

HEADMASTER LEADERSHIP EFFECT ON TASK LOAD OF SPECIAL EDUCATION INTEGRATION PROGRAM TEACHER

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Abstract

Purpose of the Study: The leadership of a headmaster at the school has a major influence on school management and teacher management. These influences also impact the task load of the Special Education Integration Program (SEIP) teacher. Various studies have been conducted in Malaysia and abroad on this issue. Based on previous studies and research on existing leadership theories, five leadership factors impact the SEIP teacher's task load, namely leadership style, attitude, knowledge, experience, and qualifications. The purpose of this study is to determine whether these factors affect the task load of the SEIP teacher.

Methodology: A fully quantitative method was used in this study by distributing a set of online questionnaires to SEIP teachers across Malaysia using the Google for platform. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) through AMOS software is used for data analysis purposes.

Main Findings: The findings show that all the factors mentioned in the leadership style, attitude, knowledge, experience, and competency of achievement are validated as influences on the SEIP teacher's task load. There have been several studies examining the leadership factor affecting the task load of the SEIP teacher, but the application of the CFA approach using AMOS is still underdeveloped. Therefore, the findings of this study can further confirm previous findings on this issue.

Application: This research can be useful for the headmaster and the SEIP teachers to give their best in school management.

Novelty: It is common to read about the issue for this research is the premier school, but this research was based on the special education field.

Keywords: *Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Headmaster Leadership, Task Load, Special Education, Special Education Integration Program, Structural Equation Modelling.*

INTRODUCTION

Five factors contribute to the issue of high SEIP teachers' task loads namely teachers, students, policies, facilities and leadership (John, 2017). However, the most important factor in influencing the high SEIP teachers' task load is that of the headmaster because the headmaster is the individual responsible for the overall operation of the school (Erica & Raymond, 2009). Some of the problems faced by the headmaster that can increase their task load are leadership styles, attitudes, knowledge, experience, and qualifications (Nelson et al., 2014). Therefore, this study was conducted to determine whether all of these factors led to the burden of SEIP teachers' task load.

The burden of the SEIP teachers' task load is at a high level due to inappropriate and problematic leadership of teachers (Norizan et al., 2013). Most of the principals who work in schools with SEIP do not adopt a leadership style appropriate to the SEIP environment (Zakaria, 2016). Even some of the school principals who have SEIPs are unfair and skeptical about SEIP (Junaidah & NikRusila, 2013). Shawnee and Ahlgrim-Delzell (2006) on the other hand stated that headmaster who lacks the knowledge of special education would burden SEIP teachers with unnecessary assignments. Also, the factors related to special education and teacher qualifications influence the task load of SEIP teachers (Habib & Zaimah, 2012). In short, five factors of headmaster leadership impact the task load of SEIP teachers - leadership style, attitude, knowledge, experience, and qualifications. Therefore, this study was conducted to validate factors of headmaster leadership that affect the task load of special education integration teacher program.

- a. Research objective
 - i. Validate factors of headmaster leadership that affect the task load of special education integration program teacher.
- b. Research questions
 - i. Can the factors of headmaster leadership that affect the task load of special education integration program teachers be determined by their consistency?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Among the problems faced by the headmaster that may increase the task load of SEIP teachers is their attitude as reported by Nelson et al. (2014) show that headteachers do not provide the encouragement and support to perform large,

burdensome tasks. The attitude of those who lack the proper attention to special education and the notion that special education is the only passenger in the school makes the issue of teacher task load at SEIP endless ([Erica & Raymond, 2009](#)). Concerned principals are concerned with the well-being and needs of their teachers including special education teachers such as [John \(2017\)](#) suggesting that those can reduce the task load of special education teachers by managing their assignments properly. This is to prevent special education teachers from doing anything outside of special education ([Amalina & Azita, 2016](#)). They also point out that the headmaster often directs special education teachers to do assignments outside of special education.

The second problem is the lack of knowledge of the headmaster regarding special education ([Stephanie, 2017](#); [John, 2017](#); [Johan, 2013](#)). [Norizan et al. \(2013\)](#), on the other hand, suggested that the headmaster would defer too much special education outside of special education teachers because they were less exposed to special education. Also in agreement was [Adam \(2014\)](#), who stated that the headmaster with little knowledge was unprepared and confident about the field. This will cause them to be overly concerned about special education and to burden teachers with a variety of assignments and services ([Billingsley et al., 2014](#); [Susan & Adam, 2011](#)).

According to [John \(2017\)](#), the problem of the headmaster's lack of knowledge, qualifications, and experience in handling special education has led to problems with conducive working conditions, assignments and so on. This situation will cause the headmaster to be less concerned with special education in general and SEIP in particular because they do not have the basic knowledge of the task load that SEIP teachers have to bear ([Marek, 2016](#)).

Leadership style is another problem faced by the headmaster in managing SEIPs in their schools. According to the study by [Muhammad, Jamalul and Azlin \(2017\)](#), autocratic teacher leadership style will affect teachers' ability to work better. [Muyan and Ramli \(2017\)](#) also agree that the mastery of the leadership style in the school by the headmaster can create a positive and stressful work environment for teachers. In examining these factors, two leadership theories are discussed: Kurt Lewin's Theory of Leadership and Hersey Blanchard's Situation Theory.

Kurt Lewin's Theory of Leadership (1939)

The Style of Leadership Theory was introduced by Kurt Lewin in 1939. It explains three dimensions of leadership style: autocratic leadership style, democratic leadership style and Laissez Faire's leadership style ([Lewin, 1939](#)). These three leadership styles have been discussed and criticized by many researchers since they were introduced. All three styles have their own advantages and disadvantages ([Budi, 2016](#)). [Syed Ismail and Ahmad \(2010\)](#), however, explain that each dimension and style of leadership has its own scope that gives both advantages and disadvantages.

The first style of leadership is the autocratic leadership style. According to [Syed Ismail and Ahmad \(2010\)](#), [Budi \(2016\)](#) and [Sanghan \(2007\)](#), this leadership style seems to illustrate that the leadership situation is so tight and humanitarian, that leaders give instructions and followers must obey without being given the freedom to give a view. While [Sanghan \(2007\)](#) found that this style of leadership makes unilateral decisions and does not represent the organization it leads. However, while this style of autocratic leadership has its own positive side, as stated by [Syed Ismail and Ahmad \(2010\)](#) and [Budi \(2016\)](#), this leadership style can ensure that all tasks are properly and timely, especially when decisions are urgently needed.

The second style of leadership is a more open and democratic style of democratic leadership in the interests of mutual interests ([Syed Ismail & Ahmad, 2010](#)). According to [Bryan \(2014\)](#), this style of leadership is based on collective decisions where leaders are receptive to their views and criticisms. [Citra and Tewal \(2014\)](#) point out that this style of leadership can make a stronger decision for the success of the organization than the personal success of the leader.

Next is the highly open Laissez-Faire leadership style and allows full freedom of decision and action to subordinates ([Syed Ismail & Ahmad, 2010](#)). [Citra and Tewal \(2014\)](#) explain that this style of leadership is not about decision making, but rather about employee-leader relationships. Of the three leadership styles presented, researchers argue that each of the leadership styles introduced by Kurt Lewin in 1939, namely the autocratic leadership style, the democratic leadership style, and the Laissez-Faire leadership style, had their own negative and positive sides. Nevertheless, democratic leadership styles are seen as more practical because the decisions of the majority are better than one-sided decisions ([Syed Ismail & Ahmad, 2010](#)).

Hersey Blanchard's Situational Leadership Theory (1969)

Hersey and Blanchard have developed a model of leadership style that conforms to their situation in 1969. [Hendryadi \(2014\)](#), states that the leadership style of this situation requires a leader to exercise his leadership following the demands and needs of the situation. In agreement with them is [Dyah et al. \(2015\)](#), who emphasize that situational leadership is an approach for leaders to understand their behaviors, their subordinates' attitudes, and situations before applying their leadership style. [Hersey and Blanchard \(1969\)](#) divided leadership styles into four dimensions, namely, telling, selling, participating and delegating. Out of the four dimensions presented, none of the dimensions is best in terms of their performance, because the leadership they practice needs to be in their situation ([Hendryadi, 2014](#)).

The first dimension introduced in Hersey and Blanchard's leadership style was the telling style. This style is similar to the autocratic leadership style advocated by Kurt Lewin, but the details are slightly different. According to [Dyah et al.](#)

(2015), this style of telling is more likely for leaders to direct their subordinates and to implement it where it is most needed when a task needs to be completed quickly, according to non-performing subordinates, and to new employees who are unfamiliar with the scope of work.

The second dimension of leadership style based on this theory is called selling. According to [Muchlisin \(2016\)](#), this style of leadership implements two-way communication between leaders and their followers in giving and performing tasks. This style occurs when a leader assigns the task, the follower performs the task in his way and at the same time, the leader controls the execution of the assignment ([Muchlisin, 2016](#)). This style of leadership is seen as more beneficial to both parties because in carrying out the task, the leader acts in the control of the action while the follower performs the task separately ([Syed Ismail & Ahmad, 2010](#)).

The next style is the participating style. According to [Muchlisin \(2016\)](#), this style of leadership implements the support and participation of leaders and members in performing tasks, while leadership is reduced by leaders. According to [Rinaldo \(2016\)](#), this participating leadership style is geared towards followers who can perform tasks but lack the willpower. [Muchlisin\(2016\)](#) points out that this style is best used when a large group of followers is within their reach but has no desire to do so.

The fourth leadership style presented by Hersey and Blanchard was the delegating leadership style. According to [Muchlisin \(2016\)](#), this style of leadership refers to situations of command and little support, meaning that leaders give their followers the freedom to make decisions and how to carry out their tasks. According to [Lokman and Aini \(2011\)](#), the leadership style of this situation is best used in schools that have different subordinate characteristics of academic background, experience, ability and ability to perform a task. In line with this study, the researchers found that the highlights of this theory and model can be elaborated because teachers in schools especially those with SEIP are of different backgrounds and different task structures.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses the full quantitative method in data collection. Researchers distributed randomized sets of questionnaires to SEIP teachers using google form. There were 35 items submitted in the questionnaire. A total of 400 respondents answered the questionnaire as complete and suitable for analysis. The data were then analyzed by the CFA method using AMOS 21. The tests used to determine the compatibility of the factors involved were CFA tests for each factor. The main criterion for determining this compatibility is to look at the positive factor loading value that should be ≥ 0.50 ([Hair et al., 2010](#)). For fitness index, the RMSEA value should be ≤ 0.08 ([Byrne, 2001](#)), while the GFI, CFI and TLI values (one of them) should be ≥ 0.90 ([Bentler, 1990](#); [Hatcher, 1994](#)). Relative / Normed Chi-Square values must be approximately ≤ 5.0 ([Bentler, 1990](#)). For validity assessment, the Convergent Validity (Average Variance Extracted-AVE) and Construct Validity measurements need to be met. According to [Kline \(2005\)](#), the value of AVE that can determine compatibility is at least 0.50, while [Fornell & Larcker \(1981\)](#) suggest that the AVE value in meeting the Convergent Validity measurement requirements is ≥ 0.5 . For reliability measurement, the Composite Reliability (CR) should be ≥ 0.7 ([Bentler, 1990](#); [Hatcher, 1994](#)).

FINDINGS

The findings show that the CFA first analysis conducted for headmaster leadership did not meet the criteria which RMSEA = 0.107, Relative / Normed Chi-Square (5.532), while GFI, CFI and TLI values did not reach ≥ 0.90 , as indicated in Figure 1. This is because there some items are redundant of construct measurement or did not measure the construct. Therefore, this CFA needs to be re-run for improvements through fit indices ([Zainudin, 2015](#)). Subsequent analyses show it fit the criteria which RMSEA = 0.79, Relative / Normed Chi-Square (3.485), while GFI, CFI and TLI values reach ≥ 0.90 , as indicated in Figure 2. Subsequent analyzes also revealed 12 overlapping items namely KP041-KP043, KP042-KP044, KP046-KP047, KP047-KP048, KP048-KP049, KP047-KP049, KP054-KP055, KP057-KP058, KP059-KP060, KP060-KP061, KP065-KP066 and KP074-KP075. All of these overlaps were looped and items with the lowest loading factor value (KP067) were discarded. This finding shows that CFA for headmaster leadership achieves the fit. It also shows that all of these factors have a direct impact on the construct.

DISCUSSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be statistically validated that the headmaster leadership factors, namely leadership style, attitude, knowledge, experience, and qualifications influence the task load of SEIP teachers. Leadership style is a major factor in the task load of teachers. The majority of respondents agree that democratic leadership is their choice. This democratic leadership gives teachers a chance to express their opinions and open the door for discussion. The second factor is the attitude of the headmaster towards special education. Respondents agree that the attitude of careless and skeptical headmasters towards special education students, SEIP teachers and SEIP itself creates a burden on the SEIP teachers.

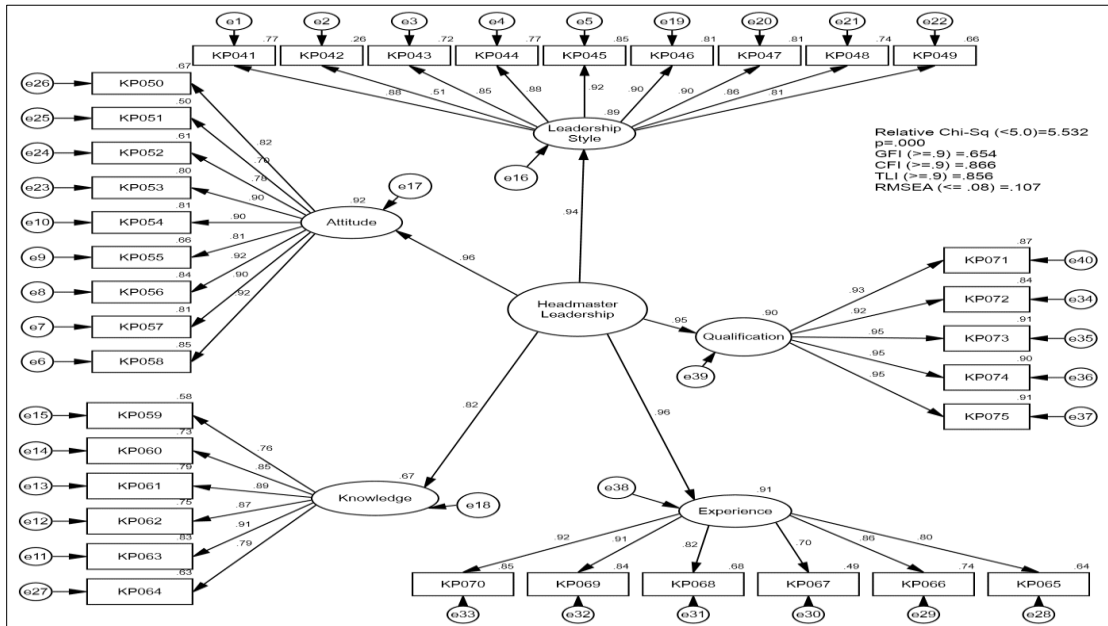


Figure 2: CFA for Headmaster Leadership

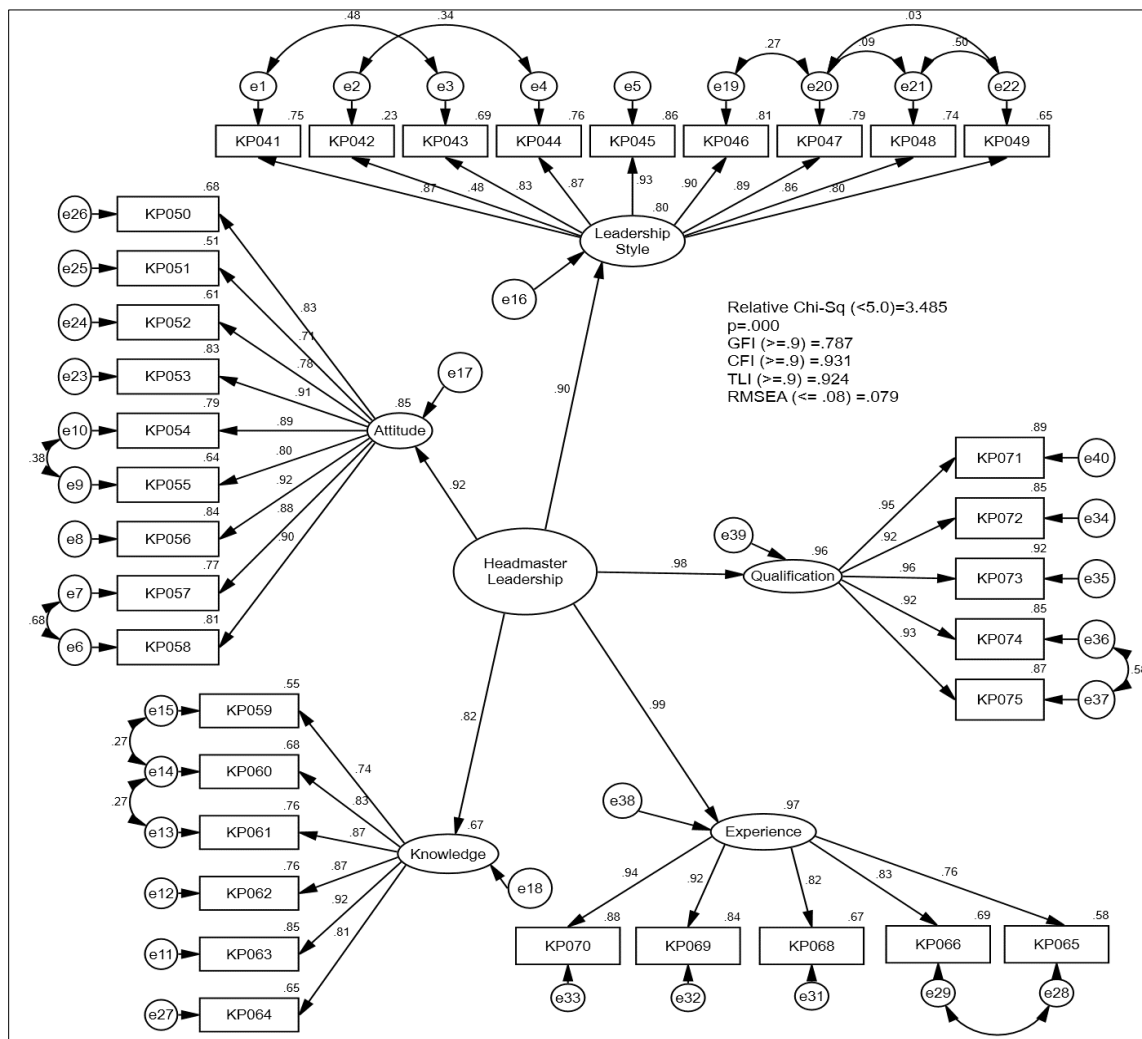


Figure 2: CFA for Headmaster Leadership (Modified)

The third factor is the knowledge of the headmaster regarding special education. The majority of respondents felt that headmaster with special education-related knowledge could distribute their assignments to SEIP teachers fairly and appropriately. Likewise, the fourth factor is the experience of the headmaster in relation to special education, special

needs students and SEIPs that influence the task load of SEIP teachers. The fifth factor is a major qualification factor for special education. The majority of respondents felt that headteachers with academic qualifications or special education-related expertise would better understand SEIP. This would have prevented them from imposing SEIP teachers on childlike and inappropriate assignments.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The findings of this study show that headmasters play an important role in school management in general and SEIP management in particular. Principals' leadership style, attitude, knowledge, experience, and qualifications influence their ability to manage SEIP especially the teachers. This task load issue is still ongoing and requires the support of multiple parties to address it. Research on these five factors can be done by the headmaster to facilitate SEIP management in their schools. As a suggestion, a study of the factors affecting the leadership of the headmaster to the task load of the teacher could be extended to other constructs and factors. In addition, it is proposed that this study be conducted qualitatively to obtain more research data.

CLOSING

The issue of the burden of the SEIP teachers' task load continues to this day. School administrators especially principals need to pay attention to this issue so that it can be addressed effectively. This should be done to prevent the productivity of SEIP teachers being affected.

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