

MARAKLI, Ö., GÜLER, C., TUNCAY, N.N., SÜRÜCÜ, G., İŞIKLILAR BUYRUK, D. (2024). "Dynamics Determining Administrator Motivation in Special Education Schools". *International Journal of Social Science, Innovation and Educational Technologies (Online)*, Vol: 5, Issue: 18, pp: 229-241

**Keywords:** education, special education, special education managers, motivation

Article Type Review Article

### Dynamics Determining Administrator Motivation in Special Education Schools

Arrived Date  
02.04.2024

Accepted Date  
28.04.2024

Published Date  
30.04.2024


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#### Abstract

While education contains many elements, some areas require more serious examination. One of these areas is the special education area. While special education has recently come up with many positive results, it also encounters the problems it encounters while turning into a new and increasingly important professional field. Special education schools are institutions where students with various disabilities are educated. The administrators working in these schools are responsible for ensuring the overall functioning of the school and ensuring that the students receive the best education. However, the motivation of administrators is an important factor that directly affects the success of schools. Factors such as job satisfaction, adequacy of support and resources, professional development opportunities, work-life balance, corporate culture and leadership style directly affect the motivation levels of managers. Knowing and improving these factors is critical to improving the overall success of special education schools. By shaping educational policies and practices in this direction, the motivation of the administrators and thus the overall performance of the school can be increased. This article examines the dynamics that affect the motivation of managers working in special education schools.

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## INTRODUCTION

Training is the process of providing individuals with permanent behavior change in the desired direction through activities carried out within a specific plan and program. As knowledge of human development and learning rapidly increases, so does the opportunity to shape more effective educational practices. Special education schools are institutions where students with various disabilities are educated. The administrators working in these schools are responsible for ensuring the general functioning of the school and ensuring that the students receive the best education (Darling-Hammond et al., 2019). This process takes place in a controlled and structured environment and increases the adaptation and participation of individuals in society by supporting social, mental, emotional and physical development. This definition emphasizes that education plays an important role in the lives of individuals and is shaped in accordance with the needs of society.

The motivation of teachers and school administrators and the quality of educational activities are important in this context. Quality education has become more critical in the educational atmosphere in recent years (Kumari & Kumar, 2023).

Highly motivated teachers and administrators work with more energy, passion, and dedication to provide a better education to their students. The intrinsic satisfaction that intrinsically motivated teachers derive from their work allows them to focus on the benefits of activities directly related to teaching. Intrinsic motivation refers to the fact that a person is motivated by factors such as intrinsic rewards in doing their job, i.e., personal fulfillment, a sense of learning and development, a sense of accomplishment, and pleasure in the work itself (Kumari & Kumar, 2023). In addition, these teachers and administrators may be more willing to improve themselves, which creates a basis for continuous improvement and innovation. On the other hand, teachers and administrators who are unmotivated can negatively impact their engagement and performance at their jobs. This can reduce the quality of education given to students and negatively affect the overall atmosphere of the school, minimizing the possibility of a product being produced.

Matsson and Dahlgvist (2013) stated that motivation is an important tool for improving and maintaining employee performance in the organization. Motivation is a critical factor for improving employees' engagement with their work, productivity, and overall performance. High motivation in the workplace enables employees to not only perform their tasks but also achieve a higher level of performance and job satisfaction.

Therefore, it is important to make an effort to increase and maintain the motivation of everyone working in educational institutions. This can be accomplished through a variety of methods, such as supporting, appreciating, reassuring, and providing support to teachers and administrators in their personal and professional development. Thus, a more motivated and satisfied team can provide a more successful training environment. This situation is much more critical for teachers and administrators working in special education schools.

Working conditions and student-parent profile make the motivation to work in special education schools even more important. Having a disability can be one of the most marginalizing factors in a child's life, and this is also reflected in education. Meeting the learning needs of students with disabilities can be a major challenge, especially where resources are limited. However, inclusive education is an approach that has proven to be highly effective in helping all students learn (Hayes, Bulat, 2017)

Teachers and administrators welcome the fact that students who receive education in special education schools find a job in public institutions or start working life thanks to the skills they gain with this education and the positive privileges granted to them. This allows teachers and administrators to feel that their efforts are paid off and to increase their moral motivation.

These developments can increase the quality of special education services and support the integration of individuals with special needs into society by enabling those working in the field of special education to be more motivated. In this way, promoting an egalitarian understanding in education and positive discrimination for disadvantaged individuals can ensure that all segments of society have access to a more equitable and inclusive education system.

After 1948, many countries around the world have ratified international human rights treaties that guarantee the right to education, or some aspect of the right to education. Some of the most important of these agreements are:

1. **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948):** This declaration defines and protects fundamental human rights and freedoms. Article 26 states that everyone has the right to education and that there should be no discrimination in education.

2. **Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989):** This convention establishes and protects the rights of children. The right to education is also among the most fundamental rights of children and is emphasized by this convention.
3. **Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966):** This covenant guarantees economic, social and cultural rights. The right to education is also within the scope of this convention.

International agreements such as these have been adopted by various countries to guarantee the right to education. The ratification of these agreements encourages countries to protect and promote the right to education and supports the creation of a more equitable and accessible system in education through a joint effort by the international community.

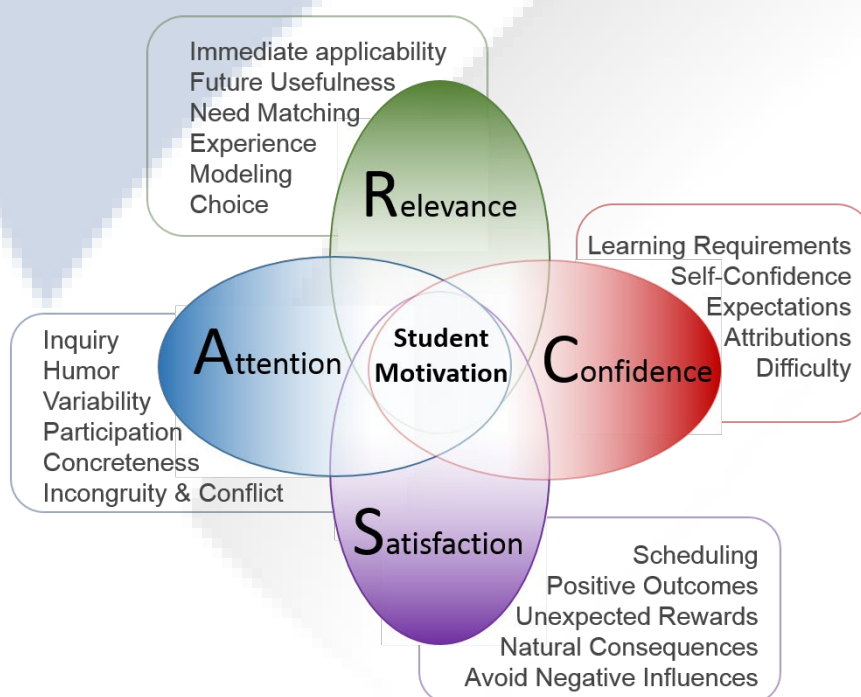
Inclusive education refers to an understanding of education that includes all children with different needs, including children with special education needs. In this context, it is important that education systems and schools are designed and implemented in accordance with the various learning needs so that each child can develop their potential to the fullest. This approach supports every child to be successful and contribute to society in accordance with the principles of justice and equality in education. McLeskey and Waldron (2000; Hayes & Bulat, 2017) states that some misperceptions and biases about the education of students with special educational needs can negatively affect the motivation of various stakeholders to implement or support inclusive education systems. These stakeholders include government officials, school administrators, teachers, communities, and international development staff. They also emphasize that the greatest resistance to the transition to inclusive education systems sometimes comes from special education teachers. These teachers may have concerns about their role within inclusive systems and may have unsubstantiated biases against inclusion.

The inclusive education approach envisages the inclusion of each individual in the educational process with their individual differences (Hayes & Bulat, 2017). The importance of this approach emphasizes that disadvantaged individuals should be accepted and supported together with their peers and differences. Supporting disadvantaged individuals with positive discrimination in education is extremely important to ensure their participation in social and business life. However, it is often seen that the work and working conditions of teachers and administrators working in special education schools that focus on the education of individuals with these special needs are more challenging than others. These teachers and administrators, who are in constant contact with

people with disabilities and their families, can work under a heavier physical and psychological burden.

Teachers and administrators working in special education schools show great dedication and effort to meet the needs of students and their families and to provide them with the best educational service. However, working in this consistently intense and emotionally demanding environment can also cause them to wear out psychologically at times. Therefore, it is important to support teachers and administrators working in special education schools and to provide them with the psychological, physical and professional support they need. In this way, they can serve students more effectively and contribute to the successful implementation of the inclusive education approach.

The ARCS model is an instructional design approach that includes four key components that aim to increase students' motivation in the learning process. These components were developed by Keller (1987) and used to provide a motivational framework. The ARCS model consists of the following four components (Souders, 2020):



**Figure 1. ARCS model**

Source: Souders, 2020

**Attention:** At the beginning of the learning process, it is important to attract and arouse students' interest. This can be done through methods such as interesting examples, engaging visuals, or compelling questions. Arousing interest allows students to focus on the topic and avoid distractions.

**Relevance:** In order to maintain students' interest and motivation to learn, it is necessary to clearly show why the subject being learned is important to them. This component may include linking learning to real-world applications. Students may be more interested when they can see how the knowledge they are learning can be used in their own lives.

**Developing Confidence:** It is important to increase students' confidence that they can succeed. This can be achieved by assigning tasks to students with the appropriate level of difficulty, recognizing their achievements, and providing positive feedback. Success increases students' self-confidence in the learning process.

**Increasing Satisfaction Through Internal and Extrinsic Rewards:** At the end of the learning process, students should be satisfied with internal and extrinsic rewards (such as a sense of achievement, certificate, praise). This includes an assessment of students' efforts and achievements. Increasing satisfaction helps students stay motivated to learn.

The ARCS model aims to increase students' motivation and create effective learning environments by taking these four components into account in instructional design processes. This model provides teachers and instructional designers with strategies to make the learning process more attractive and effective, making students' learning experiences more positive.

The impact of these factors on individuals can vary depending on the individual's personal characteristics, experiences, values, and goals. Therefore, each individual may need different strategies to increase their motivation. However, the support and opportunities provided to increase motivation can help everyone reach their potential. This type of study can be an important step in understanding and supporting the motivations of individuals.

## **Education and Special Education**

It is estimated that more than 291 million children and adolescents under the age of 20 in the world have developmental disabilities and need special education (Olusanya et al., 2022; Cheng, Lai, 2023). This data highlights the prevalence of individuals with developmental disabilities worldwide

and their need for special education. Developmental disabilities can cause individuals to experience varying levels of difficulty in their cognitive, emotional, social, or physical development. For this reason, it is important to provide support and services suitable for the special needs of these individuals in their educational processes.

Special education offers an educational approach that is customized to the individual needs of these individuals and focuses on developing their potential to the fullest. In this process, special education teachers and specialists develop teaching methods suitable for the learning styles and needs of individuals. In addition, families also have an important role in this process; They also work in collaboration with education systems to support the education and development of their children.

This statistic reveals that education systems and societies around the world need to review their policies and practices towards the education and integration of individuals with developmental disabilities. Inclusive education systems are considered as an important step to ensure the full participation of these individuals in society. In this context, it is necessary to make continuous efforts to ensure equality of opportunity in education and to allow each individual to realize their potential.

Special education refers to educational services that are specifically designed to meet the needs of individuals, which are often different from average student characteristics (Benitez Ojeda & Carugno, 2022).

These individuals may have a variety of special needs, such as learning disabilities, physical or mental disabilities, and emotional and behavioral difficulties. Special education encompasses an educational process that is specifically planned and implemented according to the individual characteristics and needs of each student. This aims to provide students with optimal learning environments, develop students' potential to the maximum, and maximize their ability to live independently. Special education services provide students with the opportunity to develop academic, social, emotional, and practical life skills. Special education is often guided and supported by special education specialists, teachers, therapists, guidance specialists, and other specialists. These professionals identify students' needs, create individual educational plans, use specific educational materials and methods, and provide support to students.

## **Special Education School Administrators**

Special education school administrators play a pivotal role in ensuring the successful implementation of programs and services designed to cater to the unique needs of students with disabilities. As the educational landscape continues to evolve, these administrators must possess a diverse set of skills and knowledge to effectively lead their schools (Ganser, 2000). Successful special education administrators are more than just managers; they are visionary leaders who understand the importance of setting clear priorities and goals, involving stakeholders in decision-making, and providing the necessary guidance and support to their staff. These administrators must be well-versed in the specific needs of students with disabilities, the latest evidence-based practices, and the intricacies of special education law and regulations. (Fisher et al., 2003; Finkenbinder, 1981). They must also be adept at fostering collaborative relationships with general education teachers, parents, and community members to ensure a cohesive and inclusive educational experience for all students (Fisher et al., 2003)

One of the key responsibilities of special education administrators is to create and implement a shared vision for their schools. Effective administrators understand that without a clear direction and purpose, school programs, facilities, and morale can deteriorate. To prevent this, they must work closely with their staff to establish priorities and goals, and actively involve others in the decision-making process (Chance & Grady, 1990).

Managing the special education process in the best way and making the places where special education will be held suitable involves many challenges. This process requires the training of educational managers and their team specialized in the field of special education.

Special education teachers and support staff should be trained to provide appropriate training and support for special needs. This requires specialized training programs and ongoing professional development opportunities in the field of special education. This situation brings a number of difficulties. To overcome these challenges, it is important for special education administrators and their teams to act in accordance with the principles of equal opportunity and inclusion in education. Strategies such as professional development, collaboration, and effective use of resources can help to successfully manage the special education process. In addition, increasing awareness of the society at large and creating supportive policies can facilitate this process.



In order to provide effective services in the field of special education, many factors such as appropriate physical infrastructure, qualifications of education personnel, parent cooperation and management skills are required. In order to manage these processes in the best way, it is important that training managers and their team have certain skills and competencies. Here are some elements that are important for the management of these processes:

**Training Management Skills:** Training managers must have basic management skills such as planning, organizing, directing, and controlling. In addition, skills such as problem-solving, communication, and teamwork are also required.

**Physical Infrastructure and Equipment Management:** The physical infrastructure of special education institutions should be made suitable for the disabled. This includes accessibility, the provision of specialized educational materials, technological tools, and other equipment. Training managers should identify such needs and provide the necessary resources.

**Personnel Management and Development:** Special education personnel should be trained and supported in accordance with the special needs of the students. Educational administrators are responsible for ensuring the ongoing professional development of teachers and other staff and providing appropriate resources.

**Parent Collaboration and Communication:** Parent collaboration is an important factor in the special education process. Education administrators should actively involve parents in the educational process, communicate with them regularly, and provide support when needed.

**Management of Policies and Regulations:** Administrators working in private educational institutions must act in accordance with the relevant policies and regulations. This includes topics such as financial management, reporting, monitoring, and evaluation.

The management of these processes requires training managers to use their leadership, management and communication skills effectively. In addition, teamwork and collaboration ensure that these processes are managed successfully. Therefore, it is important for training managers and their team to constantly improve themselves and adapt to changing needs. The roles of teachers and administrators are of great importance in the education system. Both play a critical role in student success and the quality of education. It is essential for both teachers and administrators to have a high level of motivation in order to perform their duties in the best possible way.

## Result

Keeping employees motivated in special education schools is vital to improve the quality of education and support students' success. Therefore, school administrators and stakeholders should take care to take the necessary steps to increase the motivation of teachers.

The physical environment of the school has an important place among the factors affecting the motivation of administrators in special education schools. The physical environment of a school can affect the way employees do their jobs, as well as their overall well-being and motivation. Therefore, the suitability and quality of a special education school's physical environment can have a significant impact on the motivation of administrators. Positive physical environments can increase the motivation of managers. These may include large and spacious classrooms, students being equipped with materials suitable for learning, educational tools with modern technology, and comfortable and functional office spaces. This type of environment allows managers to do their jobs more effectively, improves the quality of the work environment, and allows them to enjoy their jobs more. On the other hand, adverse physical environments can negatively affect the motivation of managers. This can include elements such as inadequate classroom or office spaces, old and poorly maintained equipment, noisy or cluttered environments. Working in this type of environment can make it difficult for managers to do their jobs, increase stress and tension levels, and demotivate them. Therefore, it is important to improve the physical environment to increase the motivation of administrators in special education schools. This may include directing the school budget towards updating the physical infrastructure, providing functional and comfortable study spaces, and providing the necessary equipment and materials. It is also important to get employee feedback and improve the physical environment by considering their needs. In this context, one of the important factors affecting the motivation of administrators in special education schools is the physical environment of the school. A good physical environment allows managers to do their jobs more efficiently and increases their motivation, while a negative environment can negatively affect their motivation. Therefore, it is important to improve the physical environment and adapt it to the needs of managers.

In special education schools, as in many schools, another important factor affecting motivation is the strong bond of relations with people, that is, parents. Relations with parents are very important for school administrators working in special education schools. Parents are an important stakeholder in the educational process of special education students and are an important source of support for students' success. Therefore, it is of great importance for school administrators to establish positive

relationships and effective communication with parents. The variability of parents' attitudes and behaviors is a situation that administrators working in special education schools may encounter. Parents' expectations and demands can vary, and sometimes these expectations can be difficult to meet. While some parents expect more participation and attention in their students' educational process, others may prefer to stay in the background. This may require school administrators to be flexible and find solutions that fit different parent needs. In particular, ensuring positive relations, cooperation and communication with parents are important factors affecting the motivation of school administrators. A good communication and collaboration environment increases parents' trust in the school, encourages greater involvement of students in the educational process, and strengthens school-community relations. This, in turn, helps school administrators do their jobs more effectively and keep their motivation high. It is of great importance for administrators working in special education schools to keep their relationships with parents positive and to provide effective communication. This is essential for the success of students and increases the motivation of school administrators. A good environment of cooperation and communication contributes to the strengthening of the school community and the successful education of students.

In order to increase the motivation of administrators in special education schools, measures such as improving the physical environment and updating legislation should be taken. This can positively affect the motivation of managers by providing a more effective work environment and therefore improve the quality of training.

**Acknowledgment:** The authors have not received financial support from the University or any other institution/organization. The authors are grateful to the journal's anonymous reviewers for their extremely helpful suggestions to improve the quality of the manuscript.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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