A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF CREATIVE LEADERSHIP AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

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Abstract:

The success of school performance is influenced by teachers and staff performance, whereas teacher and staff accomplishment is affected by principals' leadership styles. This paper aims to observe principals' ideal leadership styles and their impacts on school performance and staff performance. This study used qualitative method with phenomenological approach. The object of the study was principals' leadership styles which were perceived by administration staff and teachers. 30 interviewees were involved in this study which consisted of 5 principals, 20 teachers, and 5 school staffs. Based from the data, this study found that creative leadership was perceived as the best style to manage good relationship within school staffs. Morever, there were five basic foundations of leadership behaviours that could be used to intervene leadership styles. The principal encouraged staff creativities through reflection of principal behaviors such as, being role models, commitment building, striving to accomplish vision and mission together .

Keywords: Creative leadership, school performance, teacher and administration staff

INTRODUCTION

Improvement of an organizational performance can be achieved by the existence of solidity between employees and leader in implementing a predetermined agreement in order to achieve common goals. The role of a leader for the success of an organization is very significant and in an attemt to improve organizational performance, there are several styles of leaderships, the writer will conduct a study in terms of leadership styles on the organization,

Teacher is one of the main assets in supporting the success of a school. However, principal or school manager has a more important role in supervising and managing teacher performance. A principal must have a good management ability in order to realize the effectiveness of the school organization he/she leads. Therefore, the position of principal should not be just anyone who holds it because he/she must have competition values, including his/her leading behavior in the form

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of leader's special actions as the director and coordinator of his/her group (Eren and Kurt 2011).

One of the strategic elements in improving the quality of education is the standard of educators and the ability of educators, in order to get it, it is necessary to focus on how to improve the professionalism of the principal as a teacher manager in the learning process with students, so that the quality of education will increase in a sustainable way.

Effective school leaders are able to provide direction to the efforts of all works from school elements in achieving goals. Without guidance, the relationship between individuals and organizational goals in achieving its goals will indeed be inefficient. As the performance of the organization gets better, it will have a positive impact on the performance of school organizational elements, such as teachers, staffs and other informal supporters' performances.

Teacher Performance is defined as a work achieved by a teacher and his/her working behavior. (Murphy and Cleveland, 1991). Performance is how organizational goals can be achieved by efforts legally, morally and ethically (Zhang and Wong 2017). It is also defined as to what extent procedures implemented by a teacher in performing his/her duties to achieve the planned objectives. Some indicators of teacher performance are leadership, class mastery, information and quality planning, human resource use, output quality and student satisfaction.

Several kinds of leadership styles considered to be indicators of school effectiveness are, for example, transformational leadership. It is a leadership upheld by a manager by inviting his/her group to widen boundaries and having outsanding performance through motivation to subordinates to do better and can provide them with trust and self-confidence (Pamela, Cynthia et al. 2012).

Additionally, transactional leadership is a leadership style focusing attention on transactions between leaders and subordinates involving exchange relationships that include qualification of desired goals, standards of work, work assignments and rewards (Gregory 2006). Another conclusion that it may be interpreted as a means to drive members to offer rewards as a result of any contributions made to the organization (Gregory 2006) .

Moreover, spiritual leadership model is the highest peak of leadership model evolution which exists in transactional and transformational leadership. The main characteristics of spiritual leadership model (Reave, 2005):

1. The essence of leadership is the trust of God.
2. The function of leadership is to empower and devote faith and conscience of the followers through hard work, cedas and sincerity.
3. The leadership ethos is to dedicate to God and fellow humans for selfless devotion.
4. The leadership approach is spirituality and conscience.
5. In influencing the led is an exemplary to inspire, awaken and empower all elements of the nation.
6. The way influence is led not by a material approach but blending the soul of faith and compassion.
7. The target of leadership is to build love, spread goodness and share God's grace on earth.

Whereas, autocratic leadership style is characterized by the absolute mandate of authority on leadership, communication takes place only one direction, the supervision of subordinate performance is done strictly and gives more criticism than praises (Matsumoto 2007).

In Indonesia, there is a very famous educational figure and a hero in the field of basic education, Ki Hajar Dewantoro (-, Ekosiswoyo et al 2015). This figure has a basic principle preserved by experts and activator of education field. The basic principles of this characters are:

1. *Ing ngarsa sung tulada*. That is, a leader must be able to lead in providing an example to subordinates
2. *Ing madya mangun karsa*. This means that a leader together in the midst of the members give spirit by working together
3. *Tut wuri handayani*. That is, a leader gives back-up encouragement and let subordinates accomplish goals on their own, sometimes.

PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP

Princippal is one with professional and working with a pattern of professional performance which has been agreed in support of ease of learning success (Theodosiou and Karagiorgi 2017). According to (Theodosiou and Karagiorgi 2017), there are six functions of principal in new paradigm in the world of education, namely educator, manager, administrator, supervisor, leader, innovator and motivator. Those six functions above can be a benchmark of the principal's success in leading.

According to (Winterbottom and Winterbottom 2017), principal is a functional teacher who is given tasks of leading school in which there is a process of teaching and learning interaction between teachers and students in giving lessons. From some definitions above, it can be concluded that principal is not only a teacher, but is also able to organize and lead all resources in school to be managed optimally, achieving their common goals.

Principal must have Managerial Competence; a special ability possessed by principal as a manager in performing management functions at school institution he/she leads. This management function relates to the principal roles in planning, organizing, implementing programs, *monitoring* and evaluation. According to Imron, the tasks and functions of principal as an educational manager is closely related to the essence of educational management including curriculum and instruction, classroom management, students, human resources, finance and community involvement in education. The tasks performed by principal as a manager is an implementation of management function that includes planning, organizing, implementing, monitoring and evaluation (Adams, Olsen et al., 2017) .

Studies show that one of the determinants of school performance success is principal's leadership styles (Ng 2017). Some styles such as transformational, participatory, democratic and transactional styles vary some styles recommended by some researchers (Bryan and Burstow 2017, Díaz-Gibson, Zaragoza et al., 2017). However, most all existing researches focus on examining the relationship between leadership style and school performance. It is rare that researchers attempt to reveal what kind of leadership style is actually wanted by teachers and administrative staffs.

Therefore this study used a qualitative approach to find a model of leadership style desired by school members based on school condition. Furthermore, the leadership style models were analyzed in the characteristics of leader's behavior perceived by school members to improve school's performance.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used qualitative approach. In terms of Model of Teacher Performance Improvement, more non-numerical information was required (observation, interview and documentation). Thus in this study, the writer wanted to describe a reality in organization, which is about Organizational Performance Improvement Model through leadership style, so the study type selected was qualitative type through descriptive method, the data was dominantly in the form of words.

In accordance with its objectives, this study used qualitative research with phenomenological approach by examining the research objects, that is the princial roles and leadership styles in improving school organizational performance and the teachers' role in improving their performance and school organizational performance in a natural context. The nature of this study is Phenomenological descriptive because it gives description and report in details, systematically and comprehensively on everything related to principal's leadership roles and teacher's performance in improving school organization performance.

Thus, in addition to providing an overview of the facts obtained from the field and literature study, then the writer conducted an analysis to find the ideal model of leadership style.

Research Sites

This study was conducted at State Elementary Schools in northern Semarang district, Central Java, Indonesia. This study was conducted through *participant observation*, *In-depth interview*, and documentation. Interviews were conducted to principals and teachers in 10 State Elementary Schools in northern Semarang district, Central Java.

Research Instruments

Instrument used in this study was in the form of Question Guidance. The research instruments used were interview guide and field observation. Whereas, the data collection techniques used interviews and participant observation. Data analysis was used for the process of searching data systematically, setting interview and field notes, then collection and scientific reduction were led into understanding. The data collected were then carried out analysis activities following interaction pattern between data reduction, data display, and conclusion-drawing or verification as illustrated below:

The mechanism of the chart above is a type of qualitative research which must be considered, with the following explanation :

Data reduction.

The field data were quite a lot, so it was necessary to carefully and thoroughly record, and immediately to conduct analysis to make a reduction to which was important and

summarizing by choosing basics then searching patterns and themes, things unnecessary should be put aside. Data reduction facilitated research in preparing thesis because it could generally describe the problems to be studied .

Data Display (data presentation)

The data presentation in qualitative research was in the form of brief description, chart, relationship between components and the like.

Conclusion Drawing

The last stage in qualitative data analysis is conclusion drawing. After the data presented based on the results of interview, documentation and observation, then the writer gave a summary of conclusions.

QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

This study also used thematic networking method in analyzing the data. Thematic network is a qualitative data analysis technique based on the relation of theme network, formed from research findings (Stirling 2001) . The findings were then grouped into three themes, namely: basic theme, organizing theme and global theme. Basic theme is the basic idea appearing from data which have already been converted into text form. The construction of basic theme with same pattern will form organizing theme. Whereas, global theme is the final conclusion formed from some organizing themes.

Thematic analysis is how themes patterned in a phenomenon can be identified. These themes can be identified, inductively coded (*data driven*) from raw qualitative data (interview transcripts, biographies, video recordings, etc.) or deductively coded (*theory driven*) based on previous theories or research findings (Boyatzis 1998) .

FINDINgS AND DISCUSSION
Resource Description

This study involved three elements, namely principals, teachers and administrative staffs in each school. These elements are considered to provide adequate information related to the focus of the study, whereas this study involved 30 informants.

Those thirty informants were classified through school codes A, B, C, D and E, for principal code was "KS", teacher code is "G" and the TU staff was "S" with the following informant characteristics .

Table 1

Characteristics of Informants

No.	Informant Code	Gender	Education	Work Length/Age
1	KS-A	Female	S2	3 years / 53Years old
2	G-1-A	Male	S1	4 years / 32 Years old
3	G-2-A	Female	S1	7 years / 42 Years old
4	G-3-A	Female	S1	30 years / 53 Years old
5	G-4-A	Female	S1	31 years / 53 Years old
6	SA	Female	SMA	4 years / 28 Years old
7	KS-B	Male	S2	3 years / 54 Years old
8	G-1-B	Female	S1	20 years / 54 Years old
9	G-2-B	Female	S1	9 years / 39 Years old
10	G-3-B	Female	S1	12 years / 54 Years old
11	G-4-B	Female	S1	12 years / 46 Years old
12	SB	Female	SMA	1 year / 20 Years old
13	KS-C	Female	S1	5 years / 51 Years old
14	G-1-C	Female	SI	8 years / 51 Years old
15	G-2-C	Female	S1	8 years / 41 Years old
16	G-3-C	Male	S1	9 years / 49 Years old
17	G-4-C	Male	S1	5 years / 32 Years old
18	SC	Female	D3	2 years / 22 Years old
19	KS-D	Female	S2	2 years / 53 Years old
20	G-1-D	Male	S1	2 years / 28 Years old
21	G-2-D	Female	S1	10 years / 36 Years old
22	G-3-D	Female	S1	10 years / 37 Years old
23	G-4-D	Female	S1	4 years / 31 Years old
24	SD	Male	SMA	4 years / 29 Years old
25	KS-E	Female	S1	4 years / 54 Years old
26	G-1-E	Female	S2	10 years / 45 Years old
27	G-2-E	Female	S1	15 years / 48 Years old
28	G-3-E	Female	S1	7 years / 38 Years old
29	G-4-E	Female	S1	7 years / 38 Years old
30	SE	Male	SMA	3 years / 25 Years old

RESEARCH FINDINgS

Principal's strategy to improve teachers' performances

The interview result to know the communication relationship between principal and teacher, principal's tendency to put strategy forward through family-relationship attitude and two way-active communication between leader and subordinates and subordinates to leader. Most school teachers also shared the same opinions related to freedom provided by principal in stating arguments and conveying ideas and thoughts for teacher performance development, and this made teachers more comfortable and feel accomodated .

Principal wanted teachers to be creative by giving them freedom of conveying ideas and not restricting or restraining them, and most teachers felt more appreciated and assured

by the leader without realizing that they are parts of leadership strategy, in the end, teachers felt more comfortable when working daily and sooner or later they found themselves working very hard. T o ensure teacher performance remained excellent and improvable, principals conducted performance evaluation which was monthly conducted accessible for other co-teachers.

Table 2
Summary of Research Findings concerning principal's strategy in improving teacher performance

Criteria	Theme	Subthemes	Source Code
Principal roles	Positive perceptions	• Subordinates are very excited to be encouraged by their superiors to be rich in ideas and thoughts	G-1-C
	Negative perceptions	• Not too concerned • Only normative	KS-D
Principal strategies	Technique done	• Two- way active communication • Frequent discussions with teachers • Ideas and thoughts are up to bottom and bottom to up • Teacher performance are monthly evaluated and accessible for all	G-1-A G-5-A G-1-B G-4-B , G-1-C G-3-D G-3-E
	Desired target	• Maintaining teacher performance • Improving teacher performance	G-3-A G-3-B
	Level of strategic decision involvement	• Involving all teachers • If it is agreed in meeting, principal will immediately decide	G-1-C

Principal Strategy to improve organizational performance

One of the factors affecting outputs of education is organization performance. Understanding individual behavior is very important for a leader, because he/ she must know very well about his/her subordinates' personal nature and characters and has an ability to move potential for optimal results for the success of the organization.

Factors to consider related to individuals' behavior infuencing organization are: (1) individual characteristics, leaders need to pay attention to individual characters as subordinates or as himself; (2) individual motivation, leaders must pay attention to individuals' motivation and interaction because it affects the performance of the organization.; (3) rewards and appraisal, as support for the improvement of subordinate work.

Principals want to integrate their subordinates to work together and get used to active communication. With an ease of communication relations among functions, there is

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little chance of deadlock in organizational performance. The principal's role as a driver of organizational performance, if anything happens to principal, that is hesitancy in giving instructions to subordinates that would have great impact on subordinates' performance and creativity. It will be prone to school outputs, because the criteria for school success is how many students that can then be accepted in Junior High School and occupy the highest scores.

The performance of school organization must be ascertained to run well according to the pre-defined strategy. Principals are keen on the ideas or strategy predetermined in meeting, to be run well by teachers and staffs although they have to continuously ask and monitor the implementation directly or with the involvement of subordinates who can be trusted.

Table 3

Summary of Research Findings regarding the principal's strategy in improving the organization's performance

Criteria	Theme	Subthemes	Source
Principal's role	Positive perceptions	• The influence of the principal's leadership is great • Subordinates gain direct support	G-2-A
	Negative perceptions	• Principal decisions hesitate, subordinates will then hesitate to run a strategy made	G-2-D
Principal's strategy	techniques performed	• Frequent control to make sure the administration run well • Familiarizing all school elements for easy communication • Appointing trusted subordinates to help monitor the course of the established strategy • Ideas and thoughts are up to bottom and bottom to up • Delegating teachers to hold sections that exist in school	SE SD G-2-A KS-A G-3-A G-1-C
	Target desired	• Maintaining school organizational performance to run well • Improving school organizational performance	G-2-A
	Level of strategic decision involvement	• Involving all teachers and staffs as well as elements within the school	G-2-D

Model of ideal leadership style to improve performance

In principle, leadership is an inseparable discussion on management, meanwhile management itself has a meaning and principle on how a manager can influence his subordinates to follow and implement instructions, so that the goals of organization can be achieved according to desired target. However, in reality, the implementation of management performed by a manager sometimes constrains undesirable problems, such as ignorant and merely normative working subordinates.

A principal as a manager has tried to do managerial well by arranging and developing ideas, but there are still obstacles, pprincipal has also personally and persuasively called by discussing the advantages and disadvantages of the agreed ideas and why the neglect

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occurrs. Sometimes this step succeeds and sometimes fails in the sense that the less caring teachers keep coming back to their attitude.

The research findings found that the leadership style adopted by the majority of respondents was involving subordinates' roles when leaders took a decision, this made one of the characteristics of democratic leadership style. The principal leadershipp style was quite accepted by subordinates, because they considered the pricipal was not authoritarian and having no distance with subordinates so there was no sense of conceivable to convey suggestions, recommedations, thoughts and ideas to such leadership. Moreover, when the school was willing to divide its authority to subordinates and in its control function to the teacher's performance, it was still done fairly and guided by the rules of the existing Education Office.

While the basic principles of leadership taught by Ki Hajar Dewantoro namely ' *ing ing ngarso sung tulodo ing ing madyo mangun karso tutu wuru handayani'*, were widely embraced by the majority of schools. Another characteristic was that the principals were very concerned and assimilated with their subordinates and participated directly in efforts to improve teachers' performance and school organizational performance, and always provided good examples such as arriving earlier than teachers and other staffs' arrival.

The principal leadership here is almost equal to the basic principles of leadership initiated by Ki Hajar Dewantoro, *Ing Ingan sung tulada*. That is, a leader must be leading in providing an example to subordinates, *Ing madya mangun karsa*. It means that the leaders together in the midst of the subordinates, give all the fighting with the same struggle.

Table 4

Summary of research of the principal's ideal leadership style model
to improve organizational performance

Criteria	Theme	Subthemes	Source
Leadership Style	Birocrative	• Assessment of teacher performance is in accordance to certification rules • Ideas or thoughts should not deviate from established rules	Supported by 12 informants
	Democratic	• Two-way communication • Decisions involve with subordinates • Keen on discussion in problem solving • Providing subordinates with an opportunity to convey ideas / thoughts • Teacher and staffs performance monitoring is still reasonable • The authority distribution through appointment / delegation • Giving high trust to subordinates • Ideas or thoughts come from superiors or subordinates	Supported by 18 informants
Prinipical's leadership model	Transformational	• New ideas to improve working convenience • Frequent encouragement and persuasion to subordinates to explore new ideas	Supported by 3 informants
	Spiritual	• Teacher's job is a mandate so teachers must be patient with students	Supported by 3 informants

Leader's Behavior	Ing ngarso sung tulodo	• The teachers set a good examples by coming to school earlier than the teacher or staff.	Supported by 3 informants
	Ing madyo mangun karso	• Principals often mingle with subordinates and engage in working together	Supported by 5 informants
	Tut wuri handayani	• The principals encourage teachers to be more creative	Supported by 3 informants

From the research findings on the most dominant leadership style perceived by school members, it could be arranged models of human performance improvement (principals, teachers and staff) and the improvement of school organizational performance through the principal's leadership style as follows:
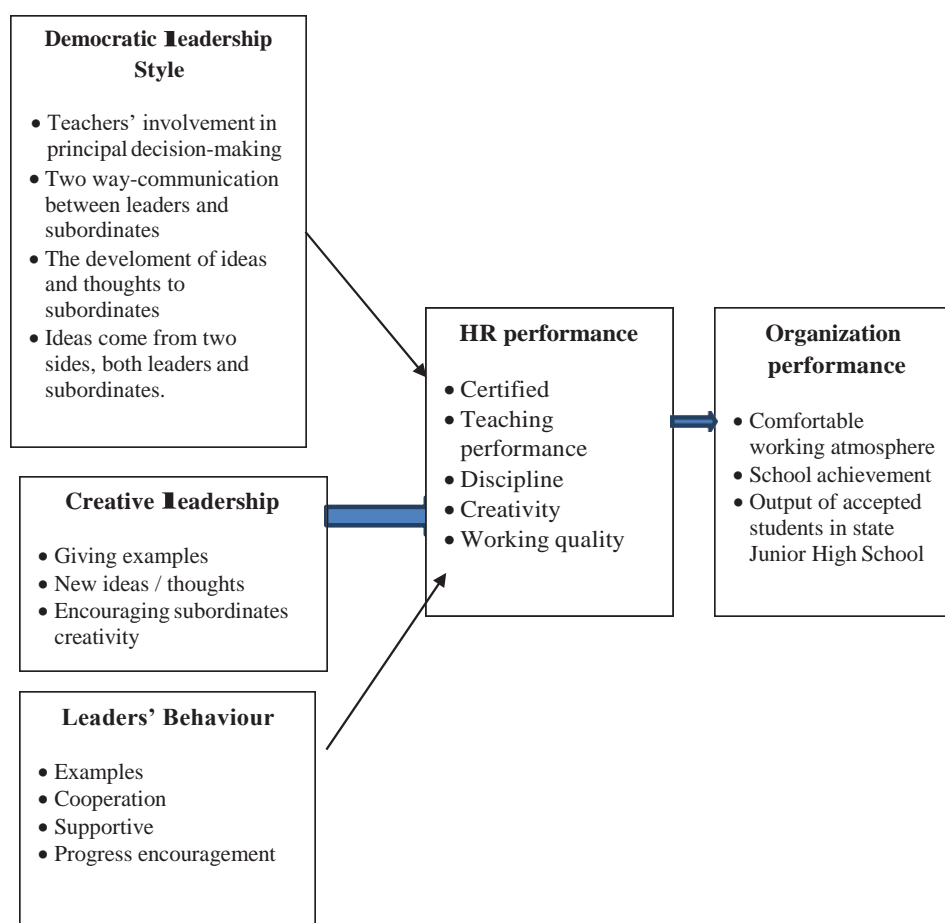

Figure 2. Conceptual Model of Leadership Style towards School Performance

DISCUSSION

The model of ideal leadership style to improve teachers' and school organization's performances according to Figure 2 above can be explained that generally, quality of the organization's performance is strongly influenced by how human resources qualify with their performance. The better the human resources' quality, the better the organizational performance quality. While the success of teacher and staff performance improvement is influenced by

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principal leadership style. From the research findings on the principals, it can be concluded that the trend of leadership style is democratic leadership style, creative leadership and the implementation of basic principles of leadership by Ki Hajar Dewantoro.

The tendency of the direction of the leadership style and its influences can be explained one by one, that is **Democratic**: *teacher involvement in principal's decision* means that the principal strives a great effort to engage teachers in the principal's decisions; ideas and thoughts are made through meetings with all organizational components of the school he leads and rarely, in the decision making, principals take his own personal decision. Leadership style by involving subordinates in decision making affects the subordinates' confidence on their abilities, so motivated to explore new ideas and thoughts, this will make the subordinates' spirit and creativity rise, which is spirit to create, work and discipline by which performance target and performance reward in the form of teacher certification can be manifested.

Whereas, the influence of the organizational performance according to the initial explanation above occurs when the performance of human resources is good, the organization's performance output will also be achieved well. *Two-way communication between superiors and subordinates can be* explained as an indication in that the principals actively enable communication between the organizational components of school, namely principals, teachers, staffs and non-formal education supporters. An open communication will shortly lead to shameful feelings and reluctance for subordinates not to actualize the spirit of work, in which will increase the performance, work quality, discipline, and of course also achieved teachers' working target, in the form of certification. The second indication is *development of ideas and thoughts to subordinates,* principals are carefully able to exploit positively through opportunities and chances provided by principals with a large enough portion, making it easier for subordinates to come up with thoughts or new ideas buried in themselves. Activeness of new ideas and thoughts that arise eventually form a synergy among them. It is the emergence of new ideas and thoughts that sometimes come from the leadership and at other times emerge from subordinates. The synergism formed by the principal will affect the competition among subordinates / teachers who will influence on how to show the best performance and by itself the performance will increase where the *include* accompanied include improving discipline, quality of work and fulfillment of teacher certification target.

The next finding is the **Creative Leadership** model*.* The model indicates that leaders *provide example of new thoughts / ideas.* This study found that principals encourage subordinates' creativity through examples of idea and thought creativity which are conducted by principals themselves and imitated by thier subordinates. The effect of giving the creativity examples from principals to subordinates is the desire to develop the examples of creativity in order to complete and refine and provoke the idea of creativity and new thoughts from subordinates. It will automatically bring a competitive attitudes among subordinates in order to be able to imitate what is exemplified by principals to be creative, spirit in working and creativity and quality of work will increase because of the desire to compete among subordinates. *Encourage the creativity of subordinates,* examples of creativity that a leader shows to subordinates need to be performed and it is a must because it has a great influence in encouraging subordinates creativity. If subordinates feel compelled to create and develop new ideas, it will then influence

them on improving their performance since creativity and ideas / thoughts are supported by subordinates' high levels of thinking and working spirit.

A national hero who became a role model in the field of education is Ki Hajar Dewantoro who has provided an overview of the basic principles of leadership. In addition to the leadership style the writer mentioned above, the writer also conducted research by combining the similarity between the principal leadership studied and the basic principles of leadership taught by Ki Hajar Dewantoro. It is found that many principals who implemented **the basic principles of Ki Hajar Dewantoro's leadershi,** namely *Tauladan* (exemplary), school principals' exemplary in leading their subordinates, such as giving examples of going to school earlier than other teachers and staff and behaving well in schools. They would have an impact on members' discipline levels and foster performance improvement, work quality and fulfillment of teacher certification targets. *Work together* is indicated by good togetherness between school principals who *assimilated* with subordinates, without distance and jointly strived to achieve the success of school organization. The influence of cooperation between principals, teachers and staffs would foster a sense of organizational love that triggered the desire to advance the organization . So it can be concluded that the improvement of organizational performance is influenced by the performance of human resources. Automatically, the performance of human resources itself will increase because of the love and desire for the development of the organization. *Giving support ,* schools always supported proposed ideas, thoughts and creativity of subordinates with good aims and not violating existing rules. This form of support is so big influence to subordinates that they feel appreciated and supported by leaders and feel assured. Subordinates' creativity can be channeled so that the love of work will arise by itself and it will then also improve subordinates' performance. *Moving forward*, school principals did not stop encouraging subordinates, especially when subordinates experienced a high surfeit of the activities of their work, moving forward and developing the performance and morale of subordinates with patience. It is a major effect on mental subordinate to working spirit, noted by the leadership and certainly there is a feeling protected of leadership, so that it creates a sense of high spirits in the hearts of each subordinate to maintain the already good performance even increase again.

CONCLUSION

From the explanation above, the discussion on the modeling of ideal leadership styles and leadership behavior in a school, it can be concluded that the democratic leadership style, creative leadership and the implementation of the basic principles of Ki Hajar Devantoro's leadership can trigger an increase in the performance of human resources including an increase in the performance of teachers in teaching, applying discipline everyday, improving teachers' creativity and maintaining and improving the quality of work. Whereas, the improvement of HR performance also automatically influences on improving the performance of school organization, so the target of performance improvement of school organizations, such as comfort in their daily work, gaining school achievement, and the number of school graduates accepted in future state schools can easily be met and achieved.

Future research is expected to test the conceptual model above tested by using empirical data to draw a factual conclusion and can be generalized in other places.

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