TEACHER WORK ENGAGEMENT IN INCLUSIVE SCHOOL

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Abstract: This research aimed to identify and state the significance of teacher work engagement to improve inclusive school performance, where the inclusive school was a form of education equity and realization without any discriminations which currently have been organized by the government of Indonesia. Further, this research was based on the phenomenon which happened that not all teachers in inclusive school were involved maximally on the inclusive concept. This research was categorized into qualitative research which exerted case study approaches to explore the teacher experience during teaching activity in the inclusive school. It aims to identify teacher engagement at work. This research finding showed that the teacher work engagement was affected by self-efficacy and organizational climate. The teacher who had high self-efficacy referred that the teacher believes themselves able to fulfill daily challenges in the school and therefore, the teacher tended to be more engaged on work. Besides, this research finding indicated that the fun organizational climate became attendant which could influence the teacher work engagement.

Keywords: Work Engagement, School Performance, Self-Efficacy, Organizational Climate

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The non-profit (public) organization which regularly gets support and attention from the government is an educational institution (school). Education is referred to as a form of human investment and pillar of nation development at once. Through education, it can produce humans with competence and skill which are needed by the state to develop the economy and assure a more dignified society life. This form of government focus in the educational sector is proven by assigning education as a significant agenda which has been stated in Laws 20th 2003 regarding Educational System, specifically article 31 paragraph 1 and 2. The essence of these laws means that every society without looking to kind of ethnicity, race, culture, and religion is deserved and obliged to go with quality education services, without any exception for the children with special needs or children with disabilities.

The Ministry of Education and Culture has estimated that the total of children who have special needs in Indonesia reaches 1.6 million children with limited educational access. On the other hand, 18%...
have got to educational access, while the rest do not go to school and still need educational fulfillment maximally (Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017). The high percentage of total children with special needs in Indonesia is certainly a duty for the government to settle soon. One of the efforts that are being carried out by the government to provide them access through the expansion of inclusive school construction program for the children with special needs and special school construction in both public and private sector (Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017).

This policy is regarded as an educational reformation which is then very welcomed by all parties, especially for the parents of those children with special needs. On the other side, the school which accepts this decision finds that the school is not settled yet to run their roles in this sector. Moreover, the teachers in regular school do not have any specific competence to teach those children with special needs and in quantity, the total of inclusive students are not comparable to the total of special companion teachers (Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016). This condition occurs in an inclusive school in Malang, SD Negeri Sumbersari 1. As the first pioneer of inclusive schools in Malang, until today this school finds it difficult to hire a special companion teacher who is suited to the qualification. From the result of observation, it is known 17 students with special needs have different learning characteristics from the level of moderate to hard handling which is spread from the low up to high-class category, as they are: deaf, mentally disabled, slow learner, emotionally handicapped, autism, ADHD, speech delay, and dyslexia. Meantime, the handling intervention on the students with special needs in the school is taken over by the two special companion teachers and 7 shadow teachers. Hence, the total of students and teachers were not proportional, this condition is then referred that the handling of students with special needs in that school is less optimal.

The special companion teacher is called the center of education who have import duty on the handling of students with special needs. Although in its practice, the responsibility on those students in the class is under the class teacher and not wholly burdened on the special companion teacher. It means that the class teacher and special companion teacher must cooperate to serve the students with special needs (Cipkin and Rizza, 2003). Likewise, it happens in SD Negeri Sumbersari 1, it needs to task and responsibility division among the class teacher, special companion teacher, and shadow teacher which aims to support the effective learning process. In the respect of this matter, from the interview result with the teachers, it is known that different opinions are often existed between one teacher to another, especially when it is regarding the learning system coordination of students with special needs and low awareness among colleagues. The case of miscommunication and a low level of teacher awareness is very possible to exist when the teachers do not have the same vision to achieve the goals. This condition cannot be regarded as a simple thing, since the performance of an inclusive school is dependent on teacher cooperation and engagement.

For the schools which apply an inclusive concept, they need to ensure correctly that all parties who are going to be involved inside this program have readiness and willingness to engage their selves maximally. In the respect of this matter, the role of the school as the agent of change and institution which have long term purpose must be able to perform best work performance and produce an outcome for all stakeholders. According to this consideration, the schools need to create a work or organizational climate (Merry, 2014) which can boost the teacher work engagement to deliver profit for the organization.

The researches which are related to work engagement in the education field are sufficient enough to discover positive findings regarding teacher performance which is useful to motivate the students and influence the academic achievement of students (Klusmann et al., 2016), teacher job satisfaction (Klassen et al., 2013), school success (Angundaru et al., 2016) an increase of enthusiasm, dedication, appreciation, and ascertainment that every individual is enthusiastic to improve the teacher performance on the process of learning and professional attitude.
which is performed during in the school (Arifin et al., 2014).

The teachers who are engaged in their work can show value-added to the school as a whole organization. Therefore, by exploring the teacher experience during the process of teaching, the researchers can get information about teacher work engagement as well as contribute to the school to introduce, develop, and apply human resource function effectively, which all of them aim to improve the teacher work engagement in an inclusive school.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Work Engagement

Work engagement has been a popular issue in International Human Resources Management and got so much attention from practitioners since it was claimed to be able to give positive consequences for the employees and organization (Saks, 2006). MacLeod and Clarke (2009), stated that if the employee engagement within the organization of public sector was the core of the organization, leader, and employee relation in the workplace, and was also potential to improve the work performance to develop public service welfare. The engaged employee could show a positive attitude toward the work, which was characterized by self-expression totally in physical, cognitive, and emotional during work (Banihani et al., 2013).

Teacher Engagement

The researches relating to teacher work engagement were many and previously discussed by academicians. As it was mentioned in the research by Hammond and Ingalls (2003), which found that not all the teachers who worked in an inclusive school environment would have the confidence to engage their selves maximally and commit to the inclusive concept. This statement was in line with the research finding proposed by Makinen (2013), that if the inclusivity was inserted within the daily teaching practice, it would become a challenge and worry for the teachers (even for the senior teacher).

The teachers who had work engagement were believed to have good health and work competence in their self-evaluation (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008). They are easy to be motivated, show energy and effectiveness in task completion, and be able to overcome complex demands that might be emerged during their work (Klassen et al., 2012). The engaged teachers were able to perform positive attitudes as sympathy, empathy, care, and concern to not only their students but also to care the colleagues in the same profession to help each other.

Several years later, the development of research which referred to work engagement was done by Klassen et al. (2013), they found four characteristics that were recently considered as having better consistency to measure teacher engagement in the process of student teaching and learning, which were then known as Engaged Teachers Scale (ETS). ETS was specially developed to see specific characteristics of teacher task in the class, the engaged teacher could be determined as long as the teacher had a cognitive-physical engagement, emotional engagement, social engagement with colleagues, and social engagement with students.

School Performance

Term of work performance or achievement had a quite broad meaning. This concept could be interpreted quantitatively or qualitatively (Mangkunegara, 2005). The school performance as an organization that worked in the public sector could be regarded as complex and specific, therefore, the result was difficult to identify directly since the type of this organization was more oriented on the process and not the result (Balaboniene and Vecerskiene, 2015). Generally, the school performance was a picture from the performance of all human resources who were involved in the school, from the performance of the headmaster, teachers, staff, students, and school committee.

The school as an opened-system was referred to as an institution that served learning and teaching service, a place for the students to learn, and became a learning institution for all parties in the school. To produce beneficial benefits for the society and maintain the quality, the school must (1) be customer-oriented, (2) extend continuous development, and (3) hold on cooperation (Hoy and Miskel, 2001). Hoy and Miskel (2001), also defined five keys of
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effective school: (1) a strong leadership from the headmaster, especially to improve learning quality, (2) teacher intention to improve student achievement, (3) focus on basic environment, and (5) systematic and periodic assessment for the students.

Theoretical Frameworks

The teacher was a figure who had to engage completely in the profession (Simbula et al., 2011) and had quite a significant role in the process of student learning. The teaching activity in inclusive school was certainly not an easy thing, because the teacher was faced with the teaching duty of students with special needs who individually needed different learning service and treatment from the normal students. This idea was supported by some previous researches that stated that the teacher of the inclusive school was susceptible to the high-stress level (Hudha et al., 2015), less optimistic (Yeung, 2011), high fatigue which might affect them to quit working (Kulophas et al., 2015), low self-efficacy (Jordan et al., 2009), minimum knowledge regarding inclusive concept (Mbwanbo, 2015), and anxiety (even for the senior teacher) (Makin, 2013). The school which implemented inclusive concept must ensure correctly that all parties who were involved inside have readiness and willingness to engage and play their role maximally, which then turned the school to be able to achieve the high-performance result.

The school as a non-profit organization was similar to the profit organization in that they both have their vision, mission, and work program which were oriented on the user satisfaction. To comply with the environmental demands which became more competitive lately between one school and other schools, the comprehensive framework of school performance was highly required to guide the school to be more focused on the strengths which have to be well-maintained. Through this research, the researcher aimed to explore the teaching experience to identify a form of teacher engagement in inclusive school as well as contribute to the school to develop aspects of strategic human resources (Merry, 2014) which were able to build teacher work engagement as a significant concept to specifically improve inclusive school performance.

METHOD

SD Negeri Sumbersari 1 Malang East Java, was selected as the object of this research because this school had implemented the inclusive school program since 2004 up to this time, and this school was the first piloting project of the Malang Government. The qualitative research and holistic single case study research from Yin (2011), has been adopted to optimize the process to explore and examine topics related to the teacher work engagement in an inclusive school, then these research objectives could be completely achieved. As many as six research informants were involved in this research by applying the snowball sampling method, classroom teacher, special companion teacher, and shadow teacher. Besides, two supporting informants as Headmaster and student guardian were also involved to discover and interpret the significance of teacher work engagement to improve inclusive school performance, specifically in SD Negeri Sumbersari 1 Malang. Further, to support this research validity, it needed the data validity test which covered: (1) credibility test (member check), (2) transferability test, (3) dependability test, and (4) conformability test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After the process of identification, reduction, and information analysis from each informant was conducted, which specifically related to the teaching experience during teaching activity in an inclusive school, it resulted that the teacher work engagement was able to see how far the teacher have physical and cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, the social engagement between the teacher and colleagues as well as social engagement between the teacher and students (Klassen et al., 2013).

The teachers who were engaged cognitively to the work, it could be reflected when the teachers have learning will and resilience. The learning will become an important part which could not be separated from the teacher’s physical and cognitive en-
gagement, where the engaged teacher would regard work as a challenge and they would prepare everything to accomplish their works even in hard condition. To face students with special needs was not an easy thing, in this case, the teachers needed good mental and physical health, so resilience could be a thing they should have. The resilience was a part of personal resources which could be an asset for an individual to engage in their works (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). The teacher who had a resilience degree would own physical and mental health to be able to prevent negative effects like stress, adaptation skill to overcome changes, and determine individual success in the relationship and interaction with the environment. On the other hand, from the research finding, it was also found that some teachers have complained about administration tasks that were charged on them since this additional task not only could bother and increase fatigue, but the administrative tasks were also risky for them to decrease teachers’ concentration or focus to educate the students. This condition was possibly able to decrease teacher engagement in their work.

From this research finding, it was indicated that not all the teachers who were involved in this inclusive school, SD Negeri Sumbersari 1 Malang could have emotional engagement in their work. This statement could be proven by the interview result where most teachers felt proud of their work. The engaged teachers would see that teaching profession as an exciting thing, has value and full meaning, moreover, if this profession was in line with their passion. When they worked according to what they loved, it was highly possible that they showed their sincere will and spare their time, energy, mind, and money on behalf of this work. In this context, the teacher passion could be an indicator that needed to be considered by the headmaster to recruit teachers, especially to hire special companion teachers who were commonly recruited from the less appropriate educational background from what is needed. The teacher’s emotional engagement was also reflected when the teacher felt inspired by their work, each informant stated that their work has brought them positive effects, particularly to develop their personality and emotion. Besides, it also could increase patience, inner satisfaction, and many kinds of feelings that might emerge also referred that the teacher was engaged emotionally to their work.

The teacher’s social engagement with colleagues was also reflected in the caring attitude to help each other and appreciate among the teachers in this school. Building communication and good relation with colleagues was an important part to achieve organizational performance which required special concern from the leader, in this context was the headmaster of a school. Since the good relation, supportive attitude, and mutual trust between the colleagues were able to deliver positive impacts which could transmit the spirit to other people, improve the interpersonal relationship and increase social engagement with the colleagues (Klassen et al., 2013). Next, this research also revealed that the teacher’s social engagement with the students was reflected from how far the teachers cared about, warmly behave and treat, and know various learning needs of those students with special needs in the classroom. Moreover, this research also found that competence was an inseparable part of the teacher engagement with the students, where the provision of pedagogic competence and social competence which were owned by the teachers could mobilize them to get engaged in their work.

Further, this research also found that self-efficacy and organizational climate were important discoveries from this research. Self-efficacy was considered as a part of personal resources that could work as an asset to build work engagement (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). First, the teachers who had self-efficacy or confidence in their ability to finish their work would influence teacher perception to get engaged to their students (Uden et al., 2013) and they were believed to have high interest and engagement as well as better performance in their work environment (Bandura, 1997). This finding was in line with the research finding that had been stated by Kulophas et al. (2018), who discovered that self-efficacy became an antecedent of work engagement, moreover, the self-efficacy could improve teacher engagement in their work. Second, the things that could improve teacher work engagement in the inclusive school needed to be well concerned by
many parties, from the teachers and headmaster. Besides, to build the work engagement, they could create a comfortable and fun organizational climate for all parties, as to create a comfortable working space, build work relationship among the teachers to get used to performing mutual help, appreciation, good leadership, obvious work responsibilities, appropriate work feedback, and equal opportunity to learn.

CONCLUSIONS

The teacher work engagement could be a factor that influences school performance as a whole if every teacher who was involved in this inclusive school had self-efficacy. Self-efficacy was a part of personal resources which became a factor that could influence the work engagement of individuals in their work. Based on this research finding, it was found that the teachers who had self-efficacy or belief in their self-competence would perform positive emotion and determine their efforts to overcome work challenges or obstacles during their task completion. Meanwhile, to empower the human resources who are existed in this organization to work optimally and own high work engagement, the organization is required to build a good and fun organizational climate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The headmaster needs to be able to improve interpersonal communication among teachers. Since, the close interpersonal relationship between the headmaster and teachers will turn the headmaster to easily mingle with the teachers, understand the teachers, and give advice as well as improve the teacher performance through some training. Furthermore, the teachers who feel that their presence can give benefits to the organization, considerable and meaningful for the organization would improve their engagement, which then impacts the school performance development. This research also proves that the concept of work engagement in a non-profit (public) organization context can deliver broader knowledge about the importance of work engagement as the success key of a public organization from the aspect of human resource management. Hence, the next researchers are expected to be able to broaden the research problem of work engagement in the non-profit organization sector, because all this time the work engagement is identical to the researches on the business sector and hopefully able to involve teaching effectiveness and student achievement which can be employed as output measurement, then it can produce to the more comprehensive research findings.

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