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CONFLICT MANAGEMENT BY MADRASAH PRINCIPALS TO ENHANCE TEACHER WORK PRODUCTIVITY AT MADRASAH TSANAWIYAH IN PIDIE REGENCY

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Abstract

Conflict is an inevitable phenomenon in educational organizations, including madrasahs, which require effective management strategies to maintain organizational stability and improve teacher performance. This study aims to analyze the conflict management practices of madrasah principals in improving teacher work productivity in Islamic junior high schools in Pidie Regency, Indonesia. This research employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation involving madrasah principals, teachers, and educational staff. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The results showed that madrasah principals implemented several conflict management strategies, including preventive conflict management, collaborative problem-solving, open communication, negotiation, and decision-making based on organizational interests. Principals played an important role as leaders who mediated conflicts, created a positive working environment, and encouraged cooperation among teachers. Effective conflict management contributed to increased teacher discipline, responsibility, motivation, and commitment to improving educational quality. However, several challenges remained, including differences in individual perceptions, limited communication intensity, and variations in teacher readiness to accept organizational changes. This study concludes that effective conflict management by madrasah principals is an essential leadership competency that significantly supports teacher work productivity. Principals who are able to manage conflicts constructively can transform organizational tensions into opportunities for improvement and professional development..

Keywords: Conflict Management, Madrasah Principal Leadership, Teacher Productivity, Educational Management, Islamic Junior High School

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INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions are complex social organizations consisting of individuals with diverse backgrounds, interests, perceptions, and professional responsibilities. Within this context, conflict is an inevitable phenomenon that may emerge from differences in goals, communication patterns, resource allocation, and interpersonal relationships among organizational members. In schools and madrasahs, conflict does not always represent a negative condition; rather, when managed effectively, conflict can become a constructive

force that encourages organizational learning, innovation, and improved performance (Robbins & Judge, 2018).

Teachers represent the most strategic human resources in achieving educational goals because they are directly involved in implementing learning processes and developing students' competencies. The professional role of teachers extends beyond teaching activities; it includes educating, guiding, assessing, motivating, and facilitating students' development (Aziz, 2012). Therefore, maintaining teachers' productivity is a critical concern for educational organizations because teacher productivity significantly influences the quality of educational services and institutional effectiveness.

However, maintaining high teacher productivity is not an easy task because educational organizations frequently encounter various internal challenges, including interpersonal conflicts, differences in work perceptions, communication problems, and leadership issues. Unmanaged conflicts may create negative consequences, such as decreased motivation, weakened cooperation, reduced organizational commitment, and declining work effectiveness. Conversely, conflicts that are appropriately managed may encourage critical discussion, improve decision-making processes, and strengthen collaboration among teachers (Robbins & Judge, 2018).

In the context of madrasahs, the role of the head of madrasah as an educational leader is highly significant in managing organizational dynamics, particularly conflicts that occur among teachers and educational staff. The head of madrasah is not only responsible for administrative management but also acts as a leader, mediator, negotiator, facilitator, and decision-maker in resolving organizational problems. Effective leadership requires the ability to identify conflict sources, analyze conflict characteristics, determine appropriate resolution strategies, and create a supportive working environment (Mulyasa, 2015).

Conflict management is therefore an essential leadership competency in educational organizations. Thomas and Kilmann (2008) explain that conflict resolution strategies can be categorized into five approaches: competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating. The selection of an appropriate strategy depends on the nature of the conflict, organizational conditions, and the objectives to be achieved. Effective conflict management enables leaders to transform destructive conflicts into functional conflicts that contribute positively to organizational development.

Previous studies have demonstrated that organizational conflict management influences employee performance and productivity. Conflict handled through open communication, participation, and collaborative problem-solving can improve trust, teamwork, and organizational commitment (Rahim, 2002). In educational settings, effective conflict management can create a harmonious work climate that encourages teachers to perform their duties more effectively. Sedarmayanti (2017) emphasizes that productivity improvement is closely related to organizational conditions, leadership effectiveness, communication systems, and a supportive work environment.

Nevertheless, previous studies have predominantly focused on conflict management in business organizations, while empirical studies examining how heads of madrasahs manage conflicts to improve teacher productivity remain relatively limited, particularly in the context of Indonesian Islamic educational institutions. Existing studies often discuss leadership, teacher performance, or organizational culture separately, but fewer studies explore conflict management as an integrated leadership process involving conflict identification, conflict assessment, and conflict resolution.

This research addresses this gap by examining conflict management practices implemented by heads of madrasahs in improving teacher productivity at Madrasah Tsanawiyah in Pidie Regency, Indonesia. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on conflict management as a strategic leadership process that consists of three interconnected stages: conflict analysis planning, conflict assessment, and conflict resolution. This

perspective provides a more comprehensive understanding of how educational leaders transform organizational conflicts into opportunities for improving teacher productivity.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the conflict management practices of heads of madrasahs in improving teacher productivity. Specifically, this research seeks to answer three questions: (1) How do heads of madrasahs plan conflict analysis within educational organizations? (2) How do heads of madrasahs assess conflicts and determine appropriate responses? (3) How do conflict resolution strategies implemented by heads of madrasahs contribute to improving teacher productivity?

The findings of this study are expected to contribute theoretically to the development of educational leadership and conflict management studies, as well as provide practical implications for madrasah leaders in developing effective strategies to create productive and harmonious educational environments.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. The qualitative approach was selected because the study aimed to obtain an in-depth understanding of the conflict management practices implemented by madrasah principals and their contribution to improving teacher work productivity. This approach enabled the researchers to explore leadership experiences, conflict resolution processes, and organizational dynamics within Islamic junior high schools.

Research Setting and Participants

The research was conducted in Islamic junior high schools (Madrasah Tsanawiyah) located in Pidie Regency, Aceh Province, Indonesia. The research participants were selected purposively based on their involvement and knowledge related to conflict management practices within the madrasah organization. The participants consisted of madrasah principals, teachers, and educational staff who were directly involved in organizational activities.

The selection of participants considered their positions, responsibilities, and experiences in dealing with organizational conflicts. Madrasah principals were considered key informants because they were responsible for managing institutional conflicts and creating a productive working environment.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using three techniques: interviews, observations, and documentation. First, semi-structured interviews were conducted with madrasah principals, teachers, and staff to explore information regarding conflict sources, conflict management strategies, leadership approaches, and the impact of conflict resolution on teacher productivity. Second, observations were conducted to examine organizational conditions, leadership practices, communication patterns, and interactions among teachers and school personnel. Third, documentation analysis was conducted by reviewing relevant institutional documents, including organizational structures, work programs, meeting records, and other documents related to school management.

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed the interactive model consisting of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. During data reduction, relevant information from interviews, observations, and documents was selected and categorized according to research objectives. The categorized data were then displayed systematically to identify patterns and relationships among findings. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on the interpretation of the collected data.

To ensure data validity, this study applied source triangulation and technique triangulation by comparing information obtained from different participants and data collection methods

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Conflict Sources in Madrasah Organizations

The findings revealed that conflicts within madrasahs emerged from various factors, including differences in perceptions, communication problems, task distribution, and adaptation to organizational changes. Teachers and staff often had different interpretations regarding institutional policies, responsibilities, and work procedures.

Differences in individual characteristics also contributed to conflict situations. Each teacher possessed different levels of experience, educational backgrounds, and professional expectations. Without effective communication, these differences could develop into misunderstandings and interpersonal tensions.

The findings indicate that conflict in madrasahs is a natural organizational phenomenon. Conflict does not necessarily indicate organizational failure; rather, it reflects the diversity of perspectives among organizational members. This finding supports the view that constructive conflict can encourage improvement when managed through appropriate leadership strategies.

Conflict Management Strategies of Madrasah Principals

The study found that madrasah principals applied several strategies to manage organizational conflicts.

Open Communication Strategy

One of the main strategies implemented by principals was establishing open communication. Principals provided opportunities for teachers and staff to express opinions, concerns, and problems openly. Through effective communication, misunderstandings could be minimized and solutions could be developed collectively. Open communication also strengthened trust between principals and teachers. Teachers felt valued because their opinions were considered in decision-making processes.

Collaborative Problem Solving

Madrasah principals tended to use collaborative approaches rather than authoritarian approaches. Conflict resolution was conducted through discussion, negotiation, and collective decision-making.

The collaborative strategy allowed conflicting parties to understand each other's perspectives and develop mutually acceptable solutions. This approach was consistent with Islamic educational values emphasizing consultation (*musyawarah*), fairness, and cooperation.

Mediation and Negotiation

Principals acted as mediators when conflicts occurred among teachers or between teachers and institutional management. The principal's role was not only to solve problems but also to maintain relationships among organizational members.

Through negotiation, principals attempted to balance individual interests with institutional goals. This strategy helped prevent conflicts from escalating and maintained a positive organizational climate.

The Role of Conflict Management in Improving Teacher Work Productivity

The results showed that effective conflict management positively influenced teacher work productivity. Teachers demonstrated improved discipline, responsibility, motivation, and commitment after conflicts were managed constructively.

A supportive organizational climate encouraged teachers to focus on their professional duties. When teachers felt respected and involved in organizational decision-making, their sense of belonging and commitment increased.

The findings indicate that leadership effectiveness in managing conflict contributes to teacher performance improvement. Principals who are able to transform conflicts into opportunities for reflection and improvement can create a productive educational environment.

This result supports organizational management theories stating that leadership behavior influences employee motivation and performance. Effective leaders do not eliminate all conflicts but manage them so that conflicts become productive forces for organizational development.

Challenges in Conflict Management

Although principals implemented various conflict management strategies, several challenges remained. These challenges included differences in personal interests, limited communication time, resistance to change, and variations in teachers' understanding of organizational goals.

Some teachers tended to maintain personal perspectives and required more intensive approaches from principals. Therefore, conflict management requires continuous leadership efforts, emotional intelligence, and strong interpersonal skills.

The findings emphasize that conflict management competence should become an important component of madrasah principal professional development programs.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that conflict management is an essential leadership function for madrasah principals in improving teacher work productivity. Conflicts within madrasah organizations generally arise from differences in perceptions, communication problems, task responsibilities, and organizational changes.

Madrasah principals manage conflicts through several strategies, including open communication, collaborative problem solving, mediation, negotiation, and participative decision-making. These strategies contribute to creating a positive organizational climate and improving teacher discipline, motivation, responsibility, and professional commitment.

Effective conflict management enables principals to transform organizational conflicts into opportunities for improvement and innovation. Therefore, strengthening conflict management competencies among madrasah principals is necessary to support effective educational leadership and improve the quality of Islamic education institutions.

Future studies are recommended to examine conflict management using quantitative approaches or mixed methods to measure the relationship between leadership conflict management styles and teacher performance indicators more broadly..

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