

The Relationship Between Principal Leadership and Teachers' Innovative Behavior in Learning at State Vocational High Schools in Padang Barat District

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ABSTRACT

Education is one of the main pillars in the development of human resources and national progress. The quality of education is closely related to teachers' ability to carry out effective and innovative learning processes. However, teachers' innovative behavior does not emerge automatically, but is associated with various supporting factors, one of which is the principal's leadership. Principals who are able to motivate, direct, and create a supportive environment are believed to encourage teachers to generate, promote, and implement new ideas in learning. Therefore, this study aimed to determine the relationship between the principal's leadership and teachers' innovative behavior in learning at State Vocational High Schools in Padang Barat District.

This study employed a quantitative approach using a correlational method. The population consisted of 195 teachers, with a sample of 120 teachers selected through proportional random sampling. The research instrument was a closed-ended questionnaire using a Likert scale that had been tested for validity and reliability. Data were analyzed using Product Moment correlation and t-significance testing at a 5% significance level ($\alpha = 0,05$).

The results showed a positive and significant relationship between the principal's leadership and teachers' innovative behavior, with a correlation coefficient (r) of 0,411, categorized as moderate. The t-value of 5,179 was greater than the t-table value of 1,656. This means that the better the principal's leadership, the higher the tendency of teachers' innovative behavior. In addition, teachers' innovative behavior was categorized as high with an achievement level of 81,63%, while the principal's leadership was categorized as very high with an achievement level of 86,27%. These findings indicate that the principal plays an important role in creating an environment that supports teacher innovation and improves learning quality.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education in the digital era has undergone a highly significant transformation and has impacted various aspects of the implementation of learning in schools. The rapid development of information and communication technology requires the education sector to continuously adapt through the application of learning methods that are more modern, effective, and innovative.

Teachers are no longer only expected to deliver subject matter, but are also required to become facilitators who are able to create engaging, interactive, and student-centered learning environments. In addition, teachers are expected to encourage students to think critically, creatively, communicatively, and collaboratively as part of the 21st-century skills needed today (Wandika, 2024; Ningrum et al., 2022).

In this context, teachers' innovative behavior becomes one of the important factors in improving the quality of learning. Teachers' innovative behavior refers to the ability of teachers to generate, develop, promote, and implement new ideas that are beneficial in the learning process. Teachers who demonstrate innovative behavior tend to be more adaptive to change, able to utilize learning technology optimally, creative in selecting teaching methods, and capable of creating more meaningful learning experiences for students. Through innovative behavior, teachers can design learning activities that are not monotonous, so that students become more motivated to learn and achieve optimal learning outcomes.

However, teachers' innovative behavior does not always develop optimally in every school. Based on preliminary observations at State Vocational High Schools in Padang Barat District, several conditions were found indicating that teacher innovation had not been fully optimized. Some teachers still tended to use conventional teaching methods such as lecturing and routine assignments without utilizing more creative strategies or learning media. In addition, some teachers were still less proactive in expressing new ideas, lacked confidence in trying different learning approaches, and had not optimally collaborated with colleagues in developing learning innovations. These conditions indicate that teachers' innovative behavior still needs to be improved so that learning becomes more effective, relevant, and suited to students' needs.

One factor presumed to be related to teachers' innovative behavior is the principal's leadership. As the leader of an educational institution, the principal has a strategic role in directing, motivating, guiding, and creating a work environment that supports the growth of teacher creativity. A communicative, participative, inspirational, and supportive leadership tends to encourage teachers to be more confident in trying new methods and developing innovative ideas in learning. On the other hand, leadership that is less open and overly instructional may hinder teachers' initiative to innovate. Therefore, the principal's leadership plays an important role in shaping an adaptive and innovative school culture.

Several previous studies have shown that the principal's leadership has a positive relationship with increased creativity, work motivation, and teachers' innovative behavior in learning (Setyaningrum, 2024; Warman et al., 2024). This indicates that a school's success in improving the quality of learning cannot be separated from the principal's ability to carry out leadership functions effectively. Nevertheless, studies regarding the relationship between principal leadership and teachers' innovative behavior in the context of vocational high schools, particularly in Padang Barat District, are still limited and therefore require further investigation.

Based on the description above, the researcher is interested in conducting a study entitled: **"The Relationship between Principal Leadership and Teachers' Innovative Behavior in Learning at State Vocational High Schools in Padang Barat District."**

2. METHOD, DATA, ANALYSIS

This study employed a quantitative approach using a correlational research method. The quantitative approach was selected because this study aimed to examine the relationship between variables objectively through numerical data analysis. Meanwhile, the correlational method was used to determine the direction and strength of the relationship between the principal's leadership as the independent variable and teachers' innovative behavior as the dependent variable.

The population of this study consisted of all teachers at State Vocational High Schools in Padang Barat District, totaling 195 teachers. From this population, a sample of 120 teachers was selected using stratified proportional random sampling. This sampling technique was applied to ensure that each school had proportional representation based on the number of teachers, so that the sample could accurately reflect the characteristics of the overall population.

Data were collected through the distribution of closed-ended questionnaires using a Likert scale. The questionnaire items were arranged based on the indicators of each research variable. The principal's leadership variable was measured through indicators such as motivating, directing, and controlling, while the teachers' innovative behavior variable was measured through indicators including idea generation, idea promotion, and idea realization. Before being distributed to the

respondents, the instrument was first tested for validity and reliability to ensure that it was appropriate, consistent, and capable of measuring the intended variables accurately.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the condition and level of achievement of each variable. Furthermore, Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis was conducted to determine the direction and strength of the relationship between the two variables. A t-test was also employed to examine the significance of the correlation coefficient at a 5% significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$). All statistical analyses were carried out using the SPSS program to obtain accurate and reliable results.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Description of Research Data on Teachers' Innovative Behavior

Data collection for the teachers' innovative behavior variable (Y) was conducted through the distribution of a questionnaire consisting of 36 statement items to 76 public senior high school teachers in Pariaman City. Based on the respondents' answers, the minimum score obtained was 90, and the maximum score was 180. The average score (mean) was 146.93, with a median value of 148.50 and a mode of 180. Meanwhile, the standard deviation was recorded at 22.108, and the total cumulative score reached 19,689. For more detailed information, the frequency distribution of teachers' professional competence scores is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Average Scores of Teachers' Innovative Behavior Indicators

Variable	Indicator	Mean	Achievement Level (%)	Classification
Teachers' Innovative Behavior	Idea Promotion	4,04	80,80%%	High
	Idea Generation	4,01	80,20%	High
	Idea Realization	4,19	83,80%	High
	Average Score	4,08	81,60%	High

Based on Table 1, the calculation of the average scores showed that the highest value was found in the idea realization indicator, with a mean score of 4.19 and an achievement level of 83.80%. Meanwhile, the lowest average score was found in the idea generation indicator, with a mean score of 4.01 and an achievement level of 80.20%. Overall, all indicators of teachers' innovative behavior were categorized as "high".

Description of Research Data on the Principal's Leadership

Data for the principal's leadership variable (X) were collected through the distribution of a questionnaire consisting of 36 statement items to 120 teachers of State Vocational High Schools in Padang Barat District. Based on the completed questionnaires, the lowest score obtained was 102, and the highest score was 180. The average score (mean) was 155.28, with a median of 159 and a mode of 172. The standard deviation was recorded at 17.534, and the total cumulative score reached 20,808. More detailed information regarding the score distribution of the principal's leadership can be seen in the following frequency distribution table.

Table 1. Average Scores of Principal's Leadership Indicators

Variable	Indicator	Mean	Achievement Level (%)	Classification
Principal's Leadership	Motivating	4,25	85%	Good
	Directing	4,29	85,80%	Good
	Self-Control	4,37	87,40%	Good
	Average Score	4,30	86%	Good

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that the motivating indicator was categorized as good, with an average score of 4.25 and an achievement level of 85.00%. The directing indicator was also categorized as good, with an average score of 4.29 and an achievement level of 85.80%. Meanwhile, the self-controlling indicator showed an average score of 4.37 with an achievement level of 87.40%, which was also included in the good category. Overall, all three indicators of the principal's leadership were categorized as "good".

To determine the correlation coefficient (r) between variables X and Y, the Pearson Correlation formula was used with the assistance of SPSS Version 25.

Table 3 Results of the Correlation Test of Variables X and Y

		Gaya Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah	Perilaku Inovatif Guru
Gaya Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah	Pearson Correlation	1	,411**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
	N	134	134
Perilaku Inovatif Guru	Pearson Correlation	,411**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
	N	134	134

Based on the calculation results presented in the table, the correlation coefficient (r) between the principal's leadership and teachers' innovative behavior was 0,411. This value indicates a moderate and positive relationship between the two variables and suggests that there are other factors also associated with the improvement of teachers' innovative behavior, such as organizational culture, work motivation, and support facilities and infrastructure. Furthermore, to test the significance of the relationship, a t-test was conducted. Based on the calculation results, the obtained t-value was 5,179, while the t-table value at the 5% significance level (df = 120) was 1,656. Therefore, H_0 was rejected and H_a was accepted, meaning that there was a significant relationship between the two variables.

Discussion

Based on the results of the study conducted at State Vocational High Schools in Padang Barat District, it was found that there was a significant relationship between the principal's leadership and teachers' innovative behavior at an 85% significance level, with a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.411 and a correlation significance value of 5.179 using the t-test. For further clarification, the discussion of each variable is presented as follows.

Teachers' Innovative Behavior (Y)

Based on the data analysis, the average score obtained was 4.08 with an achievement level of 81.60%, which was categorized as high. This indicates that teachers at State Vocational High Schools in Padang Barat District have demonstrated a good tendency toward innovative behavior in the learning process. In general, teachers have shown the ability to adapt to educational changes, improve learning quality, and apply creative approaches in classroom activities. These findings are consistent with previous studies which state that teachers' innovative behavior tends to be high in school environments that require continuous adaptation and improvement in teaching practices.

However, a high level of achievement does not automatically mean that all aspects of innovation have been fully optimized. Teachers' innovative behavior may be influenced by professional responsibilities, institutional expectations, and the need to respond to developments in education and technology. According to Janssen (2000), innovative behavior consists of three main stages: idea generation, idea promotion, and idea realization. The results of this study indicate that these three aspects have generally been carried out well by teachers. They are able to create new ideas to solve learning problems, communicate those ideas to colleagues or school leaders, and implement them in classroom practice.

Nevertheless, not every idea can always be realized optimally, especially when environmental support, facilities, or collaboration are limited. In the local context, the high level of teachers' innovative behavior in State Vocational High Schools in Padang Barat District is likely associated with curriculum demands, the need to improve learning outcomes, and efforts to strengthen teachers' professional competence. Therefore, although teachers' innovative behavior

is already categorized as high, continuous efforts are still needed to improve the quality, consistency, and sustainability of innovation in learning.

Principal's Leadership (X)

The results of the study showed that the principal's leadership was categorized as very high, with an achievement level of 86.00%. This indicates that principals have carried out their leadership functions effectively, particularly in motivating, directing, and controlling school activities. These findings are consistent with previous studies which suggest that school principals are generally able to perform leadership roles effectively within the context of school management.

However, this high achievement level needs to be interpreted critically. A high leadership score does not always mean that leadership has been fully effective in encouraging change and innovation within the school. The effectiveness of leadership is not only measured by perceptions, but also by its impact on the behavior and performance of organizational members. Theoretically, effective leadership is leadership that is able to create change and promote organizational development. In this context, the principal functions not only as an administrative manager, but also as an agent of change who is able to create an environment that supports innovation.

The motivating aspect reflects the principal's ability to build teachers' enthusiasm and work commitment through clear vision, emotional support, appreciation, and opportunities for professional growth. The directing aspect demonstrates the principal's ability to provide guidance, strategic direction, and clear work standards. This can be seen in goal setting, instructional supervision, and curriculum management aimed at improving learning quality. Meanwhile, the controlling aspect shows the principal's ability to manage resources, coordinate organizational processes, and conduct monitoring and evaluation effectively. A principal with good control skills is able to maintain organizational stability while still encouraging innovation.

In the context of this study, although principals have shown good performance in motivating and directing teachers, further improvement is still needed in developing a more systematic culture of innovation. This is important so that leadership is not only instructional in nature, but also capable of encouraging creativity, collaboration, and continuous improvement among teachers.

The Relationship between Principal Leadership and Teachers' Innovative Behavior

Based on the data analysis, the correlation coefficient obtained was $r = 0.411$, which falls into the moderate category and indicates a positive relationship. This result shows that there is a significant relationship between the principal's leadership and teachers' innovative behavior.

The role of the principal as a leader is very important in creating a conducive and innovative learning environment. A leadership that is able to inspire and motivate teachers is associated with teachers' ability to develop innovations in learning. This finding is in line with Setyaningrum (2024), who stated that there is a relationship between principal leadership and teacher work motivation in encouraging innovative behavior that contributes to improving educational quality. Likewise, Murniati and Sudana (2023) found a positive and significant relationship between principal leadership and teachers' innovative behavior. Effective leadership can create a positive work atmosphere, increase teachers' self-confidence, and encourage them to be more creative in developing learning practices.

When compared with previous studies, the correlation value in this research indicates that the relationship is not particularly strong, suggesting that the connection between leadership and innovative behavior is complex. The moderate strength of the relationship shows that the principal's leadership is not the dominant factor associated with teachers' innovative behavior. This means that there are other factors related to the emergence of innovative behavior among teachers.

Compared with the descriptive findings, both variables were categorized as high. However, the moderate correlation indicates that high leadership quality is not always followed by a proportionally high level of innovation. This suggests that the relationship between the two variables is not perfectly linear. Other factors that may be related to teachers' innovative behavior include teachers' intrinsic motivation, school organizational culture, availability of facilities and infrastructure, and teachers' workload.

In the local context of State Vocational High Schools in Padang Barat District, these findings indicate that although principals have demonstrated good leadership, improving teachers' innovative behavior requires the simultaneous involvement of various other factors.

Therefore, the relationship between the principal's leadership and teachers' innovative behavior should be understood as contextual and multifaceted, where leadership serves as a supporting factor rather than the sole determinant

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study and hypothesis testing regarding the relationship between leadership and teachers' innovative behavior in learning at State Vocational High Schools in Padang Barat District, several conclusions can be drawn. The achievement level of teachers' innovative behavior was categorized as high, with a percentage of 81.63%. This indicates that teachers have been able to demonstrate innovative behavior in learning, particularly in the aspects of idea generation, idea promotion, and idea realization. This high achievement suggests that teachers possess the readiness and ability to develop creative learning processes, although there is still room for improvement so that innovation can be more optimal and sustainable.

The results of the Product Moment correlation analysis showed a correlation coefficient of 0.411, which falls into the moderate and positive category. This finding was supported by the t-test result, where the calculated t-value (5.179) was greater than the t-table value (1.656). These results indicate that there is a significant relationship between the principal's leadership and teachers' innovative behavior. The moderate level of correlation suggests that the principal's leadership is related to teachers' innovative behavior, but it is not the dominant factor, meaning that other factors are also associated with the development of teachers' innovative behavior.

Furthermore, the achievement level of the principal's leadership reached 86.27%, indicating that principals have been able to carry out leadership functions effectively through the aspects of motivating, directing, and exercising self-control. However, this achievement still needs to be continuously improved, particularly in creating a more conducive climate for the development of teacher innovation, so that leadership is not only administrative in nature but also capable of encouraging creativity and renewal in learning.

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