusiastic in carrying out their responsibilities of educating MBK in schools. The values of love and concern always radiate in them. Through informal observations and interviews with fellow teachers, they stated that they have always fallen in love with special education (Norazmi, 2020). They also stated that, special education is always in their hearts. Based on these developments and reactions, researchers are interested to know more about what causes teachers to always make special education important in themselves and always put special education in their hearts.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous researchers have studied the uniqueness of special education and its citizens. Among the many studies found related to this uniqueness is related to the management of special education itself. Special education management has its own uniqueness in making the atmosphere of special education more cheerful and filled with elements of love (Norazmi et al., 2019). Zaid et al. (2020) stated that good management can help create harmonious conditions in school organization. Good relationships between organizational citizens also contribute to firm commitment (Rosnee et al., 2021). Similarly, the study by Fauziyana et al. (2021) who explained that, unique leadership guarantees a cheerful atmosphere in special education. This cheerfulness and harmonious relationship can maintain a love of special education (Norazmi, 2020). While Azlisham et al. (2021) and Isaac et al. (2021) stated that discipline, agreement and trust can be a reflection of good special education management. Special education is also said to be unique because it involves high psychological and spiritual management by teachers and MBK (Een et al., 2021). Zaid et al. (2021) and Norazmi et al. (2020) agree that the foundation of harmony in a school involving MBK and special education requires an element of the application of love.

#### **Norazmi Special Education Unique Leadership Theory (2020)**

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.

**METHODOLOGY**

This brief needs study uses a qualitative approach in collecting and analyzing data. Interviews were conducted with five special education teachers at SPK in Batu Pahat district. The interview sessions lasted for 15 to 30 minutes with discussions focused on the factors that made them love special education. 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 factors that cause teachers to love special education.

**FINDINGS**

Through the transcripts of the interviews produced, thematic analysis was conducted to obtain the factors that cause teachers to love special education. The results of the thematic analysis found that there are five factors that make teachers love special education, namely the value of love for MBK, changes in the special education system, unique and entertaining MBK, good relationship with MBK and support from various parties. The following are the findings of the thematic analysis.

Table 1: Themes obtained

<b>Themes</b>	<b>R1</b>	<b>R2</b>	<b>R3</b>	<b>R4</b>	<b>R5</b>
the value of affection for MBK	/	/	/	/	/
changes in the special education system	x	/	x	/	/
Unique and entertaining MBK	/	/	/	/	/
good relationship with MBK	/	/	/	/	/
support from various parties	/	x	/	/	x

**DISCUSSION**

Based on the findings of this study, it is clear that teachers always prioritize MBK education and learning in schools. The findings also show that teachers always want the best for MBK in school and after school. These teachers are of the view that, MBK has the right to receive the best possible learning from them. They also acknowledged that, more attention should be given to MBK as compared to other normal pupils in the school. This is because MBK relies almost entirely on learning on teachers (Zaid et al., 2020). They also mentioned

that, among the reasons they love special education is because they see MBK as their children who need guidance as well as love (Norazmi et al., 2020). In addition, the factors of disability and shortcomings faced by MBK also make teachers feel touched and feel that they need to be helped as much as possible (Nik & Norazmi, 2021). The teachers interviewed also stated that MBK is basically not about disadvantages, but latent advantages. Apart from that, they also hope that some important things need to be improved if they want to see special education continue to progress. Among the changes are related to syllabus, assessment and also leadership in special education.

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, educating MBK is not an easy task that can be undertaken by anyone. Educating MBK requires deep concern and love for the needs of the MBK. On the spirit and also a sense of responsibility, the teachers involved never tired of giving the best to MBK in the delivery of knowledge. The uniqueness of MBK, their learning as well as the close relationship between teachers and MBK, makes teachers' love for special education never fades.

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