

STRENGTHENING THE WEAKNESSES: THE LEADERSHIP DEXTIRITY OF  
SPECIAL STUDENTS  
A case of special students at University of Tampere in Finland

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**"If I had wings"**

If I had wings/  
I would fly on the sky/  
and see the world/

If I had wings/  
I would like to be as an angel/  
who protects people/

If I had wings/  
I would go anywhere/  
where I want/

If I had wings/  
I would hear voice of the sky/  
which tells me a secret/

If I had wings/  
I would sleep on the clouds/  
but how can I do it/  
when I don't have wings.

**By: Lisa (J.S). (2007)**

Ms. Lisa (J. S) is a special student suffering from Cerebral Palsy. She has a passion for writing and by writing she expresses her feeling, speaking is difficult for her. She has written almost three hundred poems and sold over 200 copies. This poem was written by Lisa when she was in 9th grade at the age of sixteen.

## **Abstract**

Leadership is a complex phenomenon and is also the least understood although discussed widely. However, in education leadership is everywhere. Moreover, taking into consideration of special students leadership, my research explores the dexterity of special students in terms of traits approach of leadership. Cases were developed from special students studying at the University of Tampere. Each case is unique and provides qualitative meaning assimilating ethno-biography of the respondents. Interviews were conducted according to the respondent's willingness. Autonomy to answer the interview questions were on the respondents discretions. The findings begin with the understanding of traits approach of both leaders and followers. Consequently, insights were drawn also to understand followership that "are followers born or are followers made". The findings suggested that realizing the weaknesses is important and applying these weaknesses to make their strength leading to personality development, and attitude formation. It was also found that pushing special abilities enhances in strengthening the weaknesses allows special students to perform better which drives them to seek the need of adaptability. The initiative persistence with the students of special abilities is found to be high that they do often drive themselves to push harder. This further makes them to excel competence in the field they have worked, for which they remain confident to maintain their stability and adaptability to perform. However, for them, loosing persistence is another form of weaknesses.

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## STRENGTHENING THE WEAKNESSES: THE LEADERSHIP DEXTRITY OF SPECIAL STUDENTS

Case study of special students at University of Tampere in Finland

### **General background of the study**

Leadership is widely discussed and is the least understood by many (Burns, 1978).

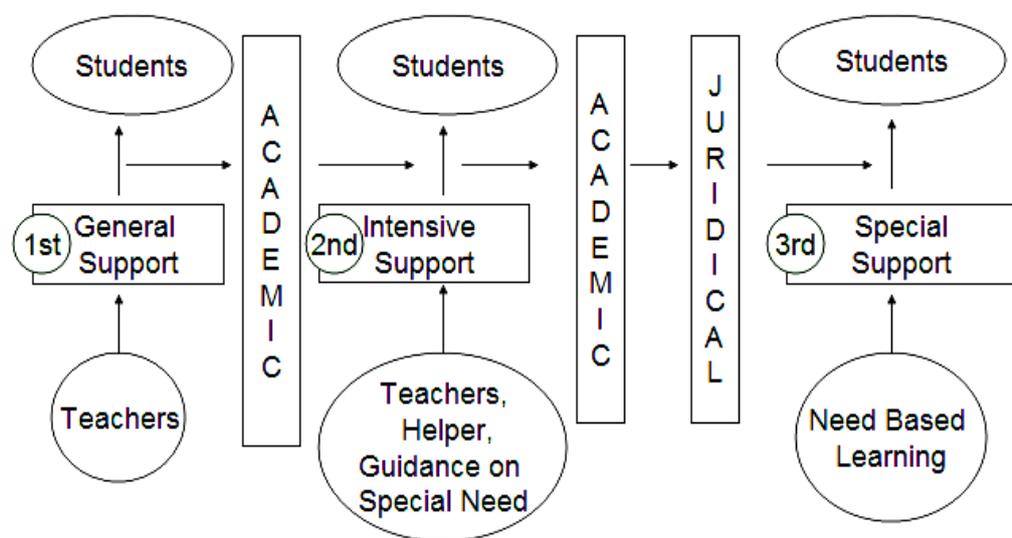
Why has leadership been complex and difficult to understand? The quench for understanding leadership from multi varieties perspectives appeals researchers to explore more about leaders. However, difficult as it is to understand and also to practice, leadership still is the prime ingredient for success.

The complexity of leadership in general education is gaining ground by attempting to explore the effectiveness of the leaders. This has an impact to follower readiness and dominant characteristic of leadership dexterity to influence followers. Nevertheless, special education is the other side of coin. Despite special education apart from being different from general education, concern for special education does attempts to enrich and enhance the potential ability of the special students. This embarks the likelihood for transformation and offers special (disable) students the opportunity in the process to normalization of living and studying with equality and intensive care. Moreover, for special students, having followers is quite a challenging phenomenon. Nevertheless, effectiveness at task and success in achievement may be the influential aspect of leadership qualities in special students.

Different countries have different laws for supporting special education. Special education has become one of the major concerns for developmental progress. Importantly, human capital is considered to be a pivotal importance that significantly contributes nation's development. Nevertheless, human have few overridden factors.

The overridden factors in human being are psychological and physiological paradigm that pulls back human being from being efficient and effective. The overridden factors have an immense impact into leadership motivational potentialities. Therefore, leadership in special education has become more concern to reduce the overridden factors to enhance and strengthen the leadership dexterity of special students. According to Rajbhandari (2011), overridden factors could come from various potential variables, such as, social, psychological, technical, physical, health related issues, finding difficult to cope up and overcome with these potential variables could lead to depression.

In Finland, new special education law was implemented in 2011. The law offers ample opportunities for the special students to grow within themselves. The model for special education differs from the general education and offers equality and justice amongst all.



**Figure 1** New Finnish special education law 2011. Three steps of special need (every child goes to school)

The model suggests that every special child have an opportunity to attend the nearby schools. This instigates the school organization to be equipped with necessary facilities to enhance the progress of special education. Moreover, every child is

considered equal and is initially offered with general support. This allows the school experts to understand the behavioural pattern of every child especially with concern to adaptability. Secondly, with additional support, the child is given intensive support for assistance, such as, helper, special needs and guidance. In any circumstance of incapability to meet with the regular adaptability, the child is rendered with special support which is only declared after the judiciary or official decisions.

However, many believe strengthening the supportive means would enhance leadership for special students, for example providing expert qualified teachers, additional necessary special support. This is one factor importantly relevant to the growth and development of leadership in special students. Moreover, many other factors are also associated with developing leadership potentialities for special students. Therefore with the purpose in exploring these, the research attempts to study the leadership potentialities of special students that are associated with the abilities of special students to drive forward with the differences.

### *Research questions*

In exploring leadership potentialities in special students, following research questions attempt to seek the answer.

1. How can special student strengthen their weaknesses for leadership dexterity?
2. How do special students strengthen their leadership dexterity for future progress?

## **Research methodology**

The exploration is qualitative research designed methodology. The advantage of qualitative paradigm allowed me to understand the phenomena from epistemological judgment that offered subjectivistic views. In this study, disabled students of any kind are taken synonymously as special students.

### *Research methods*

Research method for this exploration was initiated with applying two research tools as observation and interview. Observation offers varieties of perspective on analysis and interpretation of observed phenomena both as a learner and the doers. On the other hand, an interview tool was applied to understand the experiential learning from multi dimensional perspectives. The semi-structured interview was conducted with the adult special students at the university. Their experiential learning through the journey of achieving academic realm offered views of realism. Rajbhandari (2011, 38) states;

“Experiential learning is an important aspect of practicing the previously learned phenomena to mould the behaviour to accustom with the situation. This is where theories and practices meet to reflect the phenomenal views to critical reflexive. Moreover, experiential learning provides additional benefits to understand and learn also initiating the paradigm shift of thought, feelings and acting”.

Experiential learning is a method of constructing new ideas with the learning from the past. Rajbhandari (2008, 7) states “constructivism's central idea is that human learning is constructed, that learners build new knowledge upon the foundation of previous learning”. The special students experiential learning offered a wide range of qualitative information that was also analyzed as an ethno-biography to reflect their potential dexterity.

### *Data analysis procedures*

Data analysis procedures were instigated by giving meaning to data. Interpretations of data significantly contributed in providing useful guideline to narrate the experiential learning of special students journeying through leadership of various kinds during their academic achievement. Their experiences through the journey of life as a student offered subsequent validation and reliability with line to ethno biographic research. Validation was also acquired from the participants. They were also given an opportunity to read and suggest on the draft. Their comments and suggestion offered reliability and validity to the research exploration.

In addition, ethics were maintained by receiving consent from the respondents. Respondents were allowed to answer the interviews and also were given autonomy to drop the question if they felt offended.

### **Results and discussions**

The result of exploring leadership dexterity of special students reflects the ethno biography of the special students who participated in the interview. The leadership dexterity is further strengthened by the experiences and permissive attitude of tolerance to adapt in the normal environment by the special students.

Each special student has their own realm of potentialities to drive forward. In a certain ways, the participants face their own challenges to cope up with the existing environment. Three cases of special students are presented to highlight their ethno biography in relation to academic realm and strengthening their dexterity to goal oriented behaviour for achieving academic success. Each case of special abilities are unique that reflects their own lifelong learning realm. Pseudonyms are given to the

special students participating in this research. The pseudonyms are John, Lisa and Carrie

*An ethno biography of John*

I would have never thought about writing research on special students leadership dexterity if I would not have met John. John is a male student and most of all a good friend of mine as well. We met in a student party organized by the student union of University of Tampere. It was in the party John approached me to ask if I came from Asia. The conversation led us to become a good friend. Since then we bump across each other often at the university. In due course of time, we shared time drinking coffee and even hitting a bar together.

One fine day in summer in 2012, while we were in bar together, we came across a topic related to education. At that point John revealed that he suffered from dyslexia. It was not a surprise to me at the first place when he disclose about something he was suffering from since his childhood. Until later I knew what dyslexia was all about. According to the medical definition, dyslexia is a reading disorder. A pattern of illumination of alphabets that allows people suffering from dyslexia makes it difficult for them to read. This was what I was explained by John. When I began to understand the difficulties he faced in reading. I was surprisingly impressed to know how far he has reached to achieve his academic realm.

He finds difficulties in reading and writing. Although he has this difficulties in reading and writing, he push or drive himself to compete to overcome his disabilities and try to become as normal as other students. John is a master degree student, and he recently submitted his bachelor theses. He has a wonderful thinking and pattern of

vision to perceive things differently. He claims, with this pattern of vision in his mind, it made him possible to achieve what he craves for. He mentions,

I am studying in University and my goal is to achieve a master degree. I am a third year student and I am given a right to study master degree.

The challenge he has faced with the dyslexia has first known to him when he was promoted to grade one. For him, the challenges were never known until when reading and writing in school education began. Before beginning to start reading and writing, John claims to be smart in kindergarten when play related education was concerned and most of all the communicative abilities which made him smart in the class amongst other students. He states;

When I was in kindergarten, I realized that I was smart and there was no problem and when I went to school in the first grade, they started to teach reading and I just didn't get it, I got it in the beginning when they were teaching to learn alphabet and I realized how faster the other kids was in reading.

During his school education, reading and writing has always been a challenging issue. He was constantly supported by his mother at home and friends at school. Realizing the fact about his special need and care, his mother at home dedicated her effort in teaching how to pronounce the alphabets starting from ABC. He believes the concern of his mother was the major inspirational source for motivation. Even at school he was constantly being supported by his class mates. He states;

My mother was bit worried, she helped me and I remember one day she read me the whole alphabet of "ABC" book and she helped me read and pronounce these alphabet it was so hard. Someone sat behind me and taught me the reading process and it was kind of training and I was always underachieving with the normal standard. But there was always someone in the class who are also not good at reading.

With the support from his mother at home John achieved his basic education. His consistency in adaptation initiated his potential to drive forward that allowed

significant progress in completing his basic education. The initiative persistence to remain consistency with adaptation to contextual environment was initiated with patience and tolerance. This further allowed him to generate consistency to overcome the impulsive nature of his behaviour. He mentions his capabilities to remain proficient in the educational realm are by developing self awareness of determined goal setting.

I started to develop patience to sit at the same place longer and be able to read and write. All I need was the patience and with the motivation to go high school I could develop my patience to read even though it took a longer time. I somehow achieved good marks like 2 tens, 2 nines, and 1 eight. It was good and then I had motivation to study economics. Economic was really inspiring me and thought that if I go through I will end up having good job to provide my family good income and still study something more that I like.

Although undergoing in process of achieving higher education at the University level, John's dexterity to perceive things differently despite the challenges he faces has led him forward to demonstrate the skills with differences.

#### *An ethno biography of Lisa*

Proceeding to research leadership dexterity of special students was also a challenge for me to gather respondents willing to participate in my research. It was not so much easy to approach students to seek willing permission from them to participate in my research. At first, it was difficult for me to find the right participants, apart from John, he was my friend and he agreed to participate without any hesitation.

I started talking about special education and special students at the university to people possibly who could help me. I was meeting students and talking about the special education. After meeting few people at the university I was given helpful advices and information about the right person who I should meet. I finally met an

administrative officer especially responsible with special care and supporting special students at the University.

It was an ease for me to meet her as for which she cooperated to find and ask few special students willing to participate in my research. Within few days, I received an email from the administrative officer that two students were willing to participate, among them was an email and telephone of Lisa and the information about Carrie who promised to contact me in person.

Easy it was for me to proceed with the enquiry; I called Lisa over the telephone for the first time but never received an answer. Few minutes later I made a second attempt to call her over the telephone to make sure instant communication could be much easier for both of us. The call was again never answered. So I thought of writing an email to let her know about what I was researching upon and to receive consent from her for willingness to participate in my research as a key respondents. Few hours later in the early afternoon, I received an email from her, which Lisa offered her willing consents to participate in the research as a key respondent. Lisa also mentioned that she finds it difficult to speak and she is on the wheel chair. However, she agreed to meet at the university and write her answer for the questions I have for the interviews.

Lisa suffers from Cerebral Palsy, which is neurological disorder and permanent problem with the muscle movement which is caused by abnormalities in parts of brain that controls muscle movement. Despite such challenges, Lisa goes to the University everyday.

I met Lisa at the Linna building on the ground floor, which is the first floor in Finnish. She arrived on time and was early than I. As I noticed a girl on the wheel chair, I approached to her and called her by name. She immediately recognized me. I

could see the charm of enthusiasm and eagerly attitude. This is a normal phenomenon as she explains;

I can't go everywhere I want. Or I need someone to come with me somewhere. The thing that joins my cerebral palsy is difficulty to speak especially with strangers. It's easy for me to speak with members of my family or people who know me. Sometimes strange people don't understand me it can make troubles.

I began to talk to her normally, she forced to try hard to speak and answer to me. My intention at first was to inform her, what I was studying about. She understood me and agreed to participate. I showed her the partial work I had written for which she examined to understand by focusing on it.

As I noticed that it was difficult for her to speak, I allowed myself to speak more and let her hear me rather than letting her speak. I remember we had communicated for sometime, suddenly, I realized that I was speaking to her in English, and I abruptly asked her, could you understand me, I am speaking English, are you being able to follow. She said yes and I didn't realize this because she was also answering me in English. English is an international language; most people speak but also most find it difficult to communicate.

I was impressed about her capabilities and abilities to communicate in different language when most other normal students find it difficult to speak fluently. But for her even it was difficult to speak, I could sense that she understood every word I spoke and her answer in English was remarkable.

Having been in a circumstance of challenges with real practical life, Lisa was more than a capable person to me, despite her specialties was intense. Finally, we both agreed to share the interview session in writing which she replied back in my email.

Lisa is a bachelor degree student at the University of Tampere. This is her first year in Bachelor degree after completing her high school. Her ways of expression are

rife by writing. Her only means to quantum leap is by the means of writing for which she has written a book of poem which sold over 200 copies.

I'm happy because I graduated from the upper secondary school in three years. And now I'm studying at university. Four years ago I published a poem book of my own

While we were communicating, she also mentioned that those copies were sold because people knew about her conditions. However, for her it is wise to think in that way but for me, it was absolute prominent and productive work to write poems which even normal students finds it difficult in remaining consistent with writing habits and thinking differently to collaborate real time happenings with quoting and making it a beautiful poem. Her ability of writing and thinking differently about life has encouraged her most of the time even at bad timings, she states;

There are sometimes bad days when almost everything is difficult. Then I try to think what good is in my life. I'm happy because I'm quite independent: I don't need much help. My life could be worse. Secondly, when I feel bad I think about what I have already achieved. Of course, it helps and I know my family and friends support me.

During our meeting at Linna building scheduled for interview, we exchanged facebook account so that we could have communication regarding the interview. As it was difficult for her to speak and pronounce words, facebook communication made it much easier for her to answer the question I had. Despite her discomfort to speak and trouble having muscles movement, I noticed she was quick on her replies with writing. She mentioned that she is fast in writing and have been allowed to take examination in the computers. Moreover, Lisa' difficulties in walking by herself was impossible according to the doctors diagnose but however, Lisa attempted to walk and seldom uses her wheelchair when at home. Her initiative persistence to adapt with consistency to maintain the stability hailed to demonstrate her skills and ability with a difference.

*An ethno biography of Carrie*

Carrie texts message me with regard to seek information about my research on special students leadership dexterity. I called her back over the telephone and explained the work I was pursuing which she offered her consent to participate. We fixed a meeting place at the University for an interview.

We met at the University main building cafeteria; she explained that she would be running late for fifteen minutes which was not a problem for both of us. I waited for her at the cafeteria while she arrived looking for me. We then decided to go to another cafeteria on the second floor because the main building cafeteria was a bit noisy which would otherwise have been a problem for tape recording. As we walked towards the corridor and in the lift, she explained her problems as being a special student. She suffers from heights phobia (a phobia of heights). In her case it is severe. She fears of falling and this gives her traumatic nervousness. She explains,

I suffer phobia of high places and for me its very server, as we walked to this place I cannot walk those steps because there are holes in the stairs, if there wouldn't have been holes I would have been able to walk those stairs. Its phobia, of high places, Phobia there is nothing rational about it. Phobia is an anxiety disorder like a panic disorder or obsessive compulsive disorder.

Her fear of falling is experienced from various dimensions such as, the gaps on the stairs, looking outside the glass window and the glass railing bars. In fact, University of Tampere has glass railings and bar in few schools buildings. The most terrible design of glass railings and bar for Carrie is in Pinni B. Carrie admits that she has never been to Pinni B upper than the first floor. However, she also explains that she works and her office is at the 6<sup>th</sup> floor which her phobia has not caused her fear of falling or encountered any traumatic nervousness. She explains this is due to the wall and window being not transparent. She even has not been to the library building on the fifth floor due to the open structure of the building.

In Pinni B there are glasses beside the stairs. I cannot be there, I have never been there. Its not how I am but it does matter what I see. For instance, I work and I have my office at the top floor but I cannot see through the window. Then there are some problems in the library also due to the transparency with the glass bar.

However, while we organized to settle down in the second floor cafeteria, she also explained that she could not come to this place before but she tried time and again to push her self. Even the cafeteria has a transparent glass bars as a window on the one side which she has now overcome the fear of falling and controlled her phobia to extend with some therapy. In supporting this, Carrie states,

For sometime I wasn't able to come here at all before, but I slowly tried to do it myself since I like this cafeteria so much finally, I could overcome my difficulties and now I can come here at ease. I sometimes try places again and again where I wasn't able to go. I think it's my curiosity that drives me to try.

For Carrie, the best way of improving her fear would be through cognitive therapy which would help her to built confident and take control of her anxiety. Nevertheless, her persistence initiation to try again and again has led her to achieve and develop confident over controlling her fear. She explains,

With the therapy, I will have to relax and try to get over the phobia, and its also about confidence. I have confident sometimes and in a way it helps you with inner sense. Since my problem is with the psychology I will need to relax and built confidence to overcome the problem.

Overcoming the fear at one go has not been possible for her, however, her desire to control fear of falling has initiated to adapt stability on trying it again time after time. However, for her she has also been unsuccessful with the effort she makes to control the overridden factors and finally she withdraws. Carrie states;

Sometime I have succeeded but many times I have returned and given up. Simply I couldn't proceed further. I simply had to give up thinking going there. I also tried to go library but I have now given up because I simply cannot do it.

Surprisingly, Carrie does not have fear of flying, however, she fears of the airport and the transparent structures of the building which she fears and panic of falling down. She says;

It doesn't matter while I am in the airplane but its only fear while it is seen physically the height. I have been travelling some part in Finland and I travel by bus and I feel that I trust the bus. I can use trains especially if someone comes with me. I have also travelled by planes to England

Addition to all the challenges she suffers, she explains this problem of hers has not caused any trouble in her learning activities. However, she feels she is not independent on her own to move around University building importantly, the library. Most of the time she asks help from her friends to borrow and deposit books from the library. In supporting this view she states;

My difficulties doesn't affect the studying process its more about thinking before hand and making connection and sometime asking friends to take the paper to forth floor and get books for me from the library. I don't go to place where I cannot go but if there are places where everything is covered a close room I can be there

Moreover, for her, despite her challenges does not hamper much with the studies in respect to reading and writing, she faces a challenges to organize herself before hand with every planning she makes for pursuing her studies. She has to collaborate with the special students administrative staff at the university to arrange a class best suitable for her if she is willing to take any course. What matters most for her is the structure of the classroom, buildings and the path of the building.

### **Understanding the potential realm of special students leadership**

Leadership potential realms of special students were studied on case by case basis.

However, the exploration on special students leadership dexterity has been attempted by few leadership researchers, this study offers to picture the experiential learning and

implementation of these learning behavioural patterns of special students enlightening quantum leap for achievement of success with maximum effectiveness.

Understanding the leadership quantum leap, moreover, with special students, the leadership offers few aspects to enrich them with qualities competences. Nevertheless, with succession to achieve these aspects, they perform their dexterity with innovative accuracy faced with challenges. In line to this, special students can be creative innovators bringing in creative destruction and also be creative imitators. Henceforth, alike normal students, special students simultaneously develops leadership from within themselves. This indicates that special students may not require followers to become a leader. Most importantly, the situation they are surrounded are already a circumstantial challenges. Overcoming these challenges is a leap forward acquiring leadership dexterity on their own.

As leadership dexterity of special students is concern, leadership traits theory reveals the quality of leadership which fundamentally accounts for the heroic deeds. Nevertheless, special students are unsung heroes and the existences of leadership theory focusing on special students are scarce. Heroes are hailed and many follow them as an idealized role model. Let us take an example of Albert Einstein, Alexander Graham Bell, Prof. Stephen Hawking, Woodrow Wilson, John Nash, Howard Hughes, Helen Keller, John Cougar Mellencamp, Rene Kirby, Agatha Christie, Stevie Wonder, Brad Cohen, Nick Vujicic, Dr. Janice Brunstrom, Anne McDonald, Abbey Nicole Curran, Garrett Holeve and many special people both in academic and athletics who inspired the world with their dexterity to influence many of us. They never had any followers before; their effectiveness on succession offered a whole lot of different pictures on leadership. Moreover, they have taught us to be effective, which has made difficult even for the normal intellectual individuals often craving

answers to leadership from theories to become one great leader of our time. The questions remains, how many of us have become successful to grow as a leader.

Following the trait theory of leadership, no debates were made with understanding that leaders are born. Later scientific researchers on leadership, especially, the study of behavioural leadership from Oiiho State University (1945) and University of Michigan (1947) enlightened new perspective on made quality of leadership, defying the born qualities of leaders. Most importantly, to be made leader, something must have to happen. Something of different kind agitates and motivates human mind. This motivation is unstoppable and may defy the leadership trait of born qualities. Nevertheless, leaders are born; significantly, qualifies to indicate the proficiency of leadership but for few. Most importantly, for special students, who are determined to Focus, be Optimistic, Strive for success and Smiles for challenges (FOSS) (Rajbhandari, 2011) have potential to proceed with leadership realm. This charisma influences many to follow them.

Importantly, becoming a leader in all circumstances require leader in the frontline and the people following as the followers. However, in many cases, followers are potential influential factors but may not be required to complement in leadership realm. Rather the new insight can be reflected likewise, are followers born or are followers made.

My understanding about special students leadership potentially started while I was visiting few schools in Nepal, Kathmandu in the year 2011/2012 for research on leadership studies for my doctoral dissertation. As I was waiting on the third floor of the school building for the principal, scheduled for interview appointment, a small incident changed my perception about leadership exploration when I saw a disabled girl child had to effort herself from the wheelchair to climb few steps of the school

gate. I gazed her move as she struggled to stand holding the bars of the gate.

However, few school teachers helped to support her.

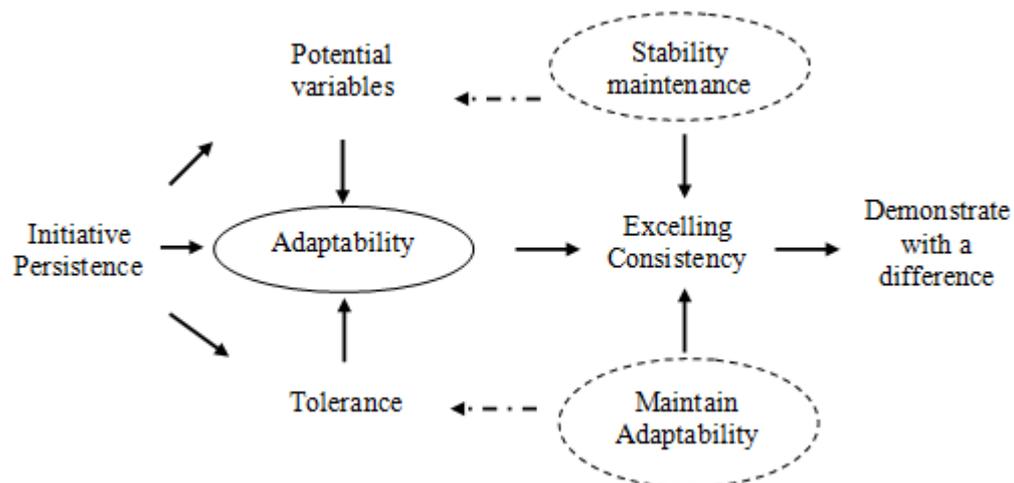
During my interview with the principal, I came up with few questions regarding the incident that I encountered with the special girl a moment ago. To my surprise, I came to know that she has her class on the third floor and she makes it with all her effort to climb the stairs to reach her class and this is her everyday routine. The school was constructed with no elevators, no physical facilities for disabled students and no special educational materials. She was a leader on her own to become effective as normal students. While I questions the principal regarding this, she claims to admit that she overlooked this problem and promised to maintain the easiness for special students which further would generate more enrollment of special students in the school.

Becoming special with disabilities may not be a born phenomenon, accident, circumstantial incidents and many other medical factors can make any normal people disable anytime. People born with special characteristic have tendencies to demonstrate born qualities of leadership, however, undesired and unexpected incidental circumstances may demand for potential of leadership dexterity for made qualities of leadership.

According to trait theory of leadership, certain characteristic of leaders shape toward behavioural pattern. The leadership traits can be also found in special students, for example, according to Stogdill (1974, 1948) in Bass & Stogdill (1990) alertness, insight, achievement persistence, self-confidence, initiative, tolerance and adaptability. Many of these traits may not be implemented and even would be difficult for the normal students to implement. However, for special students any one of these traits can change in modification of behavioural pattern towards succession.

Moreover, persistence, tolerance and adaptability can have the major impact for growing to become effective for special students in acquiring the potential realm for leadership succession.

Furthering to explore the leadership potentialities of special students, traits quality of leadership was enhanced to develop a proposition model. The traits quality of leadership reflected the dexterity of special students in pursuing the goal directed behaviour. The model suggests proposing the leadership traits quality enriched by special students in demonstrating the leadership realm strengthening their ability, skills, willingness and tolerance for adaptability and excelling consistency to perform. This performance with a difference in addition is a source of motivation to the special students.



**Figure 2 Potential realm of special students leadership. A trait model approach**

Every student has their own traits so does the special students. The proposed theoretical model in figure 2 suggests that special students traits of initiative persistence drive them to push harder to mix with the normal environment. Initiative persistence is a drive to goal oriented behaviour. The adaptability to common environment offers exorbitant workout and practice. Although difficult, the special students have a different method to exercise their practices, and have different

abilities and skills. Adaptability to environment requires special students to constantly and frequently perform the same task again and again. But sometime, overdoing of work on a regular basis increases their skills and ability which they develop it as a normal situation; this further motivates them and is implemented for progressing further. Moreover, consistency is important to maintain stability and adaptability to overcome the potent contextual variables with permissive attitude to tolerance. This in return provides easiness to performance in any activities they crave to enhance, reading, writing, movement and so forth. Nevertheless, for them every context is unique and challenging. Few succeed and few fail. For both success and failure, the consequences of traits are always demonstrated with the difference. This however, is a way towards leadership realm.

*Strengthening the weaknesses, a leadership dexterity*

Realizing the weaknesses is important and applying these weaknesses to make their strength is another aspect of traits approach which most often is relevant to personality development, attitude and perceptions. There is no one best way to demonstrate the leadership phenomenon. Various dimensions of traits variables that is associated with social activities exemplify the success of leaders in influencing the followers. For special students, when their weaknesses are immense, most of these traits variables offer to become feeble on themselves. However, alike many individuals, students having special abilities proclaims to demonstrate their dexterity by initiative persistence allowing strong determination to push harder on themselves to accomplish certain task at hand that context offers. In connection to support this view, John states the dexterity of special students by mentioning;

What happens with the people when there are pushing, there using the self leaders because they are pushing or because they realize at some point that they will never achieve the same level like Norman people. And then because of this understanding, they don't categories themselves anymore like normal people. And they are free to do their own stuff and become separate from the group and become the leader because of that they have that inner instinct but of course they tried and tried so much to become one of them in a surrounding world and they fail

Difficult as it seems, special students have their own ability to demonstrate their skill to leadership dexterity. Although followers cannot be easily influenced, even for normal students creative imitations are prominent. However, following a special student because of the proven ability of demonstrating their dexterity in classroom with standing above average is how leadership is existed. In supporting this view, Lisa states her progressive development by initiating herself to adaptability and excelling consistency to maintain stability to perform with difference is visible as she says;

I would like to think that I have always thought I'm like a normal person despite my difficulties. Especially, then, when I was younger, I didn't want to give up. I wanted to succeed at school so I did all my homework although my teacher said I don't have to do everything. Nowadays I don't give up equally easily and at university, I want to succeed like others. Nowadays I can be a bit more gracious to myself and skip doing something if I'm tired

Nevertheless, pushing the special abilities enhances in strengthening the weaknesses that allows special students to perform better with a differences. For them context has an immense pivotal impact that further brings challenges which initiate the driving forces to seek the need of adaptability. Moreover, special abilities such as phobia are unseen in physical action unless consequences are revealed, such as panicking or nervous breakdown. In such cases, students with mental abilities are always facing challenges with aspect related to their weaknesses. Such is the case, with mental challenges, students have to be extra cautions and become pre aware about the places they are visiting for taking classes. Although most manages to adapt their behavioural attitude by trying to overcome the difficulties, it seems not to be working for many. Supporting this view, Carrie states her behavioural attitude by mentioning;

I am interested in developing myself. Teachers may not be familiar with my weaknesses. When I came back last autumn, the first teacher was very helpful, he advised to me to meet special students administrator and after that the administrator made recommendation, and it went all fluently. I don't need to know every teachers should know my conditions because the administrator knows and she has been very cooperative with me. For instance, arrangement of class room. My direct contact would be to contact her and then she makes recommendations by coordinating with the administrative staffs of the respective schools.

In connection to traits model approach of special students leadership dexterity, having initiative persistence is important. Initiative persistence is a driving stimulus that creates a craving attitude to perform and achieve the desire goal. For students, the desire goal could be accomplishing school activities, which includes many aspects related to schools curriculum. For sportsmen and sportswomen, winning the game would be an achievement and so forth. However, alike normal individual, students with special abilities undergo many hurdle to perform and to excel consistency to performing task. However, difficulties remain intact unless tried to overcome them. In supporting this view, Lisa rightly expresses her initiative persistence behavioural attitude by saying that;

I'm a positive person who wants to try and try. If there's something I want, I work hard to get that.

In addition, facing the challenges and developing the trait attitude and adapting to the normal environment and maintaining the consistency to perform with differences does require persistence which is driven by alertness and intellectual stimulation to reach the desire goal. Despite student of special abilities admits the challenges they have in preceding further, their perceiving attitude alike of the normal students. This provides them with extra encouragement which further creates a synergy effects within themselves. In connection to this, John support by mentioning that;

I don't tell teachers about my problem, and if I tell I get sympathy and I don't want to, I would rater want to be like other normal students. I haven't used my dyslexia card, if I use it, it makes things easy for me but I would rather want to do on my own like the other normal students does. This is how I am doing it, I

accept my problem there is not I can do with it but I can always do better. I feel I can speak good English and I also am confident I am doing good in English in speaking if I compare with other Finnish students.

In addition to support the perceiving attitude of behaving as a normal individual, initiative persistence to adaptability and maintaining consistency excel to demonstrate the performances with a major difference. For Lisa, her initiative persistence to adaptability to excelling in normal action, demonstrated a success of achieving a desire task by learning to move without the help of a wheelchair. She profoundly addresses by stating that;

I would like to tell that handicapped can achieve impossible things. For example, when I was a little girl, one doctor told my parents I would never walk. My parents wanted us to test the English rehabilitation at home. We did that for some 8-10 years. When I was 8, I started to walk on my own. Nowadays I don't have to use a wheelchair at home

Moreover, the nature of problems and challenges differ. Nevertheless, initiative persistence is utmost important factor that offers action-oriented behavioural pattern to resume enhancing further. Lack of consistency has been found to be one of the major drawbacks that allow most to withdraw from their initiative persistence.

Moreover, maintaining consistency with adaptability and stability can excel in marching towards achieving success, which may be demonstrated with a difference.

In connection to this, John supports his views by saying

Dyslexia brings always difficulties, and there has always been difficulties and it come in a form of not being able to behave like others. Not just reading it also come with normal constant action that you are surrounded with people and the difficulties comes with how I perceive life and words are not important to me but they are important to other people and I see people that their action are more stable and I have this more impulsive action and it has caused a lot of problems not with the impulsiveness but in a way how I act in the environment. Reading and then impulsiveness I most of the time loose my patience but I tried and tried to remain patience which I succeeded and I think I am now doing better with many thing related to my studies

Few of the challenges are contextual based which has a limitation to individual reach. This allows addition support to maintain the adaptability and stability to

proceed further. Excelling consistency to maintain stability and adaptability also require an atmospheric context that any students of special abilities feels safe to accommodate and demonstrate their dexterity with a difference. Moreover, potential variables in the contextual setting would be normal for most such as, structural design of the building but could be a huge potent challenge for few. In line to support this view, Carrie appeals for the support for the contextual arrangement with cooperation from the administrative staff. She expresses that

Changes of classroom, where I have my courses and that is all the support what I really want to have. And I think that is enough for me. The other place is the library where I have to use special services from the staff or from my friend.

Special abilities is not weakness, rather it is an ability to perform the task with differences than other. This demonstration of difference is achieved unless offered the right contextual setting to the special able candidates. Despite rendering optimum support, the students with special abilities find the contextual settings suitable to the extent that only allow them to partial functionalities. Most of the action-oriented behaviour is obtained by the inner stimuli that generate the motivation for the special students to attitudinal commitment to achieve their desire goal which allows them to drive with initiative persistence.

#### *Strengthening the leadership dexterity for future progress*

Leadership dexterity is acquired through many aspects; one of the old approaches is the leadership traits. Despite having been too many criticisms with the traits approach, some of the major aspects have been drawn from it to develop new theories in leadership. This can be exemplified with intelligence, alertness, initiatives,

persistence, insight, responsibility, self confident and sociability. If we examine these traits of leadership, most of these qualities are found with most leadership theories.

Moreover, these traits significantly can be found in individuals, the only problem is to understand how we apply it into practical realities.

In the case of students with the special abilities, they understand their weaknesses but also have the insight to use them to overcome the difficulties in coping with the natural settings. In line to support this view Lisa mentions;

I'm studying Finnish language at Tampere University for the first year and I suffer from Cerebral palsy, but I would like to share my experiences by writing or some other way.

Generating the inner stimuli motivates the individual to pursue towards desire objectives. Despite Cerebral Palsy is a neurological and muscles related problems, Lisa has the determination to pursue further and struggle herself towards triumphant by generating the initiative persistence to overcome her weaknesses. Lisa initiate the her traits of intelligence, alertness, initiatives, persistence, insight, responsibility, self confident and sociability by allowing herself to repeatedly communicate, although speaking is lot more difficult in her case. Lisa's intelligence and insight allows her to transform into another method of communication by writing, which she explains;

If somebody doesn't understand me on the first time, I say that over again or then I write that

Problems creates difficulties, moreover, developing a solution to the problem is an intelligent traits of leadership dexterity among the students of special abilities.

The solution to the problem of weaknesses is by getting to know the problems well.

The identification of the problem is one of the major aspects leadership dexterity related to intelligence that is one traits of leadership. Intellectual stimulation is achieved with having the insight knowledge to the problem backed up by the

weaknesses. In line to support this view, Carries highlight her challenges when she mentions;

If I feel motivated by what is there I definitely want to work for it. I have to go there somehow and I did go, I have tried to get rid of this phobia. I tried it by myself and with my friends, and with my psychologist, but it does not work, that's why I have to get the treatment for it with the therapy. If I didn't have these problems, I would definitely I would have gone for exchange but with this phobia, I was thinking about for an exchange program and I just have to skip them and I knew I couldn't do it. I would not like to judge myself with the problems but I judge myself with my intention and action, I don't feel any inferior with the difficulties I have

Supporting her views regarding the weaknesses and the challenges that has been with her while moving around at the university buildings, Carrie also claims to be having no problem with the complexity. She states;

Pinni B is out of my limit I cannot even think about going there. But I tried I couldn't succeed. But perhaps I would like to try again. I feel equally competent like any other normal people. I am never going to get rid of this phobia but I am going to take therapy and try to function well with everyday life.

The leadership dexterity along with the traits approach, students of special abilities are moreover alertness and attentive in many aspects. This is because they are well aware about their weaknesses being a major hurdle in proceeding further for achieving success. Identification of the major problems however, provide a ways out to instigate for craving solution, this is moreover, possible with being alertness, insightful and intelligent. Supporting this view, John mentions about his traits qualities of being alert and responsible by saying;

My ears was always open and I heard what teachers was saying and I realized it and managed to go through exam, even though the reading was hard, I read the first book all of it when I was 17-18. I was able to read but the reading was always so slow, so slow that it wasn't very enjoyable. It was so slow and need so much patience. To read one page it takes 10 minutes while during this time I could watch a short movie, and reading really required lots of patience. As I grew up with age, patience came along and I was more able to read with much patience

In line to connect responsibility, traits quality of leadership approaches reflects of being socially accountable for oneself and to the nation having a wider vision which is essential for proceeding further to arrive to the destined objectives. This further requires self confidence, intelligence and persistence to drive forward. In line to support this view, John rightfully asserts that;

You need to have continuous action and I always want to progress upon the continuity. I do not want to be fed by anyone; I want to manage by my own. And this motivates me to go further and work harder in studies. I want to be free and do not want to become a burden to the government and do not want to live my life with the government money. I could have stopped going to school and go live with benefit with Finnish society and I don't want to do that because I want to manage life on my own and this is my goal. I might not be able to achieve the goal I have planned but I shall try and go ahead like I have always been doing remaining patience. There are certain people in Finland who live from the benefits received from government. If everyone will start taking benefit and not working the world doesn't work. And I want to be different.

Furthermore, the initiative persistence with the students of special abilities is so high that they do often drive themselves to push harder. This further makes them to excel competence in the field they have worked, for which they remain confident to maintain their stability and adaptability to perform. Like it is said, appearances can be deceptive, nevertheless, they are often capable on what they have been practicing on for months and years. In connection to support this view, Lisa states her capabilities by saying;

I think I'm competitive with others. I sometimes think I could be better without my cerebral palsy but I don't let my Cerebral Palsy inhibit my studies. I work hard and can also work harder. I would like to graduate from university, get a job, have a family, travel and live a good life.

With determination to proceed further with the adaptability in the normal environmental contextual settings, abilities of special students are immense when it comes to initiative persistence. This initiative persistence traits quality of the special students provides them ample encouragement to plan and organize their wellbeing in

the social atmosphere. Furthering to support this view, Lisa rightly connects her motivational potentialities to accomplish her vision by mentioning that;

I'm motivated because I want to study and work in the future despite my cerebral palsy. I would like to become a reporter or get a job where I can write

In addition, motivational potentialities initiate the intelligence and boost self confident in the special students. This is supported by the vision of John while she begins to mention that;

Two biggest goal I have in life, to have a worthy success and spiritual success. Worthy success, I want to earn so much money that I do not want to depend upon government support and live my own life that I could support my self and my family.

Motivation varies with the determination to achieve set objectives. For Carrie, the set objectives are related with educational achievements, for which her alertness and intelligence drives her to concentrate with relation to accomplish her future goals by proceeding towards higher education and establishing her career-oriented goals. She states that;

I am in front of my bachelor and that my big goal at the moment. I would like to achieve my master's degree because that the requirement for finding a good job and I would like to travel

In the same line, the initiative persistence generates the motivation. This can vary with individual goals to achieve in life. These goals can be short term as well as long term. However, the challenges backed up by the weaknesses in special students constantly pull them backward. This is natural phenomena. However, for them, loosing the persistence is another form of weaknesses. Therefore, with determination to accomplish the set mission, the finding suggested that most often, the students with special abilities have a tendency to push themselves harder and thereby generate to enhance their capabilities to enrich to adaptability furthering to maintain stability and excelling consistency.

### **Need for further research**

In my research exploration on leadership on special students, some aspects related to traits and behavioural issues are addressed to identify their dexterity to contextual environmental adaptation and maintenance of stability to tackle the hurdle of potential variables with tolerances. The trait model approach of special student leadership contributes to highlight the potential inner stimulus that initiate to generate motivation and furthering to develop leadership dexterity to inspire others with their creative imitation and creative destruction, defying a dogma of incapability, and inability characteristic of special students.

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### Semi Structured Interview schedule for students

1. What are you studying and in what level?
2. That is your difficulties called in medical terms?
3. How would you want to share your experiences?
4. How are you motivated? And how were you motivated to accomplish your success?
5. What are your future plans or goals?
6. Would you talk about the difficulties you have faced in your life?
7. How did you tackle these difficulties?
8. How do you encourage yourself?
9. What support do you receive and have you received?
10. What support do you expect to receive more? (from the university/government)
11. How would you want to judge yourself?
12. What achievement do you think you have achieved so far?
13. Do you think you are equally competitive with others?
14. How do you think you can do better?
15. What would you want to do in future?