

# The Practice of Headmasters' Leadership and Its Effect on Job Satisfaction of Special Education Integration Program (PPKI) Teachers in Johor, Malaysia

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**Abstract** Teachers in the special integration education program (PPKI) in Johor do not feel satisfaction in working, especially in the teaching and learning process for pupils with special needs. This problem exists due to various factors, such as the high burden of duties, the special circumstances of students who are unable to manage themselves, the readiness of the teachers themselves and the leadership of the headmasters. From all the factors mentioned, the headmasters' leadership factor has a very significant influence in determining job satisfaction for teachers in PPKI. Therefore, this study was conducted to explore the elements of the headmasters' leadership construct that influences teachers' job satisfaction in the Special Education Integration Program (PPKI) in Johor, Malaysia. This study involved 11 respondents consisting of PPKI coordinators from each district in Johor, Malaysia. This study used the full qualitative approach by interview data collection. The result of the thematic analysis showed that there are five main leadership elements that have become the factors to job satisfaction among PPKI teachers in Johor namely leadership style, attitudes, knowledge, experience and also qualification. These five elements are recommended to the headmaster to be given attention in ensuring the satisfaction of PPKI teachers.

**Keywords** Headmaster Leadership, Special Education, PPKI, Teacher Job Satisfaction

## 1. Introduction

Zulfu Demitras (2010) stated that job satisfaction is the effectiveness or emotional response to the aspect of work done, while teacher job satisfaction is an emotional response whether a teacher likes a given assignment (Yousof, 2009). Syed Kamaruzaman, Mohd Faithal and Habib (2017) stated that teachers with job satisfaction had

high motivation to improve their work quality on the continuous development of pupils. According to John Anderson (2017), special education teachers in special education programs have difficulty in achieving their job satisfaction. For Nelson et al., (2014), teachers' satisfaction of special education programs was influenced by the condition of the headmasters' leadership. In addition, Erica and Raymond (2009) agreed that the leadership style of headmasters in school determined whether a special education program teacher had achieved job satisfaction or not. Junaidah and Nik Rusila (2014) pointed out that the leadership of the headmasters at school has given the influence of the satisfaction of PPKI teachers.

Teachers at PPKI are having problems concentrating on their core work (Erica & Raymond, 2009). This situation is largely due to the high burden of duties that they need to bear in mind whether the task involves students with special needs (MBK) or pupils in the mainstream (Junaidah & Nik Rusila, 2014). However, the main factor influencing PPKI teachers' satisfaction is coming from the administration and headmasters in particular (John Anderson, 2017). Stephanie (2017) stated that this situation has been dragging for so long. PPKI teachers have to carry out their duties on the direction of the headmasters who had nothing to do with special education and ultimately hinder their job satisfaction (Norizan et al., 2013). The problem persisted over a long period of time. PPKI teachers do not have the opportunity to experience real job satisfaction in their real-time job of teaching PPKI and optimum conducting special pupils (Norizan et al., 2013). Undoubtedly, there are various studies on teacher job satisfaction in Malaysia, for example, the research by Rosni (2014) stated that job satisfaction of PPKI teachers was hampered by high working pressure. Elangkumaran (2010) also noted that there was a significant relationship between the teaching proficiency of the headmasters towards the work commitment of teachers. However,

there is no specific study on teachers' job satisfaction for special education flows that are directly related to the leadership of the headmaster.

Therefore, this study is important to provide a new alternative for the headmasters in planning good leadership practices in addressing the issues of PPKI teachers' job satisfaction in Malaysia generally and in Johor especially. The objective of this study is to explore the leadership elements practice by the headmasters in schools with PPKI. While the research question is what are the key elements of headmasters' leadership that give influence to job satisfaction of PPKI teachers? These elements are the leadership practices which are the factors of PPKI teachers' job satisfaction in Johor.

## 2. Literature Review

This study explored two main constructs, namely the leadership of the headmaster and also the teachers' job satisfaction in particularly for the teachers in PPKI. Leadership is vast and challenging, especially in facing the challenges brought by teachers and special students (Junaidah & Nik Rusila, 2013). Leadership is very important in charting the direction of a school and PPKI management in particular. Shantini, Muhammad Faizal and Norfariza (2018) emphasized that the headmasters' leadership is important in achieving the goals and direction of the school. Roselena and Mohd Izham (2015) also agreed that only the best headmasters' leadership practice is able to manage the school organization that covers the administration, management of teachers, student affairs and so forth effectively. While Mustamin and Muzzammil (2013) stated that school headmasters need to have the knowledge about leaderships to carry out their heavy duty as leaders, instructional, and even operational aspects to support school success, teachers' welfare and student disability. For Shahril and Muhammad Faizal (2009), leadership practice is an important aspect in influencing the progress of a school, students' welfare and teachers' job satisfaction. The special education teachers' satisfaction can be enjoying when the teacher is able to focus on their teaching and the pupil shows the proper inclination (Junaidah & Nik Rusila, 2013). The satisfaction of this work if achievable will increase the commitment of teachers in carrying out their duties (Nor Mohamad Zulhairi et al., 2016). However, if job satisfaction is not achieved, the avoidance and neglect of responsibility will occur (Rosni, 2014). This job satisfaction is important in delivering the best productivity of special education teachers (Mollynda, 2013).

Some studies related to the leadership of the headmaster and job satisfaction of PPKI teachers were conducted by some researchers. among them the study by Abid Hussain et al., (2017) which found that the democratic leadership style was more effective and practical to be practiced at

PPKI to create a conducive atmosphere in discharging the responsibilities. Gwendolin (2017) through his research supported the fact that transformational leadership style is preferred by PPKI teachers in achieving job satisfaction. Mirela Karabina (2016) stated the dimensions of charisma, individual concern, intellectual stimulation and the influence of administrators to have a positive impact on teachers' job satisfaction. Thusyanthini and Ravivathani (2014) stated that the autocratic leadership style has a negative impact on teachers' job satisfaction, while the democratic leadership style has a positive impact on teachers' satisfaction. Ivana and Nebojsa (2014) found that headmasters who practice positive relationships with teachers can create satisfaction in teachers' job. The study of Huang Hui et al., (2013) found that positive knowledge and attitude in decision making by the headmaster was crucial in determine the PPKI teachers' job satisfaction.

## 3. Research Methodology

Researchers used interview method to collect information qualitatively. This interview was conducted individually to enable the researchers to focus on the issues discussed (Daniel, 2010). For this study, the researchers interviewed 11 PPKI coordinators in the state of Johor, Malaysia and as according to Kamarul Azmi (2012), it is easier to interview respondents who are already familiar with and directly involved in the study. Selection of 11 PPKI coordinators as respondents was made because according to Malhorta et al., (2007), the appropriate number is eight to 12 respondents. Likewise, with the suggestion by Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006), the number of about 12 respondents is sufficient. Nevertheless, according to Cavana et al., (2001), the number of respondents is not rigid, depending on the purpose of the interviews conducted. In this study, the respondents were selected based on purposive sampling techniques. Palsys (2008) stated that this sampling is very useful when the researchers have their own purposes in obtaining data and is directly related to the objective of the study.

The selection of PPKI coordinators has been made because they are individuals who manage PPKI among the PPKI teachers. They are also part of the PPKI teachers' enrolment. Any assignment from the headmasters will be through coordinators before being accepted by PPKI teachers. Each district in Johor is represented by a coordinator as a respondent. There were 11 respondents representing Segamat, Muar, Tangkak, Batu Pahat, Mersing, Kulai, Kota Tinggi, Johor Bahru, Kluang, Pontian and Pasir Gudang. The interview method selected was semi-structural interview, which included some key questions and some additional questions. Qu & Dumay (2011) stated that this method is the way in which the interviewer protects data for a broad theme. This

interview method is most appropriate for the purpose of exploring dimensions in construct more deeply (William, 2015). This approach was also selected to facilitate researchers to control data acquisition and make them more focused (Blandford, 2013). Transcripts were generated after completion of interview sessions and subsequently conducted thematic analysis to get answers to the research question.

## 4. Results and Discussions

Through the thematic analysis, there are five main elements of leadership in influencing the job satisfaction of PPKI teachers namely leadership style, attitude, knowledge, experience and qualification, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Element Leadership Element Based on Interviews

Num	Theme/ Element	Respondent	Interviewer Quotes
1	Leadership's Style	RT1	You're coming in a jungle for a minute, a jerk. Monitoring job he fits to the coordinator. Then you do not want to find a book, ask a question about the article. Maybe he asked the coordinator that I'm not sure. Come here for the sake of sending a job, a letter.
		RT2	More one, administrator factor. Ouch. He himself decides for all things. A little piece of things up to a piece of things. You do not want to be involved. He has his own KPI.
		RT3	It's not our job, but we are directed to do it.
		RT4	<i>On behalf of the teachers, I think he needs to work well in order to balance, encourage cooperation, for group work. If there is a problem, talk to us, accept open remarks and also for our guidance and support to do a job.</i>
		RT5	<i>In terms of division of tasks, it seems to be biased. The special teacher has to do something that has nothing to do with us. Not in the way he is.</i>
		RT6	<i>Emm .. too easy to take on PPKI. At the same time giving a task that it does not feel we should do.</i>
		RT7	<i>It was the first time that the headmaster did not take the PPKI very seriously. Gather each other's background.</i>
		RT8	<i>The decision was in his hand. It is important that he needs to be more democratic to be able to talk. This makes it easier to work.</i>
		RT9	<i>It can be. But in the end, the decision remains in the hands of the headmaster. In 10 cases, maybe one is accepted. In addition, I am in command.</i>
		RT10	<i>Also relates to the influence of the way the headmaster leads, there is an understanding or not and so on.</i>
		RT11	<i>As far as I am in this PPKI, I have been working with 2 headmasters who each have their own style of governing school as well as their role with PPKI.</i>
2	Attitude	RT1	<i>Headmaster, I think he needs to understand it. What special education is that? Forget it, search for info.</i>
		RT2	<i>Assume he is about PPKI. So, it's just like the first trickster. I do not say anything. But the majority of them are like that. Sceptics. For them, Special teacher did not work, no school hinds and slave, I did not work, I have target.</i>
		RT3	<i>Alhamdulillah ... both understand and open to us as PPKI teachers. They trust us to carry out programs and activities related to PPKI.</i>
		RT4	<i>I think the main thing is that. The attitude of headmaster is making me comfortable to do my job.</i>
		RT5	<i>I do not expect more. Just walk in the assessment and assign tasks. He keeps saying and asking, why are all you guys in for a special teacher? Work that has nothing to do. He does not watch. How do you know what we do with our students?</i>
		RT6	<i>Yes. Not the mainstream teacher who argues for the quantity and scope of the PPKI teacher's duties, but the headmaster himself is in the same world.</i>
		RT7	<i>The headmaster here is just as firm, workaholic as it is, and it's a huge place, and it's a great way to handle it.</i>
		RT8	<i>Get a headmaster who likes to show off. More headache. I think he needs to get knowledge and experience. Need to change perceptions and assumptions on PPKI. Look at the eyes of the heart.</i>
		RT9	<i>For me, what the headmaster is doing sometimes good but sometimes lack. In terms of giving me and teachers of PPKI experience and knowledge beyond special education, I think it is acceptable. But the firmness and authority in giving the task, the headmaster need to check back. I feel heavy.</i>
		RT10	<i>Then what is emphasized is the attitude of the same headmaster as the other mainstream teachers. The assumption that the teacher is happy with not many pupils, should not be chased, the public examination remains the same.</i>
		RT11	<i>But I can say that both mentality of special education is not good enough.</i>
3	Knowledge	RT1	<i>Then you do not want to find a book, ask a question about the article. Maybe he asked the coordinator that I'm not sure. Come here for the sake of sending a job, a letter.</i>
		RT2	<i>He is not from a special education stream. Before, he was a GPK in a school that has no PPKI. He never handles PPKI.</i>

		RT3	-
		RT4	<i>It's hard to say, it's hard to say. JPN and PPD said it was necessary to keep PPKI, a special teacher not to be in the big post in school. But it's just like that.</i>
		RT5	<i>I'm sorry. That's right. If so, the headmaster will not understand. We teach, educate and nurture. This kind of boy is like a little kid. Like a baby.</i>
		RT6	<i>For the headmaster who has special education, I think there is no problem. But the less knowledge will misunderstand what is happening at PPKI.</i>
		RT7	-
		RT8	<i>The school's headmaster is pure from premiere. Tens of years in the mainstream. Do not know exactly how PPKI operates. No experience and knowledge.</i>
		RT9	-
		RT10	<i>So, if the headmaster knows, there is knowledge about PPKI, there is experience, he may be willing to assign a job to who should be.</i>
		RT11	<i>They are also not qualified, lack adequate knowledge regarding special education and PPKI operations.</i>
4	Experience	RT1	<i>Yes. He was from normal school. The school-headmaster used to be. In terms of that experience, out coat. Where is it? He'll see all sorts of calm down.</i>
		RT2	<i>He is not from a special education stream. Before he was a GPK in a school that has no PPKI. He never handles PPKI.</i>
		RT3	-
		RT4	<i>But it is. The headmaster has no experience yet about special education and PPKI for sure.</i>
		RT5	<i>Especially headmasters who have no special educational background, less knowledge, less experience. So, the headmaster will be in charge of the assignment. Do not worry about other things.</i>
		RT6	<i>Like I mentioned. If only the headmaster felt or had a great feeling, his tired teaching and even nursing at PPKI, I think he would understand quite well.</i>
		RT7	-
		RT8	<i>The school's headmaster is pure from premiere. Tens of years in the mainstream. Do not know exactly how PPKI operates. No experience and knowledge.</i>
		RT9	-
		RT10	<i>So, if the headmaster knows, there is knowledge about PPKI, there is experience, he may be willing to assign a job to who should be.</i>
		RT11	<i>More than that, they have no formal experience in special needs pupils' management and may not have the experience of having special needs person outside working hours.</i>
5	Qualification	RT1	<i>Yes. He was from normal school. The school-headmaster used to be. But not about special education.</i>
		RT2	<i>He's also an English option. Not a special education.</i>
		RT3	-
		RT4	-
		RT5	<i>Especially headmasters who have no special educational background, less knowledge, less experience. So, the headmasters will be in charge of the assignment. Do not worry about other things.</i>
		RT6	<i>His education background is not a special education. He was qualified as Malay studies teacher. Definitely not a special education teacher.</i>
		RT7	<i>It was the first time that the headmaster did not take the PPKI very seriously. Because of her qualification background.</i>
		RT8	<i>Being a leader is not easy. There needs to be experience and knowledge to facilitate PPKI and not to impose PPKI teachers. If a qualified headmaster can be preferred, indeed the option.</i>
		RT9	-
		RT10	<i>About his background, the headmaster is not a special education qualifier. So he did not understand.</i>
		RT11	<i>In my knowledge, this headmaster has no special education certificate. His qualification in administering special education is less.</i>

**Table 2.** Summary of Elements for Headmasters' Leadership Constructs

Themes/ Elements	RT1	RT2	RT3	RT4	RT5	RT6	RT7	RT8	RT9	RT10	RT11
Leadership's Style	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Attitude	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Knowledge	/	/	-	/	/	/	-	/	-	/	/
Experience	/	/	-	-	/	/	-	/	-	/	/
Qualification	/	/	-	-	/	/	/	/	-	/	/

There are five elements that can be explored through the thematic analysis conducted on the headmaster leadership factor towards teachers' job satisfaction. Through this interview findings, it can be summarized the headmaster leadership elements as in Table 2.

Most of teachers at PPKI agree that the leadership of the headmasters greatly influences their job satisfaction. The headmasters who practice the democratic leadership style are preferred over the autocratic leadership style, because for them, there are certain things that require the headmasters' discretion in determining the decision (Thusyanthini and Ravivathani, 2014). Through the findings of this study, respondents stated that the democratic leadership style of leadership is preferred by teachers and facilitates them to carry out their duties. They are also more comfortable with the attitude of the headmasters, who understand their needs as teachers as well as the disability of students with special needs in the PPKI class. In addition, the respondents also stated that the headmasters, who have knowledge in special education, can give them the opportunity to practice leadership with better understanding and not burden the teachers. The respondents also stated that the experience of headmasters, who is vulnerable to special education is better compared to headmasters who have no special education-related experience. As well as regarded to qualifications, respondents stated that qualification is also an important element for headmasters, before they are appointed to become the head of the school with PPKI management.

In addition, according to Ivana and Nebojsa (2014), the positive attitude of the headmasters towards special education is also very important in reducing the perception that they need to perform various tasks outside the PPKI because they are lack of work. Abid Hussain et al., (2017) stated that the headmasters' attitude that PPKI is not important, should be eradicated. This is very important to give better opportunities for PPKI teachers to carry out their duties with MBK and the same for headmasters' knowledge of special education. It is very important in determining their true direction regarding PPKI (Huang Hui et al., 2013). Based on the findings of this study, it was desirable for the leadership of the headmaster to re-evaluate the leadership style they are practicing in school against PPKI. Junaidah and Nik Rusila (2014) stated that the role of the headmaster affects

the overall management of the school including PPKI. John Anderson (2017) pointed out that, the headmaster involved in special education-related management, required the right knowledge and attitude towards special education to enable school management to be function properly.

## 5. Limitations and Recommendation

This study only involved PPKI teachers in Johor and does not involved the entire population of PPKI teachers throughout Malaysia. Although similar issues and problems are happening to PPKI throughout Malaysia, but each state has a slightly different situation in terms of local culture, teachers' understanding and local community acceptance. This study was also limited to leadership practices and job satisfaction of PPKI teachers only. The respondents involved were also composed of PPKI coordinators and they did not necessarily represent the views of teachers. This study also focused only on PPKI and does not involve special education teachers in other programs, such as special education schools (SPK) and inclusive education programs (PPI). As a suggestion, future researchers can broaden the scope of the study on other factors affecting teacher job satisfaction such as special pupil categories, teachers' readiness, school facilities and others. In addition, it is proposed that further studies may include the PPKI population throughout the country, as well as the involvement of various programs such as SPK and PPI.

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Satisfaction in working is important in ensuring the work commitment of the PPKI teachers. In the challenge to deal with special pupils of various categories, it is a very tough situation for PPKI teachers. Therefore, it is the trust of the administrator, especially the headmasters to practice appropriate and effective leadership in ensuring the satisfaction of PPKI teachers. In the end, teachers' job satisfaction will thoroughly affect pupil's achievement.

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