Creative Leadership Behavior of the Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri's Principals in North Sulawesi

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ARTICLE INFORMATION

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to analyze the principal's leadership behavior and its determinant factor in 3 Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) in North Sulawesi. The researchers use a qualitative and multi-site approach. The data were collected through observation, interview, and documentation studies. Meanwhile, the analysis data was adapted from the interaction model. The result shows that the principal is facilitating teachers' creativity through internal and external factors. Also creates a realization of a creative vision of teachers through direct and indirect communication. The study also shows that some determinant characteristics have a similarity and dissimilarities function as a support factor and deterrent factor to the creative leadership behavior of MTs principals. For future research, the researchers can use quantitative data on how creative leadership variables interact with other variables.

Keywords: Creative, Leadership, Principals.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, in the 21st century, the implementation of Madrasah's education is being challenged. It is hard to balance religious and academic education, as well as improve access, quality, and institutional governance. Besides that, the institution is also responsible for overcoming the gap in student learning achievement, improving the professional competence of the teachers, and improving graduation competencies. Furthermore, emphasizing administrative and learning aspects are also parts of Madrasah's internal challenges. While trying to control these internal factors, they're also facing an external factor that forced them to make changes. One of the most impactful challenges is the Covid-19 Pandemic which affects learning activity. Therefore, the government take an initiative to make an online learning policy with the Learning Implementation Guidance of 2020/2021 and the academic year of 2020/2021 (Kemendikbud, 2020). These provisions regulate the steps for implementing policies that must be carried out by Madrasah principals and teachers, including Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) which is the same as Junior High School (SMP). Essentially, every person has the potential to be a great human resource. One of these potentials is creativity. Therefore, every student has the same opportunity to develop their creativity as it is one of the important factors to create a bright future. Article 3 of Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System (UU SPN) states that the National education function is to develop the capability and create a noble mindset in the nation's life. Not only that but to expand every student's potential to be a religious person, healthy, creative, independent, democratic, and responsible.

Creative learners can be constructed in the form of creative abilities. According to Davies et al. (2013), students' creative abilities can be referred to as creative thinking, performance, and process. A creative process from teachers and support from the principals is needed to develop those abilities. According to Craft et al. (2013), teachers can carry out an activity that will push their students to develop their creativity in class, but those actions are not enough without the principal's support. Madrasah principals have the ability to build creative expectations into learning strategies, value teacher creativity, and provide resources for creative endeavors. In other words, the development of teachers' creative teaching can be pursued through the intervention of creative leadership.

Hunter et al. (2011); Vessey et al. (2014) observe that most research on creative leadership tends to ignore the substantial differences between leaders and followers, as well as the contexts. Mainemelis, Epitropaki, and Kark (2019) view this as an important criticism that implies a "one size fits all". This conceptualization of creative leadership is inadequate because the phenomenon itself is sensitive to contextual variability. If creative leadership is so complex and its manifestations depend on the applied context, then one must expect to deal with complexities and contextual differences in reading the body knowledge that has been generated by creative leadership. Based on the literature review, creative leadership research is still limited to the driving force and its multi-site context (Sternberg, Kaufman, & Pretz, 2004; Mainemelis, Kark, & Epitropaki, 2015). The driving force of creative leadership emphasizes the use of a trait approach while the multi-context emphasizes the use of a situational approach.

Mainemelis et al. (2019) describe that although creative leadership has been introduced since the 1950s by Selznick in an attempt to distinguish the more generative manifestations of leadership from technical administration and artificial intelligence systems, yet in 2018 creative leadership is more important and relevant than ever. Nowadays, creativity has become a necessity for some types of organizations including Madrasahs. Therefore, the ability to foster teachers' creativity in teaching has become an important aspect for most principals as creative leaders. There are some indications that they are applying creative leadership when the researchers visited those 3 Madrasahs and had a conversation with the principals. To get further information, the researchers try to investigate it in depth (probing). It was revealed that one of the requirements in managing promotions/functional positions for every teacher is to have innovative work to be assessed. This data is supported by the Regulation of the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform Number 16 of 2009 concerning Functional Positions and Credit Scores. On those regulations, it is stipulated that "innovative work is one of the sub-elements that are assessed in sustainable professional development". Innovative creation consists of finding the right technology, creating artworks, making/modifying the learning, and following the development of the standards preparation. According to Zhu (2018), the phenomenon revealed that creativity and innovation are not the same but are closely related and creativity is a prerequisite for innovation. In other words, innovative work is the result of an idea or the generation process. Thus, the innovative work made by Madrasah's teachers and assessed in credit scores did not just appear but emerged through a creative process that was directly supported by the creative leadership of the Madrasah principal. Thus, are the reason that this research is not focused on how innovative work is made concerning creative leadership, but it focuses on how the principal's creative leadership is demonstrated by facilitating the teacher's creativity and directing the realization through the teacher's work.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Bogar (2018), Creativity is the ability to give new ideas and apply them in problem-solving. It involves creating or developing new and valuable products, ideas, or problem solutions (Sawyer, 2012). Muhdiyanto, Yuniawan, and Mas'ud (2021) state that creativity will create development innovation in the organization. They also state that when an organization can maximize creativity, it will give birth to innovation. Innovation is more to the implementation of creative ideas that work (Anderson, Potočnik, & Zhou, 2014).

From the creative organization's perspective, a creative leader should provide a conducive environment to develop teachers' creativity through motivation mechanisms, affective, and cognitive (Byron & Khazanchi, 2015). This creative leader provides a supportive environment and encourages teachers to develop their creative abilities (Muzzio & Júnior, 2018). The teacher's creative process is influenced by factors/components from outside the individual. It is the social environment in the form of creative leadership (Amabile, 2012; Amabile & Pratt, 2016). Therefore, it can be explained that the high and the low levels of teachers' creativity are highly dependent on the levels of the principal's creative leadership.

Research on creative leadership at a certain educational level is considered a rare and new case. Besides, this research is limited to the extent of meta-analysis which emphasizes more to its library research (Mainemelis et al., 2015; Mainemelis et al., 2019). Therefore, they recommend the need for empirical research using a quantitative or qualitative approach. As well as the dynamic interaction between the principals and the teachers, together with its determinant factors (social structure, work characteristics, organization characteristics, and follower characteristics). Those factors can function as supporters and obstacles to the creative leadership behavior of Madrasah's principal.

The findings of supporting and inhibiting factors in this study can be explained based on the theory of force-field analysis by Kurt Lewin (1943). Force-field analysis is a development in social science that provides a framework for looking at the factors (forces) that influence a situation, initially a social situation. This theory looks at the forces that drive movement toward a goal (helpful forces) or hinder movement toward a goal (inhibiting forces). The principles developed by Lewin are a significant contribution to the fields of social science, psychology, social psychology, community psychology, communication, organizational development, process management, and change management and education management. Lewin (1943), believed that the "field" to be the Gestalt psychological environment that exists in the minds of individuals (or in collective groups) at any given point in time that can be described mathematically in a constellation of topological constructs. The "field" is very dynamic, changing with time and experience. When fully constructed, the individual's "field" (he uses the term "life space") describes the person's motives, values, needs, moods, goals, anxieties, and aspirations. He believed that changes in an individual's "life space" depended on the individual's internalization of external stimuli (from the physical and social world) into the "life space". Although Lewin did not use the word "experiential", he still believed that the interaction (experience) of the "life space" with "external stimuli" (in what he called the "boundary zone") was important for development. For Lewin, the development of individuals occurs when their "life space" experiences a "boundary zone" with external stimuli. It is not only experience that causes changes in the "space of life", but the reception (internalization) of external stimuli.

RESEARCH METHOD

It is important to apply the right approach in research. This research takes a place in 3 different Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs). Those are MTs Negeri 1 Bintung, MTs Negeri 1 Manado, and MTs Negeri 1 Kotamobagu. The researchers used Multi-site studies (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012; Sugiyono, 2013; Creswell, 2014). Gay et al. (2012) said that it is common to find a case study about a certain phenomenon in some location. This study is usually called a collective case study, multi-site, or comparative case study.

Related to the problem of the research, the researchers used a multi-site study that combined and adopted the site-ordered effects matrix and casual model (Gay et al., 2012). This matric is used to sort out the research sites and to present possible cause-and-effect relationships between the creative leadership behavior of Madrasah's principals and their determinants factor. Meanwhile, the casual model

is used to expand its analysis to help the researchers to identify and demonstrate the causal relationships between the principals and the determinants.

This research was taken at 3 different locations namely: Manado City, Bitung City, and Kotamobagi City North Sulawesi. It was conducted from April to October 2021. The qualitative data consists of Madrasah's principal, vice-principal, teacher, personal and formal documents, pictures, records, field study, and informal conversation. Data sources used by the researchers depend on the research's requirement. The data collection techniques are observation, interview, and documentation study. These techniques share one aspect in which the researcher is the primary data instrument.

The research data on the principal's behavior and the determinant factors is stopped when the research gets boring. The data analysis technique was adapted from the interactive model by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) which consist of 3 steps, namely: data reduction, data display, and drawing a conclusion. Before conducting those 3 analyses of data interactively and continuously, the researchers create a data code to arrange the research data. The main problem of creative leadership on Madrasah's principles is divided into some codes. They are Kkr-Pf stands for facilitating behavior, and KKr-Pa for directing behavior. FP-M is a code for the determinant factors of creative leadership behavior of the principal, W: interview technique collection, O: observation, D: documentation study, KM: data source from the principals, WKM: data source from the vice principals, GMTs-WKls: Class advisor, GMTs-MP: subject teachers. In the interview, P: the question given by the researchers, while J: the answer from the informant. Furthermore, the sequence of activities of interviews, observations, and documentation studies are coded: 1, 2, and so forth according to their frequency.

RESULTS

Creative leadership behavior of MTs Principles
According to the research data, it shows that creative leadership behavior of MTs principles is divided into two kinds of behavior. The first one is facilitating the teacher's creativity and the second one is directing the realization of the MTs principal's creative vision through the work of the teachers. This research is in line with the research study conducted by Mainemelis et al. (2015), creative leadership where the cross between leadership's and subordinates' supportive contribution will emerge in two contexts, namely facilitating the creativity of subordinates and directing the realization of the leader's creative vision through other people in the work context. The results of their research still have one context, namely integrating creative diversity.

The directing behavior is the realization of the principals' creative vision through the teacher's work as the main source of creative thinking and behavior. In that context, the teachers are expected to make a supportive contribution, so that the principal can make a more creative contribution. Thus, the higher level of a principal's creative leadership refers to a higher level of contribution, it all depends on the principal's ability to inspire and obtain a higher degree to support the teacher's contributions. Creative leadership in directing context refers to the

realization of the MTs principal's creative vision through the creative work of MTs teachers.

According to the research, there are internal and external motivations for facilitating teachers' creativity. Internal motivation consists of creative thinking, self-confidence, and self-actualization. Meanwhile, the external motivation in this research is a description of the topic/data fragment in the form of MGMP (teaching forum), incentives, assistance, supervision, guidance, budget, and facilities/infrastructure. This research is related to Amabile's (2016) research on the componential theory of creativity. Although in the beginning, Amabile found that intrinsic motivation was the entrance to the growth of individual creativity, hence because research on creativity continues to grow, external motivation is used as a variable that predicts individual creativity. External motivation or well known as extrinsic motivation is the encouragement or strength from the teacher's outer self that influences them to take creative actions. The purpose of that action is to develop students' creativity. This motivation can be positive and negative. For example, when the teacher can answer questions from the principals related to teaching assignments with a very satisfactory answer, then teachers may get positive support or strength to teach better. Thus, they can achieve the teaching standard. On the other hand, if teachers are not successful in accomplishing the given task, then they will receive a warning letter. Those are considered negative motivations. For that reason, a deterrent can be used as a driving force for MTs teachers to correct deficiencies to work harder. Consequently, the failure experienced is not repeated and can be used as a driving force to improve creative learning. Internal motivation or known as intrinsic motivation is the driving force from within teachers to do work creatively and achieve the expected goals. This internal motivation is the driving force to continue to work hard, teach creatively and carry out the duties of the MTs principal creatively. The teacher can automatically do that because internal motivation arises from within the teachers in carrying out tasks according to their needs.

Behavioral categories direct the realization of the MTs principal's vision through teachers in the work context including direct and indirect communication. Face-to-face meetings and direct reports from teachers to principals are direct communication. Direct communication is a communication process that is carried out directly or face to face by the principals of MTs with the teachers. As long as they communicate directly and do not use intermediaries or communication media to deliver messages, it is considered direct communication. Direct communication between the MTs principals and MTs teachers is carried out face to face without any communication tools. Meanwhile, indirect communication can be done via phone or online. Thus, the principals and teachers can communicate on how to create a creative vision and a way to apply it. Different from direct communication, indirect communication is a process using intermediary media as a messenger to get to the recipient. This indirect communication is used as long-distance communication. According to the research, indirect communication in directing the realization of the MTs principal's creative vision through the work of MTs teachers seems relevant to recent research on creativity by experts starting to examine the arrangement of creative workspaces as a source of imagination that can trigger the emergence of creative ideas. Even the room's color and furniture can be a source of leader creativity. This workspace is included in a creative work

environment that can foster the creativity of subordinates and can be referred to as a physical characteristic of the organization (Dul & Ceylan, 2010). It is natural in today's modern times when the principal plays the role of a creative leader through direct communication using symbolic workspace arrangement as a reflection of directing the realization of his creative vision in leading MTs creatively.

The determinant factor of creative leadership
Generally, the creative leadership behavior of the MTs principal does not grow and develop in a static or vacuum state and is isolated from the influence of environmental factors that determine the personality of the MTs principal to lead the Madrasah. The findings in this study indicate that the determinants of the creative leadership behavior of MTs principals are divided into two types of determinants. The first one is supporting factors including the principals' characteristics, the teachers' characteristics, religious observance, autonomy, and authority. The second one is resistance factors including the principal's characteristics, teachers, and the external environment (political practice).

DISCUSSION

Based on the research findings of the supporting factors and inhibiting factors, the determinants of creative leadership behavior of MTs principals can be explained according to the theory of force-field analysis. If the MTs' principals facilitate and direct their creative vision through the teachers, what Lewin calls "life space" or "field" and "factors (forces) that influence a situation" have to be calculated. That is, the MTS creative environment is a field to analyze the creative leadership behavior of the MTs' principals.

There are certain aspects of the principals' and teachers' characteristics of MTs that function as support. On the other hand, certain aspects function as barriers. According to the findings, creative thinking skills, creative problem-solving abilities, and creative decision-making abilities are the determinants factors that support the creative leadership behavior of MTs principals. The related findings are the management style of superiors who are too bureaucratic or over-bureaucratic. Hypothetically, it can be narrated that the MTs principal together with the teachers who manifest creative thinking skills, problem-solving abilities, and decision-making abilities are minimally able to maintain and maximally improve the creative leadership qualities of MTs principals. On the other hand, MTs principals together with MTs teachers who are reluctant to express ideas, pessimistic, and do not easily accept new ideas can reduce the creative leadership quality of MTs principals. Meanwhile, the application of a superior management style that is too bureaucratic or over-bureaucratic from superiors can reduce the quality of the creative leadership behavior of MTs principals who apply a superior management style. Hence, it also can reduce the activity level of MTs teachers in carrying out teaching assignments or additional tasks in MTs.

According to the findings, the supporting factors are shown through realizing creative thinking skills, their application in solving problems, and making decisions. This is in line with Amabile's (2016) componential theory, namely "creativity-relevant processes" or "skills in creative thinking". The dimensions of this component of creativity include creative thinking, cognitive and perceptual styles,

creative self-efficacy, and trust in leaders. From the explanation above, it is clear that the ability to think creatively is potential for everyone including the principals as an individual. Based on the findings of this study, the dimensions of the MTs teacher's trust in the MTs principal are a necessity to develop the creativity of MTs teachers through the facilitation of the MTs principal.

CONCLUSION

According to the data analysis above, the researchers conclude that the creative leadership behavior of MTs consists of facilitating the inspiration of MTs teachers and directing the realization of the creative vision through the work of MTs' teachers. Nevertheless, those teachers' creativity is shown by external and internal motivation. Direct and indirect communication are important factors that support creative leadership. The determinant factors are consists of support and resistor factors. The determinants that have a supporting function are shown through the characteristics of the MTs' principals, teachers, religious observance, and autonomy and authority. The same thing goes with the resistor's factor which is shown by the characteristics of the MTs' principal, teacher, policy, and environment.

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