

Principal's Behavior in Strengthening Teacher Innovation and Creativity During The Covid-19 Pandemic

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Received: 21-11-2021

Revised: 07-02-2022

Accepted: 29-03-2022

Article Info

Abstract

Keywords:

Roles of Principal;
Teachers Innovations
and Creativity; Covid-19
Pandemic

The purpose of this article, among others, was to analyze the role of the principal in increasing teacher innovation and creativity at SMPIT Hidayatul Ghazzali Purwakarta during a pandemic. This research was conducted with a qualitative approach and data collection through observation and interviews to describe the role of the principal at SMPIT Hidayatul Ghazzali. The objects of research include the principal, three teachers, the school committee, and two guardians and students. The role of the principal as a leader or leader, it can be seen that some of the efforts he has made in increasing teacher innovation and creativity in learning include: a) the principal as an example; b) providing guidance or supervision; c) award and punishment; d) involving teachers in training; e) create a pleasant working atmosphere, and f) provide freedom to innovate and be creative.

Kata kunci:

Peran Kepala Sekolah;
Inovasi dan Kreativitas
Guru, Pandemi Covid-19

Abstrak

Tujuan artikel ini antara lain untuk menganalisis peran kepala sekolah dalam meningkatkan inovasi dan kreativitas guru di SMPIT Hidayatul Ghazzali Purwakarta saat terjadi pandemi. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan pendekatan kualitatif dan pengumpulan data melalui observasi dan wawancara dengan tujuan untuk mendeskripsikan peranan kepala sekolah di SMPIT Hidayatul Ghazzali. Adapun yang menjadi objek penelitian antara lain kepala sekolah, tiga orang guru, komite sekolah, dan dua orang wali serta peserta didik. Peran kepala sekolah sebagai pimpinan atau leader, terlihat beberapa upaya yang dilakukannya dalam meningkatkan inovasi dan kreativitas guru dalam pembelajaran antara lain: a) kepala sekolah sebagai teladan; b) melakukan bimbingan atau supervisi; c) pemberian penghargaan dan hukuman; d) melibatkan guru dalam pelatihan; e) menciptakan suasana kerja yang menyenangkan; dan f) memberikan kebebasan berinovasi dan berkreasi.

INTRODUCTION

During the Covid-19 pandemic, teachers are required to be able to innovate learning to create effective distance learning (Luh et al., 2020; Murray et al., 2020). Most teachers still educate with the assumption that the learning process is a one-way activity between the teacher and the student (Tutak & Adams, 2015). This has resulted in increasingly complex problems in the distance learning process during the COVID-19 pandemic (McFaul, Hardie, Ryan, Bright, & Graffin, 2020). This condition requires special attention from school principals so that teachers

can carry out effective distance learning by developing creative and innovative learning (Hasim & Hasanah, 2020). During the COVID-19 quarantine period, almost all schools changed the form of learning to a distance learning model (PJJ). For PJJ to run effectively, learning activities must be changed to be as interesting and creative as possible.

Innovation and creativity are two things that are interrelated with each other. Education, creativity, and economic empowerment have a broad scope for experts in various scientific fields (Falola & Abidogun, 2014), innovation takes place when one uses new tools and technologies (Blândul, 2015), to develop their creativity. Creativity is the result of someone's creation in creating something different from before, as a result of imaginative creations, or changing existing things into new things (Lapeniene & Dumciene, 2014; Mia & Ljerka, 2018). Form of creativity can be in the form of the ability to think creatively or to work creatively (Leung et al., 2012). In this context, teachers are required to be able to develop creativity both in the form of thinking and working creatively to be able to produce various distance learning innovations.

Innovation can be defined as a novelty (Acton, 2018). The application is to implement ideas into reality and contribute to solving problems. Creativity has a broad meaning, relating to critical thinking skills, communication skills, problem-solving, and collaboration. To be able to produce effective learning innovations, teachers need to realize that in innovation there are social elements that need to be considered such as adaptability, leadership, collaborative work, and other social skills (Ja'far, 2019; Teo, Zhou, Fan, & Huang, 2019).

The ability to innovate also requires the ability to work with others, through the use of technology (Baykal, Van Mechelen, & Eriksson, 2020). For a teacher, innovation and creativity in using digital technology greatly affect learning activities, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic (Adnan & Anwar, 2020; König, Jäger-Biela, & Glutsch, 2020).

The willingness of teachers to try to find, explore and seek various advances, approaches, methods, and learning strategies is one of the supports for the emergence of innovations. Without the support of the teacher's urge to always innovate in learning, learning will be saturated with students. The characteristics of creative teachers include Flexible, optimism, respect, agility, humor, inspiration, gentleness, disciplined, responsiveness, empathetic, while the factors that influence teacher creativity are internal factors (inheritance and psychological) and external factors (social and cultural environment). Internal factors are the essence of humans themselves in which there is an urge to develop and develop towards a better company than before, by their ability to reflect to meet all their needs (Morais & Azevedo, 2011).

To develop creativity and innovation in learning, teachers need support from the principal as a leader (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008). During the COVID-19 pandemic, school principals need to improve their managerial and leadership abilities to support the creation of a conducive learning climate, effective learning, and creative teachers (Hanum, Supriyanto, & Timan, 2020). But in fact, not all school principals succeed in developing teacher creativity during distance learning, as a result, various complaints arise from students and parents.

Hidayat Ghazzali Purwakarta Integrated Islamic Junior High School (SMPIT), is one of the private schools that is in great demand by the surrounding community because formal education is held due to the demands of the community's needs, the current number of students is 87 students, Hidayatul Ghazzali Integrated Islamic Junior High School (SMPIT) during the Covid 19 pandemic is still showing its achievements. Several achievements have been proven to require teacher innovation and creativity, including: (1) 2nd place for Da'wah at the Provincial level, the result of the guidance of Islamic Religious Education teachers (2) Overall champion in

the city level scouting event as the most compact group, which is none other than the result of teachers -the extracurricular teacher (3) actively develops innovation and creativity in learning, especially in arts and culture subjects and skills, in which every student is encouraged to hone his creativity.

Based on the results of observations at Hidayatul Ghazzali SMPIT, it can be seen that the quality of schools is still well maintained. Teachers can develop learning methods that are by changes and technological developments along with the COVID-19 pandemic. This is supported by evidence of student achievement in local and national competitions held virtually. At Hidayatul Ghazzali SMPIT all teachers in their learning use online learning using the Google Classroom (GC), Zoom, Google Meeting, and WhatsApp applications. By making WhatsApp attractive and accessible. WhatsApp is used by students or parents. Teachers also have a high willingness and motivation to improve their competence in dealing with this pandemic by attending education and training, training that supports innovation in learning. From the collected data, they also always take part in competitions that can increase their creativity. There is something more unique when the author asks what motivation can make the spirit increase innovation and creativity, or the role of the school principal (Interview, Juhroh 2021).

The results of good school performance are the result of support from all parties. The implementation of PJJ or Online learning, requires principals to increase educators' innovation and creativity. This study aims to explore the leadership of the principal as one of the individual behaviors in the organization, to create and develop teacher creativity so that they can develop digital-based learning innovations during the Covid -19 pandemic.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research used a qualitative approach (Maxwell & Reibold, 2015). Participants in this study were determined by the purposive sampling method (Jupp, 2015), which consists of principals, school committees, teachers, parents, and students. The data collection technique was carried out through an in-depth individual interview process (Rosaliza, 2015). Data analysis was carried out using qualitative analysis methods, the research was conducted at Hidayatul Ghazzali Integrated Islamic Junior High School (SMPIT). Researchers conducted research during the covid-19 pandemic, interviews were conducted online, so that in data collection there might be limitations of research data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of interviews with several people were associated with the role of school principals in increasing teacher innovation and creativity during a pandemic at SMPIT Hidayatul Ghazzali. Based on interviews with school principals, many teachers, school committees, and even some parents, we can summarize in a description how the role of a school principal is to maintain and even improve the innovation and creativity of teachers during the Covid-19 pandemic. In general, the principal's leadership role in increasing teacher creativity and innovation can be seen in the following: 1. Principal as a role model for teacher creativity; 2. The application of rewards and punishments; 3. Involve teachers in training; 4. Creating a pleasant working atmosphere.

The principal as a role model for teacher creativity

The principal is a good example in terms of developing creativity. According to the results of an interview with one of the teachers, it is known that the Principal of SMPIT

Hidayatul Ghazzali has the spirit and character of a visionary leader. In addition, it was also conveyed that the principal is an example of a creative leader who is currently continuing his master's education and continues to learn to write in the form of books and journals, and this is used as motivation for teachers at his school to work and be creative.

At the beginning of PJJ learning, schools have included teacher development activities in PJJ learning, either through training conducted by the education office or carried out independently in schools. In this case, the principal does not only give orders to the teacher but also provides a concrete example through the efforts to make the creative works he develops. According to the principal, giving examples is expected to be an incentive for teachers to be more aware in terms of developing competence and creativity, especially during this COVID-19 pandemic.

The principal's leadership behavior, which directly exemplifies creative behavior, is proven to be able to change the mindset of teachers to be more creative and motivated to always develop themselves. This is in line with the research results (Sunaengsih, Anggarani, Amalia, Nurfatmala, & Naelin, 2019). What is done by the leadership example is the key to the success of a managerial program.

Continuous supervision

Supervision of learning is very important to be carried out as a whole in schools. Because with supervision it can be seen the weaknesses in the school. Both the potential of educators and education staff, students, or the school environment can affect the quality of schools. All of them can be overcome with supervision activities that are carried out continuously and seriously.

From the results of interviews with two class teachers, information can be obtained that SMPIT Hidayatul Ghazzali carries out continuous supervision at the beginning of each semester and the end of the semester. The principal supervises the teacher regarding the learning activities carried out by the teacher and all those involved in the learning activities. The supervision of activities will always be controlled and orderly in learning activities. This was reinforced by the principal, "During this Covid-19 pandemic, we continue to carry out supervision because one of the principal's duties is to supervise teachers. The results of supervision become the basis for sustainably developing the teaching profession. We already have to map the teacher's ability in terms of mastering various digital platforms that will be used in PJJ. After determining and identifying the abilities of each teacher, the follow-up that needs to be done is to provide technical guidance". What a school principal needs to acquire is adequate ability related to the material that will be given to the teacher. As a school principal, you must always improve your ability to use digital applications online or distance learning, (Interview, Nenden 2021).

The explanation from the principal was strengthened by a statement from one of the senior teachers who was assigned to assist in the implementation of the academic supervision. The following is his statement "Yes, at our school there is still academic supervision even during the pandemic season. The principal makes the direction of activities more practical by making a structured schedule and measurable targets to be achieved through professional guidance activities. We were also given directions on what we should do as teachers to keep distance learning effective" (Interview, Dulkipli 2021).

The implementation of continuous supervision by the principal is one of the best ways to develop teacher motivation and creativity in learning. This is in line with the research results (Ololube & Major, 2014; Rahabay, 2016). which states that evaluation and supervision are

important efforts in building teacher competence and professionalism to remain creative and innovative.

Rewards and punishments enforcement

According to the principal's explanation, to build the discipline and work motivation of teachers in developing creativity and innovation in digital-based learning, the principal applies a reward and punishment system. The statement from the principal, in line with the statement of two teachers, "*The principal in providing rewards and punishments at the end of the learning year to teachers who excel by giving awards, and announcing, punishment actions taken by the principal with directions, reprimands, and warnings, which are educating*", In line with the above statement, the following is another statement "We teachers strive to continue to develop the ability to develop learning innovations because in our school a reward and punishment system is applied which is always applied to all teachers. All achievements are well rewarded, as well as various teacher mistakes will be punished, at least get a warning from the principal" (Interview, Dulkipli and Juhroh 2021).

Based on the results of the interview regarding the implementation of rewards and punishments, the principal also gave gifts and reprimands regarding activities in terms of implementing online learning activities as well as activities carried out or participated in by the school. The results of interviews with school principals are "The forms of rewards are (1) awarding certificates, (2) rewards for a better teacher and employee performance, (3) verbal praise in ceremonies or meetings, and (4) monetary prizes. While the forms of punishment are (1) verbal and written reprimands, (2) written sanctions, (3) separate coaching, (4) postponement of periodic salary increases every year or two years, (5) removal of positions held along with revocation of grant" (Interview, Nenden 2021).

The reward system implemented for teachers who have high dedication and good performance aims to: 1) elevate the dignity of teachers; 2) encourage the spirit of teacher achievement; 3) promote disciplined performance; 4) increase enthusiasm to provide optimal service to students; 5) create a climate of competition in terms of increasing achievement and professionalism. These five things aim to improve the quality of the process and learning outcomes.

Involving teachers in training

In interviews with resource persons, two teachers in grade 3 and grade 5 stated that the principal encouraged each teacher to take part in training, both functional and objective, to achieve professional competency standards and improve professionalism to have competencies above standards and within a certain period. This activity can be in the form of courses, training, upgrading, or various other forms of education and training. Teachers can participate in functional training activities based on assignments, either by school/madrasah principals, other institutions such as the Education Office, professional organizations such as the Indonesian Teachers Association (PGRI), or because of the teacher's initiative.

The training activities or collective teacher training are activities in participating in scientific meetings or joint activities aimed at achieving standards or above the standards of professional competence that have been set. The collective activities of these teachers include (1) Workshop activities or teacher group activities such as the Teacher Working Group (KKG) for religious teachers with the MGMP for Islamic teachers. (1) Participants in seminars, scientific meetings, and other collective activities by the duties and obligations of teachers, such as

functional training, and so on. (1) The principal also gives freedom to all teachers to always develop creativity according to their respective fields. This is evidenced by involving teachers in ecopreneur training. (4) Look for colleagues to hold workshops.

Creating a pleasant work atmosphere

In his daily life, the principal is always friendly and creates a friendly and pleasant school atmosphere and conditions. This conducive working atmosphere is evidenced by the increasingly intense school scheduling activities. Togetherness for the school community by holding joint meals, and sports together with examples of gymnastics held every Friday morning.

Schools need to be developed so that they become safe, comfortable, and orderly schools in carrying out all regulations, not only to improve student achievement but also to foster teacher performance and be able to display the best performance. To create good conditions, it is very necessary to pay attention, care, and cooperation from all elements (stakeholders) that exist, ranging from school leaders/principals, teachers, students, parents, school committees, and the surrounding community as education supporters. All of these elements are responsible for creating a safe, comfortable, and effective atmosphere for the implementation of a good education. In this case, learning will be successful if the school atmosphere is safe, comfortable, and orderly.

The following are the results of an interview from a school committee that conveys what the principal has done in creating safe, comfortable, and effective schools during the pandemic:

Improve the safety of the school's physical environment

To improve school safety, especially from the spread of Covid -19, efforts must be focused on school physical buildings equipped with health equipment to support the completion of health protocols for schools, which are supported by technical instructions following Health protocols and anticipate solutions to all possible problems that arise in the future. Covid-19 pandemic. All school facilities and infrastructure must be clean and by health protocol procedures during the Covid-19 period. In addition, it was stated that schools must complete various standard operating procedures (SOPs) when they are going to reopen schools, all of which must be regulated from the time children enter school until they return home from school. The use of thermogenic at the entrance gate for early prevention of transmission of all people who enter by knowing the maximum body temperature must be 37°C people enter the school area. In addition, environmental disinfectants are sprayed regularly. This is an effort to make schools safer from the spread of the Covid-19 virus.

Improving teacher's discipline

"Under no circumstances, teachers must maintain discipline, especially in carrying out their duties as a teacher by their main duties and responsibilities". (Interview, Joni 2021). He conveyed what the school principal had done in disciplining it, especially during the Covid-19 period. Discipline in carrying out learning activities through PJJ as well as in implementing health protocols wherever they are, especially in the school environment. Wear a mask, always wash your hands with soap, keep your distance and continue to carry out your duties as a teacher.

Respect each other in the school environment.

In creating a conducive and comfortable school atmosphere, even during the pandemic, what was conveyed by the principal still emphasized to all school staff to respect and accept differences and taking the best path or decision as a mutual agreement. The most important

thing to do is to respect each other. By respecting and appreciating each other, it will provide good benefits. Also, there are no unnecessary problems.

Give freedom to innovate and be creative

What was conveyed by the principal then we share his perception with students and guardians of students and with teachers to get information that the principal gives freedom to innovate and be creative to teachers and students? The principal quoted from what was conveyed by the Minister of Education that First, innovation must come from freedom because it is freed. Freedom is a condition when we are independent to do whatever we want to do. What is the relationship between education based on freedom? Is it efficient with the times, considering the rules is an important indicator in all actions? The achievement of freedom in question is in terms of innovation, creativity, and tolerance for every failure. Second, there must be action to remove the barriers that exist in between. Barriers to the interaction between teachers and students.

Based on the results of interviews with the principal was cross-checked with 2 students in grade 7 and grade 9, what was conveyed by the principal always reminded teachers to use learning media in a variety of creative and fun ways. Teachers continue to use online media in the implementation of their learning using a variety of media applications in learning activities. From the information submitted by students, teachers use the Zoom Meeting application, Google Classroom application, video applications via Youtube which are packaged in an attractive manner so that students are interested, comfortable and do not feel bored in receiving learning.

Furthermore, the principal also gives freedom. The purpose of freedom for teachers to be creative and teachers to be more creative in learning so that students can absorb the lessons well. Freedom can also provide opportunities for teachers to use existing learning media, of course freedom in accordance with the rules that apply at school.

CONCLUSION

From research on the principal's behavior in improving teacher innovation and creativity during the covid-19 pandemic. It can be concluded that there are several roles and responsibilities of school leaders to continue to develop and improve teacher innovation and creativity. The success of the school in carrying out activities and learning is the responsibility of the principal. The role of a school principal is very active so that various successes were obtained during the Covid-19 pandemic. From some information from the informants, it can be concluded that there are s principal's efforts can be imitated (1) the principal as an example; (2) supervision and guidance, (3) giving rewards and punishments, (4) involving teachers in training, (5) creating a pleasant working atmosphere, (6) providing freedom to innovate and be creative. This research certainly has limitations, for example in the data collection process during a pandemic which allows for less in-depth data, so further research in the post-pandemic should be able to conduct more in-depth research regarding the role of school principals in strengthening teacher innovation and creativity during the pandemic.

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