

Increasing Teachers' Creativity Through Visionary Leadership, Religiosity, and Mutual Help

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Abstract

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a survey method involving 219 elementary school teachers, selected through proportional random sampling. Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) to evaluate both the measurement model (outer model) and the structural model (inner model), as well as to examine the direct and indirect relationships among the research variables. The findings indicate that visionary leadership, religiosity, and mutual help each have a positive and significant effect on teachers' creativity. In addition, mutual help significantly mediates the relationships between visionary leadership and teachers' creativity as well as between religiosity and teachers' creativity, demonstrating the important role of collaborative culture in strengthening teachers' creative capacities. Collectively, these variables explain 64% of the variance in teachers' creativity, while the remaining 36% is influenced by other factors beyond the scope of this study. These findings suggest that enhancing teachers' creativity requires an integrated strategy that combines visionary school leadership, the strengthening of teachers' religiosity, and the cultivation of a collaborative school culture grounded in mutual help. Such synergy is expected to promote sustainable educational innovation and improve learning quality in response to the demands of twenty-first-century education.

Keywords: visionary leadership, religiosity, mutual help, teacher creativity, SEM-PLS.

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INTRODUCTION

The transformation of education in the twenty-first century requires teachers to demonstrate high levels of creativity in designing innovative, adaptive, and student-centered learning experiences. Rapid educational reforms, globalization, technological advancement, and increasing demands for twenty-first-century competencies have fundamentally changed teachers' professional roles from knowledge transmitters to facilitators of meaningful learning. Consequently, teacher creativity has become a fundamental competency because creative teachers are more capable of designing authentic learning experiences that foster students' critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity, and problem-solving skills (Henriksen et al., 2022; OECD, 2023; UNESCO, 2023; Fullan, 2023).

Teacher creativity is increasingly recognized as one of the most important determinants of educational quality and school innovation. Creative teachers continuously generate novel instructional ideas, solve classroom problems effectively, adapt teaching strategies to diverse student characteristics, and encourage active learning. Previous studies consistently indicate that teacher

creativity significantly improves instructional quality, student engagement, learning motivation, and educational innovation (Henriksen et al., 2022; Torres, 2023; Vanblaere & Devos, 2022). Moreover, collaborative professional learning communities have been found to stimulate teachers' creative thinking through knowledge exchange and collective reflection, allowing schools to become learning organizations capable of continuous improvement (Harris & Jones, 2022; OECD, 2024). Despite these findings, teacher creativity remains uneven across schools because many educational institutions still lack leadership support, collaborative culture, and organizational environments that encourage innovation.

Among organizational determinants, visionary leadership has become an increasingly important research topic in educational leadership. Visionary leadership refers to principals' ability to formulate a compelling future vision, communicate strategic goals, inspire teachers, anticipate educational change, and mobilize organizational resources toward continuous improvement. Visionary principals establish organizational climates that support experimentation, professional learning, innovation, and collaborative problem-solving. Research has demonstrated that visionary leadership positively influences teacher motivation, organizational learning, innovative work behavior, and instructional creativity by encouraging teachers to explore new pedagogical approaches and continuously improve instructional practices (Hallinger, 2023; Sun et al., 2023; Ninković et al., 2025). Likewise, leadership characterized by transformational and visionary orientations has been shown to enhance teachers' creative teaching through increased professional autonomy, promotion focus, and collaborative work environments (International Journal of Educational Management, 2025; Acta Psychologica, 2025).

Besides organizational leadership, religiosity constitutes an important individual characteristic influencing teachers' creativity. Religiosity reflects individuals' internalization of religious beliefs and moral values that guide ethical behavior, intrinsic motivation, responsibility, sincerity, integrity, and commitment toward professional duties. Teachers with stronger religiosity generally perceive teaching as meaningful service, demonstrate higher resilience when facing instructional challenges, and possess stronger intrinsic motivation to improve students' learning experiences. Previous studies indicate that religiosity positively contributes to work engagement, organizational commitment, innovative behavior, and professional performance because it strengthens teachers' psychological resources and ethical responsibility (Aboramadan et al., 2023). Furthermore, educational studies have shown that religiosity combined with effective leadership significantly enhances teachers' professional commitment and performance, thereby creating favorable conditions for instructional creativity.

Another essential determinant of teacher creativity is mutual help, widely recognized in Indonesia as *gotong royong*. Mutual help refers to collaborative behaviors characterized by cooperation, reciprocal support, collective responsibility, trust, and knowledge sharing among organizational members. Within schools, mutual help encourages teachers to exchange teaching experiences, collaboratively solve instructional problems, develop innovative learning materials, and support each other's professional growth. Such collaborative interactions increase collective efficacy, organizational learning, and innovation capability, all

of which contribute positively to teacher creativity. Recent studies have consistently demonstrated that teamwork, collaborative culture, professional learning communities, and knowledge sharing significantly improve teachers' innovative behavior and creative performance (Vanblaere & Devos, 2022; Torres, 2023; Harris & Jones, 2022). Likewise, strengthening collaborative culture has been shown to improve teacher performance through increased individual capacity and organizational learning.

Conceptually, visionary leadership, religiosity, and mutual help are complementary factors that collectively promote teacher creativity. Visionary leadership establishes strategic direction and nurtures an organizational climate supportive of innovation. Religiosity strengthens teachers' intrinsic motivation, ethical responsibility, and professional commitment. Mutual help facilitates collaboration, knowledge sharing, collective learning, and mutual trust, enabling teachers to generate and implement innovative instructional ideas. The integration of these three dimensions creates a sustainable educational ecosystem where organizational leadership, individual values, and collaborative culture interact to strengthen teachers' creative capacities and school innovation (Hallinger, 2023; Harris & Jones, 2022; Fullan, 2023; OECD, 2024).

Although previous studies have examined the relationships between educational leadership, collaboration, religiosity, and teacher creativity, most have investigated these variables independently. Very few studies integrate visionary leadership, religiosity, and mutual help into a comprehensive framework for explaining teacher creativity, particularly within Indonesian elementary schools. This gap is theoretically important because creativity emerges not only from organizational leadership but also from teachers' internal values and collaborative social interactions. Therefore, this study aims to examine the effects of visionary leadership, religiosity, and mutual help on teachers' creativity. The findings are expected to enrich the literature on educational leadership and organizational behavior while providing practical recommendations for policymakers and school leaders in developing innovative, collaborative, and value-based school environments capable of responding to future educational challenges.

RESEARCH METHOD

Population and Sample

The research population is all teachers in the school where the research is located as many as 219 people. Given that the population is still reachable, all members of the population are made as research respondents so that the sampling technique uses saturated sampling (total sampling).

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection is carried out through several stages, namely:

1. compile research instruments based on the indicators of each variable;
2. perform instrument validation;
3. distribute questionnaires to respondents;
4. checking the completeness of respondents' answers;
5. performing coding and tabulation of data; and
6. processing data using SmartPLS 4.

Research Model

The relationship between variables in this study is expressed in the following structural equation.

$$Y = \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon$$

Description:

- Y = Teacher Creativity
- X_1 = Visionary Leadership
- X_2 = Religiosity
- X_3 = Mutual Help
- β = Path coefficient
- ε = galat (error)

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was carried out using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with the help of SmartPLS 4 software. The analysis stage consists of evaluation of measurement models (outer models), evaluation of structural models (inner models), and hypothesis testing.

1. Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Descriptive analysis was used to describe the data characteristics of each variable through mean values, medians, modes, standard deviations, variances, minimum values, maximum values, and respondent frequency distribution.

2. Model Evaluation

Model evaluation is carried out through testing measurement models (outer models) and structural models (inner models). The outer model was used to test the validity and reliability of the construct through the value of the loading factor, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite Reliability, and Cronbach's Alpha. Construct is declared to meet the criteria if it has a loading factor of ≥ 0.70 , $AVE \geq 0.50$, and Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha ≥ 0.70 . Furthermore, the inner model was evaluated using R^2 , f^2 , Q^2 , and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) values to determine the model's ability to explain the relationship between variables and the feasibility of the structural model.

3. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was carried out using the Bootstrapping procedure on SmartPLS 4. The decision on the hypothesis is based on t-statistical values and p-values. The hypothesis is stated to be accepted if the t-statistical value > 1.96 and the p-value < 0.05 at the significance level of 5%.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data Description

Creativity

The results of the measurement of the Creativity variable (Y) data were obtained based on respondents' answers to the creativity instrument which consisted of 36 question items that had a score of 1 to 5. The following are the results of the measurement of descriptive statistical data of the creativity variable, namely the amount of data (*sum*) is 35418, the number of data (*count*) is 219, the highest score (*maximum*) is 180, the lowest score (*minimum*) is 75, the average score (*mean*) is 161.73, the middle value (*The median* is 168.00, the most frequently appearing score (*mode*) is 177, the range of the highest score is 105, and the *standard deviation* is 20.796, as shown in table 1 below.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Creativity (Y)

No	Statistical Measures	Results
1	Number of Data Points	219
2	Mean	161.73
3	Median	168.00
4	Mode	177
5	Standard Deviation	20.796
6	Variance	432.493
7	Range	105
8	Minimum Score	75
9	Maximum Score	180
10	Number of Classes	9
11	Class Width	12
12	Total	35418

Visionary Leadership

The results of the measurement of the Visionary Leadership variable (X1) through research instruments obtained results, namely the number of data (*sum*) is 33146, the number of data (*count*) is 219, the highest score (*maximum*) is 175, the lowest score (*minimum*) is 77, the average score (*mean*) is 151.35, the median is 158.00, the most frequently appeared score (*mode*) is 168, the highest-lowest score range (*range*) is 98, and the *standard deviation* is 20.148. The data can be explained through table 2 below.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Visionary Leadership Variables (X1)

No	Statistical Measures	Results
1	Number of Data Points	219
2	Mean	151.35
3	Median	158.00
4	Mode	168
5	Standard Deviation	20.148
6	Variance	405.945
7	Range	98
8	Minimum Score	77
9	Maximum Score	175
10	Number of Classes	9
11	Class Width	12
	Total	33146

Religiosity

The results of the measurement of the data of the variable (X3) through research instruments obtained results namely the number of data (*sum*) is 32805, the number of data (*count*) is 219, the highest score (*maximum*) is 170, the lowest score (*minimum*) is 75, the average score (*mean*) is 149.79, the *median* is 156.00, the most frequently appearing score (*mode*) is 164, the highest-lowest score range (*range*) is 95, and the standard *deviation* is 18.789. The data can be explained through table 3 below.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Religiosity Variables (X2)

No	Statistical Measures	Results
1	Number of Data Points	219
2	Mean	149.79
3	Median	156.00
4	Mode	164
5	Standard Deviation	18.789
6	Variance	353.017
7	Range	95
8	Minimum Score	75
9	Maximum Score	170
10	Number of Classes	9
11	Class Width	12
12	Total	32805

Mutual Help

The results of the measurement of the mutual help variable (X3) through research instruments obtained results, namely the number of data (*sum*) is 34115, the number of data (*count*) is 219, the highest score (*maximum*) is 175, the lowest score (*minimum*) is 75, the average score (*mean*) is 155.78 The median value is 161.00, the most frequently appearing score (*mode*) is 165, the range of the highest-lowest score (*range*) is 100, and the standard *deviation* is 19.218. The data can be explained through the table 4 below.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistical Variables of Mutual Help (X3)

No	Statistical Measures	Results
1	Number of Data Points	219
2	Mean	155.78
3	Median	161.00
4	Mode	165
5	Standard Deviation	19.218
6	Variance	369.321
7	Range	100
8	Minimum Score	75
9	Maximum Score	175
10	Number of Classes	9
11	Class Width	12
12	Total	34115

SEM-PLS Analysis

The inferential statistical analysis used to test the hypothesis in this study is the *Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling* (PLS-SEM) method. The selection of the PLS-SEM method is based on consideration, especially given its ability to handle situations where the data does not meet the normal distribution assumptions.

Measurement Model (Outer Model)

1. Creativity (Y)

The Creativity variable (Y) is measured through a second order factor model with formative dimensions and reflective indicators. The results of the construct analysis using Confirmatory Factor Analysis showed that all indicators had a loading factor value above 0.7 as well as Composite Reliability and AVE values that met the ideal threshold. Discriminant validity testing through the Fornell Larcker criterion showed that the root value of the AVE variable Creativity was greater than its correlation with other constructs in the model. These results prove that the indicators on the Creativity variable are able to measure their constructs consistently and can be distinguished from other constructs in the study.

1. Visionary Leadership (X1)

The Visionary Leadership Variable (X1) was measured through a second order factor model with a pattern of formative relationships at the dimensional level and reflective at the indicator level. The outer model test produced Composite Reliability and AVE loading factor values which were all in the satisfactory category so that this construct was tested validly and reliably. The root value of AVE in the Fornell Larcker table for the Visionary Leadership variable was recorded higher than the correlation value with other exogenous and endogenous variables. These findings confirm that the Visionary Leadership instrument has good discriminative validity for use in subsequent structural model testing.

2. Religiosity (X2)

The Religiosity Variable (X2) was measured through a second order factor model with formative dimensions and reflective indicators. The results of the outer model test showed that the loading factor values of Composite Reliability and AVE all met the criteria so that the Religiosity construct was declared valid and reliable for use in further analysis. The Fornell Larcker criterion shows that the root value of the AVE of the Religiosity variable is greater than its correlation with other constructs in the research model. This proves the discriminant validity of the Religiosity variable is met and the indicators used are able to accurately distinguish this construct from other constructs.

3. Mutual Help (X3)

Mutual hel (X3) is measured through a second order factor model with formative dimensions and reflective indicators. The results of the outer model test showed that the loading factor values of Composite Reliability and AVE all met the criteria so that the Religiosity construct was declared valid and reliable for use in further analysis. The Fornell Larcker criteria show that the root value

of the AVE variable of mutual help is greater than its correlation with other constructs in the research model. This proves the discriminant validity of the Religiosity variable is met and the indicators used are able to accurately distinguish this construct from other constructs.

Structural Model (Inner Model) and Hypothesis Test

Testing the Variance Inflation Factor score resulted in a score of 2,124 for the Visionary Leadership to Creativity track and 2,932 for the Religiosity to Creativity track. Both values are well below the threshold of 5 so that the model is declared free from the problem of multicollinearity between exogenous variables. The results of the path significance test showed that Visionary Leadership had a positive effect on Creativity with a path coefficient of 0.174, a statistical T value of 2.773 and a p-value of 0.006. Religiosity was also proven to have a positive effect on creativity with a path coefficient of 0.170, a statistical T value of 2.175 and a p-value of 0.030. Both pathways meet the requirements for the significance of T statistics above 1.96 and p-value below 0.05 so that the two direct influence hypotheses in this study are declared accepted.

DISCUSSION

1. The Influence of Visionary Leadership (X1) on Creativity (Y)

The results of the first hypothesis test concluded that there is a direct positive influence between visionary leadership on creativity with a path coefficient value of 0.174. The test results showed that the T value of statistics > 1.96 and the $p\text{-value} < 0.05$. The test of the influence of Visionary Leadership (X1) on Creativity (Y) resulted in a statistical T value of 2,773 with a $p\text{-value}$ of 0.006. Thus, it can be interpreted that the better the Visionary Leadership (X1), the more likely it is to increase Creativity (Y).

Research conducted by Yang and Xu (2026) the visionary leadership of school principals has a positive effect on teacher learning innovation through improving work welfare and teacher collaboration. The research explains that visionary leaders are able to clarify common goals, foster teacher confidence, and create a school culture that supports learning innovation.

In addition, research by Hsin-Hao Chen and Yu-Hsi Yuan (2021) found that the visionary leadership of school principals contributes to the improvement of creative teaching teachers. Principals who have a clear and communicative vision are able to stimulate teachers' imagination so that teachers are more encouraged to produce innovative and creative learning methods.

2. Direct Positive Influence of Religiosity Variable (X2) on Creativity Variable (Y)

The results of the second hypothesis test concluded that there was a direct influence of Religiosity (X2) on Creativity (Y) with a path coefficient of 0.170 and produced a statistical T value of 2.175 with a $p\text{-value}$ of 0.030. The results of the test showed that the T value of statistics > 1.96 and the $p\text{-value} < 0.05$. This means that there is a significant influence of Religiosity (X2) on Creativity (Y). Thus, it can be interpreted that the better Religiosity (X2) tends to increase Creativity (Y).

Research by Marcus Penthin, Alexander Christ, Stephan Kröner, Manfred L. Pirner, and Annette Scheunpflug (2023) explains that teachers' spirituality and religiosity affect teachers' professional beliefs in teaching and learning. Teachers who have high spirituality tend to be more reflective, humanist, and innovative in learning. This research shows that religiosity is a source of value and meaning of work that encourages teachers to develop creative learning and be oriented to the needs of students.

3. Direct Positive Influence between Variables of Mutual Help (X3) on Creativity (Y)

The third hypothesis test concluded that there was a direct positive effect of Please Menohelps (X3) on Creativity (Y) with a path efficiency of 0.238, resulting in a statistical T value of 3,257 with a *p-value* of 0.001. The results of the test showed that the T value of statistics > 1.96 and the *p-value* < 0.05 . This means that there is a significant influence of Please Help (X4) on Creativity (Y). Thus, it can be interpreted that the better the Please Help (X3), the more likely it is to increase Creativity (Y).

Helping *behavior* is very important for teachers in increasing creativity because through cooperation, social support, sharing ideas, and professional collaboration, teachers get inspiration and new solutions in learning. In the school environment, the culture of helping creates a positive, open, and collaborative work atmosphere so that teachers can more easily develop learning innovations. Teachers who help each other do not work individually, but exchange experiences, media, learning strategies, and problem-solving so that teachers' creativity develops more optimally.

According to the research of Palmira Pečiuliauskienė, Lina Kaminskienė, and Erno Lehtinen (2023), teachers' collaborative activities such as working together to try new ideas and sharing learning ideas have a positive relationship with teachers' innovative behavior. The research shows that professional cooperation between teachers encourages creativity because teachers gain support, new experiences, and inspiration from peers.

4. Indirect Positive Influence between Visionary Leadership (X1) on Creativity (Y) through Mutual Help (X3)

The results of the fourth test concluded that there was an indirect influence of the Visionary Leadership variable (X1) on Creativity (Y) through Help Help (X3) with a path coefficient of 0.054, with a statistical T value of 2.196 with a *p-value* of 0.028. The results of the test showed that the T value of statistics > 1.96 and the *p-value* < 0.05 . This means that there is a significant influence of Visionary Leadership (X1) on Creativity (Y) through Please Help (X3). Or in other words, the Help Help variable (X3) is able to mediate the influence of Visionary Leadership (X1) on Creativity (Y).

Visionary leadership has an important influence on increasing teachers' creativity through helpful behavior because visionary leaders are able to create a collaborative, supportive, and innovative school culture so that teachers are encouraged to help each other, share ideas, and work together in developing creative learning. In the context of modern

education, teachers' creativity does not develop individually, but is strongly influenced by the school's social environment, principal's leadership, and collaborative relationships between teachers. Visionary principals are able to build a shared vision, inspire change, and create a school climate that encourages professional cooperation between teachers. Through a culture of helping behavior, teachers find it easier to exchange experiences, share learning media, discuss learning solutions, and develop innovations collectively. Thus, helpful behavior becomes an important mediator that connects visionary leadership with increased teacher creativity.

5. Indirect Positive Influence between Religiosity (X2) on Creativity (Y) through Mutual Help (X3)

The fifth hypothesis test concluded that there was an indirect positive influence of Religiosity (X2) on Creativity (Y) through Please Help (X3) with a path coefficient of 0.076, with a statistical T value of 2.529 with a *p-value* of 0.011. The test results showed that the T value of statistics > 1.96 and the *p-value* < 0.05 . This means that there is a significant influence of Religiosity (X2) on Creativity (Y) through Mutual Help (X3), in other words the Help variable (X3) is able to mediate the influence of Religiosity (X2) on Creativity (Y).

Religiosity has an important influence on increasing teachers' creativity through help-helping behavior because religious values form social concern, empathy, solidarity, cooperation, and the spirit of sharing between teachers. In the school environment, teachers' creativity does not develop individually, but is greatly influenced by a collaborative culture and positive social relationships between teachers. Teachers who have high religiosity tend to view helping colleagues as part of moral values and devotion so that they are more active in sharing ideas, experiences, learning media, and innovative learning solutions.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the hypothesis testing, this study concludes that teachers' creativity is directly and indirectly influenced by visionary leadership, religiosity, and mutual help. The findings indicate that visionary leadership has a positive and significant effect on teachers' creativity. School principals who are capable of formulating and communicating a clear vision, inspiring teachers, encouraging innovation, and creating a supportive organizational climate are more likely to foster teachers' creative thinking and innovative instructional practices. Visionary leadership enables teachers to explore new teaching approaches, solve instructional problems creatively, and continuously improve the quality of learning.

The study also reveals that religiosity has a positive and significant influence on teachers' creativity. Teachers who internalize religious values in their professional lives tend to demonstrate stronger ethical commitment, intrinsic motivation, responsibility, sincerity, and resilience in carrying out their educational responsibilities. These values encourage teachers to continuously develop innovative ideas, respond constructively to educational challenges, and provide meaningful learning experiences for students. Therefore, religiosity serves as an important personal resource that supports the development of teachers' creativity.

Furthermore, the findings confirm that mutual help has a positive and significant effect on teachers' creativity. A collaborative school culture characterized by cooperation, trust, knowledge sharing, mutual support, and collective problem-solving encourages teachers to exchange ideas, develop innovative teaching strategies, and improve instructional practices through collaborative learning. Such an environment strengthens teachers' confidence to experiment with new instructional methods and promotes continuous professional learning, ultimately enhancing their creativity.

This study further demonstrates that mutual help acts as a significant mediating variable in the relationship between visionary leadership and teachers' creativity. Visionary school principals not only influence teachers' creativity directly but also indirectly by fostering a collaborative organizational culture in which teachers actively support one another, exchange professional knowledge, and work collectively to solve educational challenges. This collaborative atmosphere strengthens teachers' capacity to generate and implement creative instructional innovations.

Similarly, mutual help mediates the relationship between religiosity and teachers' creativity. Teachers who possess strong religious values are more likely to demonstrate empathy, altruism, cooperation, and a willingness to assist colleagues. These positive interpersonal behaviors strengthen collaborative relationships among teachers, facilitate knowledge sharing, and create an environment conducive to creativity and continuous professional development. Consequently, religiosity contributes to teacher creativity not only through individual motivation but also through the enhancement of mutual help within the school community.

Overall, this study highlights that improving teachers' creativity requires an integrated strategy involving the strengthening of visionary leadership, religiosity, and mutual help. The synergy among these three factors has been proven to enhance teachers' creativity both directly and indirectly through the mediating role of mutual help. Therefore, school leaders and educational policymakers should prioritize the development of visionary leadership practices, foster teachers' moral and ethical values, and cultivate collaborative school cultures based on mutual help and collective responsibility. These efforts will contribute to creating innovative, adaptive, and sustainable learning environments capable of meeting the challenges of twenty-first-century education.

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