CREATIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE

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Abstract
Creativity can be nurtured and enhanced through education. In schools, creativity is seen as an important force for shaping the development of creativity in the management of schools and in the teaching and learning process. School creative climate is one of the important social factors in influencing motivation, attitudes, behaviors and beliefs of a teacher in their jobs every day. This concept paper discussed the concept of school climate and creative school climate that includes creative organizational climate theory relevant to creativity. The applications of creative school climate for foster creativity are also discussed through literature reviews.

Keyword*:* creativity, school climate, creative school climate, creative school climate theory.

Introduction

Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 stated a major transformation in the Malaysian education system. To prepare the nation to perform at an international level, it is important to envision a highly-successful education system (MOE, 2013). In producing a balanced education as a fundamental aspiration of students, Malaysia Education Blueprint expressed a desire to use the National Education Philosophy. Aspirations for every student are formulated in line with the National Education Philosophy which includes knowledge, thinking skills, leadership skills, bilingual proficiency, ethics and spirituality and national identity (MOE, 2013).

Students' thinking skills is the second most important aspirations outlined in the Malaysia Education Blueprint. Each student must have a passion to know and learn how to get a lifetime of knowledge and capable of linking various new knowledge. Each student must master a variety of cognitive skills such as critical thinking, creative and innovative, problem-solving and reasoning and learning ability (MOE, 2013).

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According to I.Dorn, Kanikeberg, & Burke (2012), in this 21st century, creativity is essential for future. A creative person can think creatively, work creatively with others and implement innovations. Rhodes (1961) defines to be creative people must have strong relationship between human being and environment factors. Environment factors here involved creative situation, social environment, physical environment, field, culture, family and organizations (Riga & Chronopoulou, 2012). In schools, creative environment creates the conditions for creative thinking to flourish and allows it to emerge.

Schools have a major role in fostering creativity by creating climate that is challenging and supportive for the teachers and the students (Omenyi, Agu, & Odimegwu, 2009). Creativity can be developed in a supportive school climate and therefore programme for the development of creativity should be emphasis to extent the school climate in supportive of creativity (Omenyi et al., 2009).

School Climate

According Rahil & Habibah (2002), environment is the stimulus that influences individual development. Coon (2000) provides a definition that the environment is *"The sum of all external conditions affecting development, especially the effects of learning".* Physical, social or psychological dimension involved as context in school environment and these influences the behavior of students in addition to the formation of skills (Coon, 2000). Climate is the observed and recurring patterns of behaviours, attitudes and feelings that characterize life in an organization (Ekvall, 1996). School climate refers to the character and quality of school life that reflects goals, leadership practices, norms, interpersonal relationship, values, teaching, learning and organizational structures (NSCC, 2007).

School climate is a complex and multidimensional construct used to describe the characteristic qualities of interactions among teachers and students at school (Hoy, Smith, & Sweetland, 2003). School climate can affect mood, motivation, creativity and productivity of teachers and students positively or negatively. School climate is a set of unique characteristics of

a school where teaching and learning situation in schools seem to be a function of the atmosphere of the school (Adeyemi, 2008).

According to Garbarino & Clarke (2009), school climate is a social system that creates learning environments. This phenomenon occurs because students from different background and a different experience to be in a group where behavior depends on the form of a protocol created by administrators and teachers. School climate influence the development of students, particularly through the introduction of self-concept, the effectiveness of the working capacity and the ability to build good relationships with others. Thus the role of school climate is very pertinent to the personality and the development of students' academic success and effectiveness of the school organization.

School climate can be categorized into three dimensions that are physical, academic and social dimension (Loukas, 2007). According to Loukas (2007), the physical dimension includes school size and ratio of students to teachers in the classroom, availability of resources, appearance of the school building and its classrooms, order and organization of classrooms in the school, safety and comfort. The academic dimension includes teacher expectations for student achievement, monitoring student progress, quality of instruction and promptly reporting results to students and parents (Loukas, 2007).

The social dimension of climate refers to the employee's social and organisational context in terms of teamwork, job design, leadership styles and reward system (Loukas, 2007). The social organisational contex can be described at three levels. The first level is the entire organisation that includes organisation's culture and human resource management policies. The second level is team level includes group composition and the third level is job level that includes autonomy and supervisory support, complex and demanding jobs (Dul & Ceylan, 2011). Most studies conducted on school climate shows that creative climate can create a motivating learning environment and help students obtain a better performance and more satisfied teachers to work. School climate reflects the atmosphere of the school and provides an environment conducive to effective teaching and learning process.

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Creative School Climate

Creative climate is understood as beliefs and opinions about school shared by the people in the organization (Karwowski, 2011). Creative climate reflected peoples' perceptions and beliefs about environmental attributes shaping expectations about creative outcomes and creative interactions in the work environment (Yi et al., 2008).

School is basically an organization characterized by individuals within the organization and standard behaviour within the system (Willower & Carr, 1965). Creative climate encourages people in the organization generate new ideas, implement creative ideas and helps the organization to grow and increase its efficiency (Ekvall, Waldenstrom-Lindblad, & Arvonen, 1983). School creative climate influences each member's ability to generate creative ideas for their individual and group development (Omenyi et al., 2009). Generally teachers pay much time in their school and have many interactions with their colleagues, leaders, students and other workers. Teachers' mental situation and behaviors are influence by creative organizational climate and then influence the creativity development of their student (Yi et al., 2008).

Mohsin & Yunos (2008) stating that creative school climate will be formed when (a)learning is seen as an enjoyable to students (b)students feel loved, valued and respected, (c)students are active in the classroom, (d)students are proud and feel the school is their own (e)the teacher is as advisers, trainers and source of knowledge, (f)students feel they can openly discuss their problems, (g)learning strategies promote cooperation and (h)learning experience is modified so that it is relevant to students' lives.

M.Amabile, Conti, Coon, Lazenby, & Herron (1996) defines creative organizational climate can influence the creative work carried out in organizations. Creative organizational climate also encourages people to generate new ideas and helps the organization to grow and increase its efficiency and at the same time it enables members to generate and implement creative ideas more effectively (Ekvall, 1996).

In the school context K.Hoy & Miskel (2007) defines the organizational climate of the school as a quality school environment that is constantly experienced by teachers and influence

their behavior. In addition, K.Hoy & Miskel (2007) stated that *"Organizational climate is a broad concept that denotes members shared perceptions of the tone or character of workplace; it is a set of internal characteristics that disitnguishes one school from another and influences the behavior of people in schools"*. Members in an organization share perceptions of the nature or character of the workplace; this is an internal characteristic that distinguishes one school to another school and affects people in schools.

According to M.Amabile et al., (1996), creative organization climate are influences by few categories such as (a)encouragement of creativity that appears within the organizations by organizational encouragement, supervisory encouragements dan work group supports, (b)autonomy of freedom which means creativity is fostered when individuals and teams have relatively high autonomy and control over their work and their own ideas, (c)resources that encourage people to accomplish their work by leading to beliefs about the intrinsic value, (d)pressures that have positive influence if it was perceived from the intellectually challenging nature of problems and (e)organizational impediments such as internal strife, rigid management, structures within organization that appear to enhance creativity.

Creative School Climate Theory

Karwowski (2009) defines three elements in creative climate that are interpersonal, task and energetic level. Interpersonel describes the relationship between people in a school and is characterized by overall warmth between people in the school. The task element is known as practical influence of participants on choice ways of realizing the task. The third element, the energetic level describes the dynamism of the system, its static versus flexible character. These three elements are highly interactive in creating creativity where a high level of interpersonal is accompanied by high task and fuelled by positive energy.

Many scholars presume that the relationship between the social organisational work climate and creativity is mediated by motivation. M.Amabile, Conti, Coon, Lazenby, & Herron, (1996) proved positive influence of intrinsic motivation and creativity. According to M.Amabile et al., (1996), creative organisational climate enhance employee's creativity and employees fell motivated to show creative behaviour. Amabile model of climate for creativity is elaborated on the basis of intrinsic motivation. There are ten categories proposed in this model that is related to intrinsic motivation that are organizational encouragement, supervisory encouragement, work group support, sufficient resources, challenging work, freedom, organizational impediments and workload pressure.

According to Ekvall (1996), climate for creativity is developed on the basis of the psychological processes which includes eight dimensions. A climate that is supportive of creativity is one that is characterized with challenge, freedom, idea support, debates, risk-taking, trust and openness, idea time and playfulness and humour. Ekvall (1996) defines the dimension as:

i.   Challenge – Challenge is the emotional involvement members have in its daily operations and long-term goals of the organization.
ii. Freedom – Freedom is describe as the independence in behaviour exerted by people in the organization
iii. Idea support – The supportive and proactive manner in which new ideas are treated.
iv. Trust and Openness – The emotional safety of professional relationships.
v.   Playfulness and Humour – The spontaneity and ease that is displayed
vi. Debates – The occurrence of encounters and clashes between viewpoints, ideas and differing experiences and knowledge.
vii. Risk Taking – The tolerance of uncertainty and ambiguity exposed in the workplace.
viii. Idea Time – The amount of time people can use for elaborating new idea.

Creative School Climate For Foster Creativity

Creativity is the creative thinking ability of behaviour, ideas and the finished product based on the experiences and owned curiosity, original knowledge, adventure, imagination, personality traits and challenges (Cheng, Shiu, & Chuang, 2012). According to Sharma (2011),

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creativity is a mental and social process involving the generation of new ideas or concept, or new associations of the creative mind between existing ideas or concepts.

There are many factors influence for fostering creativity in a school such as teacher-student interactions, creative leadership, work autonomy, school management and peer-to-peer teacher encouragement (Rubenstein, Mccoach, Siegle, & Rubenstein, 2013). School organizational climate provided some useful points for stimulating creativity and innovation: trust and support environment for fostering new ideas and changes; the willingness to challenge the fixed construct; prestige-free atmosphere and an attitude (Tsai, 2012).

Individual needs an environment that is supportive and rewarding of creative ideas and must decide how to respond in environment challenges (Sternberg, 2006). Environment need to provide a combination of challenge, freedom, resources, appropriate work-group features, supervisory encouragement and organizational support for individuals to be creative (Amabile, 1996). Yi (2008), in his study about creativity and organizations culture observed that teachers are creative. Teachers teaching was greatly influenced by school administrator and school leadership's empowerrment, provide support that motivated teachers to engage in creative teaching and also guided them toward professional growth. Peer interactions between teachers have positive influence on teachers' creative teaching. Creative idea generation, professional growth, brainstorming result, the importance of partnership and teaching strategy is the positive influence on teaching creativity (Yi, 2008).

According to Selamat, Samsu, & Kamalu (2013), organizational climate is a main factor that could affect teachers' creative job performance. If the organizational climate in the school was unhealthy, teachers in secondary schools were unable to carry out their tasks. A study by Omenyi, Agu & Odimegwu (2009), found than school climate has been proven to increase students' creativity and students'creativity was more stimulated in an environment where students were given opportunities for personal expressions.

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Conclusion

Creative school climate is conducive to produce creative teaching and learning process. Enhancing creativity is important not only for individual but for the whole organizations. Creative school climate fosters creative work and creative behaviour among the members in school organizations and also improve working condition among students and teachers to achieve schools objectives. To enhance creativity within members in an organization, social dimensions of school climate must be given major considerations. School is a wondrous place for creative adventure and growth when stimulated and prepared by good organizational.

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