

## **Elements of Leadership Style In The Leadership Construct Of Special Education Headmasters In Malaysia**

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**Abstract:** Special education leadership is leadership that requires a firm commitment from all parties involved. The commitment given must be based on the needs of students with special needs and also the welfare of teachers. Effective leadership in special education should make the management of special education better and ensure the harmony of every citizen. In addition, quality leadership also reflects the success of a special education program led. However, there are a handful of school leaders whose special education programs are not going well. This is due to several problems such as the knowledge of the leader, the experience of the leader, the attitude and also the leadership style practiced. These problems in turn affect the workload of special education teachers and their job satisfaction. This study details the leadership style factors in influencing the management course of special education programs.

**Keywords:** special education, leadership, task load, job satisfaction

### **INTRODUCTION**

Headmasters who do not give proper encouragement to PPKI teachers in carrying out their duties also have an impact on the job satisfaction of such teachers (Aminah et al., 2021; Azlisham et al., 2021; Saadiah et al., 2021; Firkhan et al., 2021; al., 2021; Ishak et al., 2021; Ashari et al., 2021). The attitude of headmasters who do not understand the real role of PPKI teachers causes disruption of teachers' job satisfaction to teach MBK. Head teachers who understand the duties of PPKI teachers will adopt a leadership style that does not interfere with teachers' job satisfaction (Norazmi et al., 2019; Fauziyana et al., 2020; Norazmi, 2020; Zaid et al., 2020; Zaid et al., 2021). Teachers at PPKI are dissatisfied with their work because they are disturbed by the leadership practices of headmasters and their negative attitude towards special education. While the job satisfaction of special education teachers is influenced by their work relationships with peers and also head teachers. The issue of high workload of teachers in PPKI due to headmaster leadership has been lingering for many years (Mohd Norazmi et al., 2021; Rosnee et al., 2021; Roszi et al., 2021; Nik Nurhalida et al., 2021; Een et al., 2021; Yusaini et al., 2021). This study was conducted to explore the elements of head teacher leadership style that influence the workload and job satisfaction of special education teachers.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The elements of each construct were explored by conducting interviews. This qualitative approach was carried out by interviewing 11 coordinators for the PPKI program throughout the state of Johor. A total of 11 respondents involved are a coordinator for each district in the state of Johor. Each element is explored for each construct in this study. The results of the interviews were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis methods. Each element obtained through the thematic analysis was included as a dimension in the construction.

### **FINDINGS**

Through the coding process, the leadership style results from nine statements, namely always giving instructions, briefings and own decisions (open coding), which form autocratic leadership (axial coding), always asking, meetings and good relations (open coding) form democratic leadership (axial). coding), as well as full submission, no inquiries and no monitoring (open coding) that form the Laissezz-Faire leadership (axial coding). The three statements on the axial coding, are summarized as leadership styles in the selective coding process as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Thematic Analysis Process For Leadership Style Elements

<i>Open Coding</i>	<i>Axial Coding</i>	<i>Selective Coding</i>
Always give Instructions	Autocratic	Leadership Style
Briefing		

Own decision	Democratic	
Always ask		
Meeting		
Good relationship		
Surrender completely	<i>Laissez Faire</i>	
Don't ask		
No monitoring		

**DISCUSSION**

Details of the results of the analysis show that all respondents agree that leadership style is an important element in the leadership of headmasters that affect the workload and job satisfaction of PPKI teachers. Respondent RT1 explained that headmasters adopt a delegating leadership style that is to delegate power to subordinates to carry out tasks. This style of leadership has been described in Hersey Blanchard’s (1969) Situational Leadership Theory. According to him, all forms of monitoring at PPKI are handed over to the coordinator to be implemented, while the headmaster is less concerned directly with PPKI.

For respondents RT2, RT3, RT8 and RT9, they are of the view that their headmaster leadership style is more towards autocratic leadership style. This style of leadership gives the impression that the headmaster in the school sets all decisions on his own. They prefer to give instructions and not accept views. Respondents involved also stated that, although a meeting was held to resolve problems in PPKI, but in the end the decision will be made unilaterally. This situation makes the work environment at PPKI move in one direction and only according to the direction and influence of the headmaster. It also has an impact on the lack of creativity and innovation in the management of PPKI.

While respondents RT4, RT5 and RT6 admitted the opposite. They noted that head teachers practiced inconsistent leadership styles. Headmasters distribute assignments unfairly to teachers in schools including in the mainstream. The situation also happened to teachers at PPKI. They feel that a balanced and appropriate division of tasks is more significant and practical. For them, the unfair division of tasks will cause some teachers in PPKI to experience work dumping because most of the tasks in the mainstream are handed over to PPKI teachers. The effect of this leadership style also causes teachers at PPKI to not be able to carry out their main tasks with MBK more effectively. Failure to perform the task in turn denies them job satisfaction.

In contrast to RT7 respondents who stated that headmasters who practiced Laissez-faire leadership style made them not care about PPKI. This leadership style has an impact on the management of PPKI as a whole. This indifference causes PPKI teachers to have to be fully responsible for PPKI because the headmasters fully hand over all forms of tasks and management matters to PPKI. When all things are taken lightly by the school administration, then PPKI teachers need to take their own initiative in performing their duties. This is also a burden to them to perform the task.

Finally, RT10 and RT11 respondents gave the view that democratic leadership style is more significant in management in PPKI. They noted that each headmaster adopts his or her own leadership style in their administration. Headmasters need to communicate well with teachers at PPKI so that appropriate and consistent assignments can be given. This democratic leadership practice is able to avoid the occurrence of workload, because the headmaster can receive explanations and views of PPKI teachers before giving instructions. Headmasters who practice a democratic leadership style also prefer to hold meetings, rather than holding briefings for the purpose of making a decision.

**CONCLUSION**

This element of leadership style is agreed upon as one of the essential elements in head teacher leadership. Aziz et al. (2018) stated that leadership style is an aspect of leadership that is the practice of head teachers in carrying out leadership in schools. The findings of the study related to the elements of leadership style are also in line with the findings of the study by Saffiee, Hamid and Ghazali (2018) who also stated that leadership style is an element of leadership that can determine the stability of the school organization. Kamaruzaman (2012) also agrees that leadership style is an element in headmaster leadership with the statement that the leadership style practiced will influence the course of school management as a whole. The findings of this study also confirm the findings by Abu Bakar et al. (2015) that the leadership style element becomes a key aspect of head teacher leadership in influencing the success of school management.

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