

Sustainable Leadership in Special and Inclusive Education: A Theoretical Review of Accessibility, Teacher Capacity, and Environmental Support

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ABSTRACT:

In the special and inclusive education context, sustainability has come into the spotlight, as institutions need to ensure that learning disabled learners are supported equitably, accessibly and continuously. Sustainable leadership, sustainability leadership, and environmental leadership are subjects that have been explored in the organizational and educational literature, but there is a lack of integration of these three concepts in the field of special education. The purpose of this conceptual review is to discuss these three leadership paradigms in the context of special schools, inclusive mainstream settings, disability-support settings and multi-disciplinary educational systems. It believes that sustainability in special education is not just about the environment or about using resources efficiently. It also features the long-term sustainability of inclusive pedagogy, accessibility, teacher capacity, assistive support, family engagement, ethical governance, and continuity of services. The article presents an integrated framework of sustainable leadership in special and inclusive education based on literature from inclusive education, disability rights, educational leadership and sustainability leadership. The framework connects leadership behaviors with the culture, teacher and staff capacity, accessibility, collaboration amongst stakeholders and ongoing improvement of the school. The article has contributed to putting sustainability right at the heart of disability and inclusive educational quality.

Keywords: accessible digital platforms; assistive technology; special education; inclusive education; perceived accessibility

1. Introduction

The need for inclusive and special education systems to deal with a complex and intertwined set of challenges is growing. Challenges faced are ensuring equal opportunities for learners with disabilities, making reasonable adjustments, recruiting and retaining qualified teachers and support staff, increasing partnership between

families and schools, making schools more accessible and keeping inclusive practice in place in a changing institutional and policy environment. Enrolment is not the only aspect of inclusive education. This involves meaningful engagement, suitable provision, accessible spaces, trained staff and a school culture which values learner diversity (Ainscow, 2020; Florian, 2019).

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2006) states that persons with disabilities have the right to inclusive education without discrimination based on equal opportunity. In the same way, international education language has placed great emphasis on the importance of tackling exclusion in education by ensuring that learners with disabilities and other marginalized groups experience are identified and removed (UNESCO, 2020).

Leadership is at the heart of special and inclusive education in this context. Schools and education systems can have policies for inclusion, but these policies have to be implemented if they are to be effective; for this to happen, leaders must provide the conditions for it to take place in school. Educational leaders affect the availability of resources, support of teachers, institutional culture, accessibility planning, the use of assistive technology, professional development, and collaborative relationships among the stakeholders. Leadership is also an ethical responsibility in special education since they are often decisions that impact the education of a learner for whom participation in learning is dependent upon provision of ongoing support, special services, and coordinated intervention. Leadership, therefore, is relevant to sustainable leadership since it places emphasis on institutional capacity, continuity, shared responsibility and ethical culture. Sustainability leadership is also applicable because of its focus on value-based action, engaging stakeholders, systemic change and action that focuses on solving problems. The added dimension of environmental leadership is to highlight accessible, safe, healthy, sensory-sensitive and climate responsive learning environments.

Sustainable leadership, sustainability leadership and environmental leadership have been extensively explored in management, organizational studies, higher education and sustainability studies. But their significance for special and inclusive education has not been well incorporated. This is an important gap to fill, since special education settings have unique sustainability issues. These include teacher

shortages, special educator attrition, fragmented support services, access to assistive technology that is inconsistent, inadequate access, lack of interprofessional coordination, and lack of alignment between inclusive education policy and its implementation at the classroom level (Billingsley & Bettini, 2019; Woodcock & Woolfson, 2019). A leadership framework that is oriented toward sustainability can contribute to the solutions for these challenges by connecting leadership actions and long-term institutional sustainability and disability-inclusive practice.

The present article explores the interconnections between the three paradigms of sustainable leadership, sustainability leadership and environmental leadership as strengthening special and inclusive education. It doesn't view sustainability as a business or an environmental issue. Rather, it considers sustainability as the ability of education systems to continue to provide access, participation, learning, dignity, support and responsiveness to people with disabilities over time. In this context sustainability is clearly relevant to the theory and practice of special education.

There are three objectives in the article. First, sustainable leadership, sustainability leadership and environmental leadership in perspective to special and inclusive education are compared. Second, it builds upon the identification of leadership practices that can enhance accessibility, teacher capacity, inclusive culture and stakeholder engagement, and continuity of services for learners with disabilities. Third, it suggests an integrated approach for sustainable leadership in the special education institutions and inclusive education systems.

This article helps advance scholarships in three ways on the issue of special education. First, it takes sustainability leadership theory into the realm of special and inclusive education. Second, it restates sustainability as a multi-faceted educational issue of ethics as well as pedagogy, workforce, environment, and services. Third, it offers conceptually a framework to inform future research, preparation of teacher leaders, school

improvement and disability inclusive policy implementation.

2. Framework

The aim of this article is to suggest a holistic model of sustainable leadership in special and inclusive education. The framework places sustainable leadership, sustainability leadership, and environmental leadership as inter-dependent and reinforcing pedagogies which can enhance the capacity of institutions to educate learners with disabilities. Sustainable leadership is about continuity, long term development of institutions, ethical responsibility and sharing. The values-based approach to action, stakeholder engagement, systemic change and translating inclusive principles into action are key elements of sustainability leadership. Environmental leadership focuses on learning environments which are accessible, safe, healthy and climate friendly.

The framework is based on the premise that sustainability in special education is not about cost effectiveness, environment or organization life or survival. It encompasses support for inclusive practices, specialized support, teacher capacity, accessible infrastructure, assistive technology, family engagement and ethical decision making at the level of the school and education system going forward. A sustainable special education system is one that puts students with disabilities into education, and helps them to learn, communicate, and develop as they go (Florian, 2019; Shogren et al., 2017).

The framework focusses on five institutional processes where leadership has an impact on sustainability in special and inclusive education. The first one is inclusive culture. Leaders have an impact on the ethos, expectations and daily practices that create an environment in which learners with disabilities are seen as active, valued members of the school community. Teacher and staff capacity is the second process. Qualified and supported teachers, special educators, therapists, counsellors and support personnel are crucial to sustainable inclusion. Accessibility and assistance are the third process. Leaders need to make sure that physical environments, learning resources,

learning platforms, classroom procedures and communication systems are accessible. The fourth one is that of collaboration with stakeholders. Working together with learners and families, teachers, administrators, therapists, community organizations, and policy makers is a critical component of special education. The fifth one is continuous improvement. Engagement, learning, wellbeing, quality of support and institutional responsiveness need to be continually assessed in inclusive systems.

There are also five anticipated outcomes specified in the framework. These are enhanced learner participation by learners with disabilities, continuity of support services, teacher retention and well-being, accessible and safe learning environments and institutional resilience. These results are interrelated. Well-being of teachers helps to sustain services, accessible context helps learners participate, and partnership among stakeholders helps build institutional resilience, for instance. Thus, the proposed framework is conceived as a learning process, which is not a series of separate administrative measures, but a process, which is continuous and relates to the process of learning.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Leadership

Leadership in special and inclusive education involves acting by educational stakeholders to establish conditions for equitable access to education, meaningful participation and sustained support for learners with disabilities. Not restricted to formal power or administrative decision-making. It encompasses distributed, collaborative, instructional, ethical and relational practices that allow schools to meet the needs of the diverse learners.

Leadership in special education requires coordination between the school leaders, special educators, general educators, therapists, counsellors, the families, community agencies and the policy makers. It also means advocacy as leaders need to recognize and address factors that impede participation. These can be physical, curricular, technological, attitudinal,

communicational or institutional. Therefore, a positive attitude towards dignity, accessibility, equity and evidence-based practice is essential to good leadership.

Leadership in this article refers to an action and values-based process that inspires educational stakeholders to continue to be inclusive, to eliminate barriers, increase support, and to enhance learning and participation for learners with disabilities. This definition is relevant to special education as it demonstrates that there is a need for both ethical commitment and practical implementation for inclusion to happen.

3.2 Sustainability

Sustainability in special and inclusive education is the ability of education systems and institutions to continuously provide inclusive, accessible, ethical and effective education for learners with disabilities. It encompasses the sustainability of pedagogy, staffing, facilities, assistive technology, engagement of families, institutional commitment and support services.

This is not the same as the 'corporate' or 'environmental' interpretation of sustainability. In special education, sustainability is defined as how long inclusive practices will endure beyond the end of a single project, individual teacher commitment, isolated interventions or short-term funding. A sustainable special education system is a one that can be resilient to learner diversity, is able to support teachers, has accessible environments and respects the rights of learners with disabilities in the face of change (Ainscow, 2020; UNESCO, 2020).

There's an ethical component to sustainability as well. Structured support, individualized plans and programming, access to materials, communication systems, behavioural support, assistive devices, and collaborative services are all important for learners with disabilities. However, when these supports are lacking, educational participation is precarious. For sustainable leadership, leaders need to ensure continuity, minimize institutional fragmentation and construct systems that will sustain learners for the long term.

4. Sustainable, Sustainability and Environmental Leadership

The concepts of sustainable leadership, sustainability leadership and environmental leadership provide complementary viewpoints for special and inclusive education. The concept of sustainable leadership has focus on continuity, shared responsibility, a culture of ethics and institutional capacity down the road. Sustainability leadership is about doing the right thing, creating change, involving stakeholders and finding solutions to complex problems. Environmental leadership focuses on fostering learning environments that are accessible, safe, healthy, sensory supportive and environmentally responsible.

The leadership paradigms presented here can be seen as ways to understand how educational institutions can be maintained as places of inclusion rather than as a formal policy statement when applied to special education. They also explain how leadership can enable teachers, families, therapists and learners to create educational systems which are resilient, participatory and disability inclusive.

4.1 Sustainable Leadership

Sustainable leadership in special and inclusive education is about the sustainability and development of institutions that will be able to provide learners with disabilities in an equitable and sustainable way. It is more than just about the implementation of stand-alone programs. It explores the sustainability of inclusive practices, teacher capacity, infrastructure, assistive supports and student services in transition, change of staff, policy change and resource scarcity.

Social and ethical responsibility are the first of the three aspects of sustainable leadership. Special education leaders need to ensure that learners with disability are treated with dignity and offered opportunities to be involved in school life. This involves being mindful of reasonable accommodation, access to materials, differentiated instruction, assistive technology, respectful communication and inclusive assessment.

The second dimension is in continuity of support. For the learner with disability these systems of identification, individual planning, therapy coordination, communication with family, classroom adaptation and progress monitoring are often relied upon. These systems can be conflicting, resulting in disruption to learning and participation for students. Sustainable leadership thus demands that leaders ensure the continuity of services and minimize reliance on short-term and/or individual personality-based projects.

Third dimension is shared responsibility. While special educators play a key role in inclusive education, the role can only be sustained if the education system adopts this approach. It must be a shared responsibility of general educators, school leaders, therapists and counsellors, families, peers and community agencies to ensure that inclusion occurs. Sustainable leaders establish a framework for working together, including multi-disciplinary planning meetings, co-teaching, family consultation and peer support groups.

The 4th dimension is moral and ethical behaviour. Resource allocation, placement, the level of support, access, and decisions related to priorities for intervention are often decisions made by special education leaders. The decisions should be made because of fairness, transparency, dignity and Learner's best interests. Ethical leadership is especially crucial in the settings of constrained resources and conflicting agendas in institutions.

The fifth dimension of continuous improvement. There must be continual assessment on the participation and meaningfulness of a child with a disability in learning, provision of suitable support and the learning environment for a child with a disability must be safe. Leaders should use data, teacher reflection, family feedback and student voice, as appropriate, to further enhance inclusive practice.

The sixth dimension of inclusive institutional culture. Inclusion can only be sustainable if it is ingrained in the values, routines, policies, relationships and expectations of schools. Sustainable leaders thus strive for the

incorporation of disability into the very mainstream of the institution's educational work and not as an additional responsibility.

4.2 Sustainability Leadership

Sustainability leadership in special and inclusive education is a leadership that materializes in institutional action; changes inclusive values into action. It links concepts of ethics to systems in place, such as teacher learning and support, accessible buildings, curriculum modifications, AT, family involvement, interprofessional collaboration and evidence-based practices.

The first characteristic of sustainability leadership is acting since the inclusive values. Leaders need to go beyond a general discussion of inclusion to ensure that pupils with SEND can access the curriculum, communicate, interact and be included in the life of the school. This involves arrangements for Universal Design for Learning (UDL), for individual support, for assessment to be accessible, for behavioral support and for assistive technology (AT) to be appropriate (CAST, 2024; Forlin & Chambers, 2017).

The second aspect is seeking sustainability solutions. The implementation of a policy in special education systems may have a lot of problems with the teachers' shortage, high workload, low support services, low accessibility, and other persistent problems. The solutions to these issues are sustainability leadership – ways of planning for the long-term, prioritizing resources, working interdependently with others, and continually learning.

The third aspect is the involvement of stakeholders. The stakeholders in special education are students with disabilities, parents/caregivers, special educators, general educators, therapists, school leaders, policymakers, community organizations and disability advocates. In sustainability leadership, it is acknowledged that different kinds of knowledge are produced by each group. Families are aware of what the child needs and what is going on in his/her life. Teachers have an awareness of the realities of the classroom. Therapists bring the skill sets they have to the

table. Students, if possible, give firsthand information regarding their participation and support requirements. These are all perspectives that reinforce inclusive solutions.

The fourth one is change of organization. The school culture, teacher beliefs, teaching methods, assessment approaches, resource management and school infrastructure, need to be changed in the journey of implementing inclusive education. Sustainability leaders help facilitate these changes by engaging in trust-building and reducing resistance, providing professional learning, and connecting values of disability inclusion with institutional goals.

The fifth feature is 'accountability for inclusion'. Institutions need to ask themselves if they are achieving inclusion in practice if they are to be sustainable as leaders. This encompasses the tracking of attendance, engagement, progress, accessibility, teacher preparedness, family satisfaction and support service provision. You should not be held accountable in a punitive manner. It should be developmental, reflective and have the educational quality of learning for learners with disabilities as its target. **Figure 1** presents the integrated framework proposed in this article. The framework explains how sustainability-oriented leadership paradigms can influence institutional processes and outcomes in special and inclusive education.

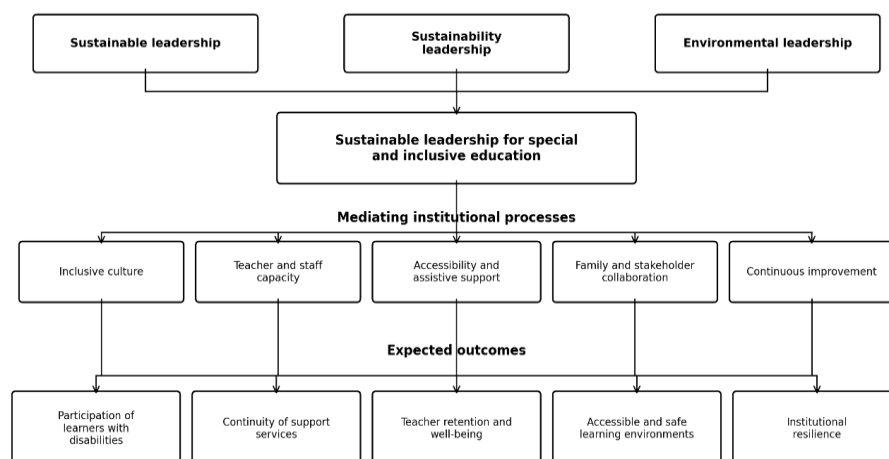


Figure No.1: Framework for Sustainability Leadership

The framework highlights that sustainable special education depends on the interaction between leadership values, institutional processes, and inclusive outcomes. It also shows that accessibility, teacher capacity, collaboration, and continuous improvement are central mechanisms through which leadership becomes sustainable.

4.3 Environmental Leadership

Issues of environmental leadership have implications for special and inclusive education as learners with disabilities are directly impacted by the physical, sensory, social and environmental conditions of their learning environments. Energy efficient or ecologically aware school is an environmentally responsible school. It is also accessible, safe, healthy, inclusive and responsive

to a variety of sensory, mobility, communication and health-related needs.

Environmental leadership in special education involves making the environment barrier-free, accessible classroom, safe transportation, inclusive playgrounds, sensory sensitive environments, clean facilities, appropriate acoustics, and emergency procedures that include learners with disabilities. It also features a focus on digital accessibility as online platforms, digital content and assistive technologies increasingly form the foundation of learning.

Health and safety is also a concern of environmental leadership. Students with disabilities might be more sensitive to possible environmental stressors like heat, noise, crowding, pollution, inaccessible buildings and

poorly planned emergency responses. School leaders will need to therefore take environmental quality to be part of educational access. A classroom can be inclusive in theory, but not in practice if it is sensory and overwhelming, has limited mobility, has a lack of communication support, or is a health hazard.

Another key element of environmental leadership is climate resilience. Learners with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to the effects of extreme weather, heat, flooding, air pollution and disaster events, as this can affect their mobility, medical needs, communication and routine needs. Educational leaders are thus faced with the task of planning for access to disaster preparedness, inclusive disaster evacuation procedures,

continuity of learning in the face of disasters, and effective communication with families.

Inclusive environmental education is also an aspect of environmental leadership. There should be opportunities for learners with disabilities to engage in meaningful sustainability-related learning, school gardening, recycling, environmental awareness and community-based ecological activities. This participation will help to maintain the notion that the learner with a disability is not a recipient of services, but a participant in the life of the school and community. **Table 1** summarizes how the three leadership paradigms can be adapted to special and inclusive education. The comparison shows that each paradigm contributes a distinct but interconnected dimension of sustainability.

Table 1. Comparison of Sustainable, Sustainability, and Environmental Leadership in Special and Inclusive Education

Leadership paradigm	Core focus	Application for special and inclusive education	Key stakeholders	Expected inclusive education outcome
Sustainable leadership	Long-term continuity, ethical responsibility, shared leadership, and institutional resilience	Sustains inclusive practices, teacher capacity, accessible resources, and continuity of support services	School leaders, special educators, general educators, families, administrators, therapists	Stable and resilient inclusive education systems
Sustainability leadership	Values-based action, systemic change, participation, and problem-solving	Translates disability rights, equity, and inclusion into institutional policy and classroom practice	Students with disabilities, families, teachers, therapists, policymakers, community organizations	Participatory and ethically grounded inclusive education
Environmental leadership	Safe, accessible, healthy, sensory-supportive, and climate-responsive learning environments	Creates barrier-free classrooms, accessible facilities, inclusive emergency plans, sensory-sensitive spaces, and digital accessibility	School leaders, infrastructure planners, teachers, families, students, local authorities	Accessible and supportive learning environments

As shown in Table 1, the three leadership paradigms should not be treated as competing

models. Together, they provide a comprehensive leadership foundation for sustaining access,

participation, support, and institutional resilience in special education.

Environmental leadership is practices of leadership that embody diverse social significance goals. Social, economic and ecological sustainability is demonstrated. The leadership can't be there to respond to problems or crises but for many socio-political, cultural and environmental issues. The unique leadership findings in this study for sustainable and sustainability leadership approaches encompass three common findings, and are: (a) relevance of moral, ethical values, attitudes and beliefs; (b) organizational change; (c) traits of transformational leadership. Environmental leadership builds relational and transactional leadership skills as it adds sustainability leadership. It can be concluded that neither single leadership nor single behaviour is enough for environmental leaders to deal with complex environmental problems but needs various abilities.

5. Teacher Capacity, Professional Development, and workforce Sustainability in Special Education

One of the key issues of special and inclusive education is workforce sustainability. Having good quality, continuity of support for learners with disabilities is very dependent on the availability, preparation, retention and wellbeing of special educators, general educators, therapists, counsellors, and support personnel. Teacher capacity needs to be thus considered as one of the institutional concerns of sustainable leadership.

The special education leaders should be able to facilitate the recruitment and retention of qualified staff, mitigate excessive workload, offer mentoring for novice teachers, and establish collaborative working environment. Teacher attrition is a serious issue in special education because it negatively affects relationships, continuity of support, and is a load for those teachers who stay in the classroom (Billingsley & Bettini, 2019). In order to be true leaders in sustainability, caseloads must be manageable, instructional resources available, administration

support provided, professional autonomy, and the complexity of special education work recognized.

Professional Development is also a necessity as teachers need values, knowledge and practical skills to address learner diversity in an inclusive education environment (Watkins & Donnelly, 2014). Ongoing training is needed for teachers to become familiar with concepts of inclusive pedagogy, Universal Design for Learning, assistive technology, individualized education planning, behavioural support, differentiated instruction, assessment that is accessible, and interprofessional teamwork and collaboration with families. This training should not be limited to compliance or an occasional basis. It needs to be a part of school improvement plans and facilitated via mentoring, collaborative planning, professional learning communities, and reflective practice.

Well-being of teachers should be considered a sustainability concern. In some cases, education is an emotionally stressful job with one-on-one interactions with students that must be documented, involved in collaboration with other staff members, and flexible and enduring. The indirect impact of leaders' support of teacher well-being is on student learning, service continuity and school culture. This support can involve less administrative burden, planning time, peer support, valuing professional skills and developing psychologically safe environments.

Leadership development is also a key element to workforce sustainability. School leaders must have knowledge of disability law, rights, inclusive pedagogy, assistive technology, accessibility and family engagement. It is therefore necessary to make disability-inclusive leadership a part of leadership preparation programs. An increase in leadership capacity throughout the school supports the institution to be less reliant on one leader or champion for inclusive education.

6. Discussion

The review revealed that sustainable leadership, sustainability leadership, and environmental leadership can be mutually reinforced to

contribute to the strengthening of special and inclusive education systems. Sustainable leadership is a source of long-term institutional capacity. It supports the continuity of support, the development of leadership succession and inclusion in school culture, and schools' inclusive practices. Sustainability leadership brings values-based action and values-based change. It supports and facilitates the implementation of disability rights, equity and inclusion in the systems of support in educational institutions. Environmental leadership enlists attention to physical, sensory, health-related and ecological conditions that affect learning for students with disabilities.

One of the implications of this synthesis is that the concept of inclusion should be considered from a sustainability perspective. Inclusive education is not possible with only temporary projects, the efforts of individual teachers or specific policy requirements. Stable leadership structures, trained personnel, accessible environments, collaboration of stakeholders and continuous improvement are needed. If that is not the case, inclusive education can only be accepted on paper and be weak in practice (Ainscow, 2020; Woodcock & Woolfson, 2019).

The three paradigms of leadership also indicate that sustainability in special education is multi-dimensional. It contains ethical sustainability, as dignity and rights are targets of the protection required of leadership. It also covers pedagogical sustainability as the evidence-based inclusive practice needs to be sustained. It encompasses workforce sustainability due to the need for adequate working environment for Special educators and support professionals. It covers environmental sustainability, as learning spaces need to be safe, accessible and sensitive to the needs of all. It also incorporates relational sustainability as families, educators, therapists and communities need to work together over a period.

Such holistic awareness has implications for the school leaders. First, the leaders should evaluate inclusive practices in light of sustainability and not just ask if there is an inclusion policy present.

Second, leaders should reflect on the teachers' readiness to teach inclusively, including their training, time, resources and support. Third, leaders should make sure that accessibility is considered in terms of physical, curricular, digital, communicational and social considerations. Fourth, leaders need to create a structure to include family and stakeholder involvement. Fifth, leaders must consider teacher retention and well-being to be at the heart of the quality of special provision.

There are policy implications for the framework too. Inclusive education policies must contain provisions for the development of staff, accessibility of infrastructure, provision of assistive technology, participation of the family and follow-up of participation results. Compliance measures should not be the only means of policy implementation, and resources and professional learning should be provided to support policy implementation. Systemic sustainable leadership requires co-ordination between education, health, social services, disability affairs and community-based organizations.

The article extends sustainability leadership beyond the corporate and general organizational context to add to the special education theory. It offers a lens to ensure inclusive education leaders can assess if their school will maintain access, participation, support, and learning for students with disabilities. It also supports practice by highlighting leadership behaviours that can support institutional resilience and capacity, accessibility and continuity of support for teachers.

7. Limitations and Further Research

This article is conceptual and draws upon a literature synthesis that combines literature from the disciplines of sustainability leadership, educational leadership, inclusive education and disability rights. The biggest disadvantage is that the proposed framework has not been tried in a special education school or in an inclusive school. The article also draws on ideas from the literature of leadership that frequently has appeared in organizational or environmental settings or both,

but not in a business context. While the concepts presented in this paper have been presented in a special education context, additional empirical studies are required to explore the practical implications in the various educational contexts.

A further constraint is that special education systems are highly diverse in terms of the national and policy contexts, resource levels and cultural contexts in which they operate. Effective leadership in one situation can be adapted for another situation. Thus, the suggested framework should be interpreted as a conceptual basis that is not a blanket solution.

The suggested framework should be evaluated in special schools, including mainstream schools, teacher education institutions and disability support services in the future. Qualitative research can investigate the meaning of sustainability in inclusive education to the school leaders, special educators, families, therapists, and students with disabilities. A quantitative study could explore the links between sustainable leadership practices and teacher retention, inclusive school culture, accessibility, and student participation. Mixed method studies could be particularly beneficial for comprehending the impact of leadership behaviors on institutional processes and outcomes.

Further studies on leadership for environmental accessibility in special education need to be conducted, too. This encompasses sensory-inclusive classroom design, accessible school design, inclusive emergency planning, digital accessibility and climate resiliency in school for learners with disabilities. International and inter-school comparisons could be used to define context-specific models of sustainable leadership in special and inclusive education.

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8. Conclusion

This article discussed the three interrelated paradigms of sustainable leadership, sustainability leadership and environmental leadership to strengthen special and inclusive education. This review indicates that these leadership practices can contribute to a stronger continuity of services for learners with disabilities, more family engagement, teacher capacity building and accessibility, values, and a culture of inclusion in educational institutions. Sustainable leadership places a focus on long-term institutional resilience and shared responsibility. The focus of sustainability leadership is on value-based action, stakeholder engagement and systemic change. Environmental leadership focuses on safe, accessible learning environments, health, and sensory supportive spaces, as well as climate responsive spaces. The main idea of the article is that the concept of sustainability in special education cannot be reduced to the category of resource management or the environment. It must be interpreted as the ability of educational systems to maintain dignity, access, participation, learning and support for learners with disabilities in the long-term. In this sense, sustainability is directly related to the theory and practice of special education. This article provides conceptual framework and possibilities for further research, leadership development, and institutional practice of applying sustainability leadership paradigms to special and inclusive education. The suggested framework can help educational leaders, policy makers, teacher educators and disability service providers to develop systems that are ethical, resilient, accessible, and sustainable. To make inclusive education a permanent institutional fact for learners with disabilities, it is essential to have leadership.

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