

Strategy for Leadership: How Principals of Successful Schools Improve Education Quality

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Abstract:

This study aims to find out the extent of the principal's leadership strategy that has been carried out in improving the quality of education in Karawang. This type of research is descriptive qualitative research. The data collection tools used are interviews, observations and literature reviews. The object of the study was the principal of SMK 1 Karawang. The study was conducted from March to December 2016. The data analysis technique is a descriptive qualitative analysis technique consisting of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. The results of the study stated that there were several activities of the principal to implement the functions of the principal as a strategy for improving the quality of education at SMKN 1 Karawang. These functions include the educator function, the manager function, the administrator function, the supervisory function, the leader function, the innovator function, and the motivator function.

Keywords: *Education Strategy, Leadership, Principals, Quality of Education*

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui sejauh mana strategi kepemimpinan kepala sekolah yang sudah dilakukan didalam meningkatkan kualitas mutu pendidikan di Karawang. Jenis penelitian ini adalah penelitian kualitatif deskriptif. Alat pengumpulan data yang digunakan adalah wawancara, observasi dan kajian pustaka. Object penelitian adalah kepala sekolah SMK 1 Karawang. Penelitian dilaksanakan dari bulan Maret sampai bulan Desember 2016. Teknik analisis data yang digunakan adalah teknik analisis kualitatif deskriptif yang terdiri dari pengumpulan data, reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menyatakan bahwa ada beberapa kegiatan kepala sekolah untuk menerapkan fungsi-fungsi kepala sekolah sebagai bentuk strategi dalam meningkatkan mutu pendidikan di SMKN 1 Karawang. Fungsi-fungsi tersebut diantaranya fungsi pendidik, fungsi manajer, fungsi administrator, fungsi pengawas, fungsi pemimpin, fungsi inovator, dan fungsi motivator.

Kata Kunci: *Kualitas Mutu Pendidikan, Kepemimpinan, Kepala Sekolah, Strategi Pendidikan*

INTRODUCTION

Education is a crucial factor in human life. Al-Shuaibi (2014) stated that education is essential to one's life. It leads to future prosperity and many life prospects. People stand to gain a great deal from receiving an education. With education, humans have a high degree and become cultured and able to continue to develop a culture to achieve a better life. Education plays a role not only in the formation of individuals but also in the formation of community culture toward a better quality of life. With the increasing quality of human life, humans can actualize their life continuously by maintaining and improving the quality towards a better direction in various fields of social life.

National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003 states that education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process (Nasution, 2020). So, students actively develop their potential to have religious and spiritual power, self-control, personality, intelligence, character, and the skills needed by themselves, society, nation, and state (Farida & Sitorus, 2020). From this perspective, education develops competent people in intellectual, social, emotional, spiritual, skilful, and character.

The development of quality demands and the encouragement of technology in various fields make universities continue to develop and produce useful academic products for society. Change requests can be made effectively in higher education management when leadership and governance are adequately developed. Various internal conflicts in the direction of education generally occur due to poor leadership (Oktaviani, Agung, & Marlina, 2019). The strategic education issue written in HELTS (Higher Education Long Term Strategy) is achieving quality supported by four pillars: accountability, autonomy, evaluation, and accreditation (Sulila, 2021). This issue at the college level elaborates on how to encourage universities to design activities oriented towards achieving the specified performance. The role of university leaders in managing and organizing institutions and the fundamental part of these leaders will significantly determine the success of educational institutions. The leadership's ability to decide what policy areas will boost performance substantially will be a direction for the lower structure. The management system of educational institutions capable of managing performance indicators will unite all the organization's activities into a joint movement to achieve the organization's vision (Sulisworo, 2012).

Some issues encountered in the administration of educational institutions. For example, how to make sure that the performance set by the organization at a higher level can be reduced to a version at a lower level, how to find key performance indicators that are supported by other indicators that affect each other, and how to measure the key indicators that have been chosen. An organization's ability to decide and manage performance with due regard to such defined indicators largely depends on the leadership and governance of the educational institution.

Leaders are essential in how educational institutions grow and change (Pizzo et al., 2017). Leadership abilities that exceed others are the first aspects that must be possessed, for example, with the policy of Law No. 9 of 2009 concerning BHP. The first thing the leader must do is study and analyze the Act on the influence, impact, and opportunities for educational institutions. His ability to foresee the appropriate measures will enable him to make additional adjustments to his vision and goal.

The leadership model needed to bring the institution to the world class is based on culture and values. This leadership combines several leadership models that the authors feel are suitable for the institution to grow and develop. This leadership is about creating value and turning it into an institutional culture that affects everyone's emotions, including the academic community and educational users. As stated by Prihatin (2012), that leadership is the production of value translated into an institutional culture related to perceived matters that concern the emotional impression of each person, whether they be academics or stakeholders. It is also strengthened by Patimbangi & Kasmah (2022) that for schools to compete to enhance their academic quality, their administrators must establish a plan for managing the schools they oversee.

Many previous studies have justified principal leadership in the educational field, such as research by Sanchez, Usinger, & Thornton (2019) concerned highlights one urban middle school's new female principal's beliefs and strategies. Juharyanto, Bafadal, Arifin, Saputra, & Adha (2020) conducted other research which focused on the use of conventional communication technology as a leadership strategy for the principal of the One Roof School. An investigation from Noor, Herlinawati, & Sofyaningrum (2020) aimed to explore the academic supervision of the principal in helping teachers improve their teaching profession to enhance students' learning outcomes. Another research by Pujiyati (2020) is concerned with analyzing and finding out the implementation of principals' leadership through school quality with the long-term goal of improving the quality of schools through principals' leadership. The following study by Jones & Ringler (2021) examined principal preparation students' ideas about affirming diverse kids and families in schools. This inside-out study examined if diversity issues at a principal preparation program internship changed candidates' self-awareness of their biases in educational settings. Thessin (2021) conducted a study examining the interactions between 12 principals and their supervisors to grasp better the significance of collaborative efforts to principals' professional growth. The subsequent research was conducted by Kaso et al. (2021), which aimed to determine the type of principal leadership in improving the quality of the teaching and learning process. In addition, the research by Huda & Rokhman (2021) focused on describing and analyzing the planning, implementation, and evaluation of Madrasahs in strengthening the quality of education at MI Miftahul Ulum.

Last but not least, the research from Kuryani, Arafat, & Mulyadi (2021) focused on determining and analyzing knowing and describing the principal's strategy in increasing the competitiveness of SD Negeri 1 Supat. Prior research has examined the beliefs, conventional communication technology, academic

supervision, implementation, principal preparation of students' thoughts, principal interaction, the types, and how to increase competitiveness concerning the leadership strategies of principals. However, there still needs to be a limitation of the study on the principal strategy for improving educational quality focused on the principal function, notably in SMKN 1 Karawang. This article outlines the principal's actions, including how the principal formulates strategies to fulfil his responsibilities to enhance the school's quality.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a qualitative research design. According to Taylor et al. (2016), qualitative research is a procedure that produces descriptive data in speech, writing, and behaviour of people observed. This qualitative research makes it possible to understand reality through inductive thought processes. It proceeds from reducing and reconstructing the data to the theory or interpretation of the phenomena observed (Ary et al., 2010). The qualitative descriptive approach is a research method that seeks to describe and interpret objects according to what they are (Creswell, 2014). Moreover, to answer the research question and appropriately describe facts, characteristics, objects, or study subjects.

Data collection tools used were interviews, observation and literature review. The interview was used to collect data from people about their thoughts, beliefs, and feelings regarding situations. Observation is a data collection technique used to observe principal activities. Observation can show whether words match actions or reveal subtleties that the person may not be aware of or cannot express (Ary et al., 2010). The literature review collects data or sources related to a particular topic that can be obtained from various sources such as journals, the internet, the thesis, and other libraries. This Literature review was conducted through recent research studies as a reference for determining school academic quality improvement programs.

The participant of this research is a principal of SMKN 1 Karawang, West Java, Indonesia. The participant was chosen by purposive sampling, which selects participants or data on the basis that they will have specific characteristics or experiences.

The data analysis techniques included data reduction, data presentation and conclusion drawing. The data obtained were processed using qualitative research. Then a domain analysis was conducted to get a general and comprehensive picture of the object of study through data reduction, display and verification (Miles & Huberman, 2013). The process of analyzing this data was carried out by researchers continuously. The researcher did this in a triangulation manner, including observation data, interviews and interrelated document studies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Principal Functions to Enhance Academic Quality

The principal's leadership role is essential in improving the quality of education. In carrying out his duties as a principal, there are several functions implemented by the principal, such as the function of educator, manager,

administrator, supervisor, leader, innovator and motivator.

In reference to observation, the principals can perform their functions well to improve the quality of education in the schools they lead. The principal's activities showed in the Table 1.

Table 1. Principal Functions to Enhance Academic Quality

Principal Functions	Activities
The educator Function	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. builds the mentality of school residents. 2. Instilling positive moral values both culturally and religiously. 3. Implementation of healthy life.
Manager Function	Establish a special team to manage programs in the context of school development.
Administrator Function	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide supervision and direction to trusted staff to resolve administrative issues. 2. School information system management that integrated all sections.
Supervisor Function	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supervise the field of planning, implementing and evaluating teaching and learning. 2. Involving teachers in various pieces of training to improve the teaching and learning process.
Leader Function	Establish good cooperation and communication with all school residents.
Innovator Function	Identify the problems and try to provide alternative solutions.
Motivator Function	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creating a conducive and comfortable working environment 2. Applying discipline as a form of efficiency and effectiveness to motivate work productivity.

Educator Function

Based on the results of research on the application of educator functions. The principal of SMKN 1 Karawang has carried out this function by prioritizing mental values, moral values, physical values, and artistic values. Build the mentality of school residents by setting an example to be disciplined and support positive activities, such as school participation in local, regional, or national competitions. Being disciplined is not only obeying the rules but consciously placing yourself to do according to beliefs. It is in line with Mariyani & Gafur (2018) stated that discipline must be pursued in a conscious form to be able to obey through existing habituation and apply especially in schools, but must be in line with its conscience. The skill possessed by the principal in his capacity as an educator can be enhanced through the mental growth of teachers in relation to their mental attitudes and dispositions. In this situation, the principal must foster an environment where all educators can do their jobs proportionally and professionally. As an educator, the principal must constantly seek to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. In this instance, the principal's expertise will significantly impact his professionalism, particularly in forming the understanding of educational professionals regarding the execution of duties. Experience as a teacher, vice principal, or member of a civic organization, as well as upgrading and training, significantly impacts the principal's capacity to perform his duties.

The principal also tried to instill positive moral values both culturally and religiously. Furthermore, the relevance and participation of the principal in instilling artistic and cultural values can be seen from the support for the value of art and phenomenon and the growing local culture. The support is in the form of activities that promote local cultural customs, such as traditional art performances in the release of class XII students or extracurricular theatre activities. In addition, the principal also tried to implement a healthy life. It is a little complicated because it needs strategies to handle it. One approach used is the personal approach by the principal.

It seems that the meaning of guidance cannot be separated from the understanding of guidelines proposed by Ki Hajar Dewantara. The three famous dense sentences in the among system are *ing ngarso sung tulodo, ing madyo mangun karsa, and tut wuri handayani* (Hardoko, 2013). These three sentences mean that education must be able to set an example, exert influence, and control its students. The attitude of the principal illustrates this. He provides an example, guidance, direction, and appeals in carrying out his duties and functions as a leader within SMKN 1 Karawang.

Furthermore, this is the principal's strategy for increasing the competitiveness of SMKN 1 Karawang. For example, the involvement of SMKN 1 Karawang in various competitions and increasing mental value also increases competitiveness and experience. In addition, the existence of a preserved religious culture provides added value as an educational institution.

Manager Function

Based on the results of research on the application of manager functions. The principal of SMKN 1 Karawang has carried out this function by forming a special team to manage programs in the context of school development. The entire program cannot be separated from the principal's legitimacy, supervision, and direction in its implementation.

The Principal of SMKN 1 Karawang makes it happen in the personal organization of the school in a structured and empowered manner tailored to the abilities of teachers and staff. With the aim of conformity with the duties and functions carried out with their expertise. Things to consider, such as educational background and experience in personal organization of the school. In its implementation, such organizing activities are planned in detail, directed, and evaluated periodically for performance. It is strengthened by Jelantik (2015) stated that as a manager, the principal does the planning, organizing, directing, and supervising.

Management is the process of a manager's job in developing programs and collaborating with a group to achieve objectives effectively and efficiently. As a result, it can be stated that a manager must be able to support the development of regular work by planning, organizing, or building a team of work mobilizers, as well as providing guidance and oversight. Therefore, education management will operate smoothly if it is overseen by a professional school manager who can distribute power and responsibilities to his representatives without sacrificing his role as a leader. Principals must have cooperative or competition-based techniques to empower the education personnel in order to fulfill their

managerial duties. They were providing chances for educators to advance their careers and encouraging all educational institutions to participate in supporting school initiatives. The approach for implementing the managerial duties and responsibilities of the principal in the school is defined by empowering the existing personnel, including teachers, employees, honorary personnel, school committees, and students. Principally, empowerment is intended to capitalize on the potential, expertise, and skills possessed by implementing and supporting elements of education in schools in development programs in all sectors by instilling in them the confidence to contribute to the program's implementation positively. In this regard, the principal must be able to empower all resources in order to enhance their performance effectiveness. Consequently, education management will be capable of producing satisfactory outcomes.

Administrator Functions

Based on the results of research on the application of administrator functions. In its implementation, it gives a mandate to the appointed staff but still supervises and directs these duties and responsibilities. In any case, the administrator functions still run well because, without good administrative capabilities, the supervision and direction of administrative issues will not go well.

In addition, there is a management of the school information system that is integrated between sections. Although information systems are broader, such as the general public and stakeholders, it is still conventional. Also, school resources, maintenance, and procurement of needs are managed. In carrying out his function as an administrator, the simplest thing for good administration is the existence of documentation regarding school activities, both academically and non-academically.

As an administrator, the principal has a tight association with the administrative tasks of recording, collating, and documenting all school programs. Specifically, the principal must be able to administer the curriculum, administration of students, administration of people, administration of facilities and infrastructure, administration of archives, and administration of finances. According to Kristiawan et al. (2017) conveyed that there are six administration duties of the principal, namely lesson management (compiling lesson schedules, arranging assessment activities), Staffing management (organizing matters related to the selection, appointment, transfer, and dismissal of school staff members), Discipleship management (planning and organizing new students, division of students), management of facilities and infrastructure, (procurement, use, and maintenance of school material tools), Financial management (salary teachers, school staff, and student instruments), control of the school and community relations (building cooperation between schools and the community and other institutions).

Supervisor Function

Based on the study's results, the supervisor comes from the internal school, including the principal, vice principal, and senior teacher. As a supervisor, the principal of SMKN 1 Karawang supervises the planning,

implementation, and evaluation of teaching and learning. After that, the principal made recommendations on the results of the supervision. Provide suggestions and inputs on which ones need to be maintained, improved, and/or left for the advancement of education at SMKN 1 Karawang. In addition, to improve the quality of education at SMKN 1 Karawang. Teachers are involved in training related to the development of quality education, the latest teaching methods, or the target pass rate that must be achieved. This is to meet and develop the abilities of teachers.

The nature of this research is consultative supervision, where the principal provides recommendations as a form of openness and encouragement to move forward to improve the quality of teaching and learning activities.

Leader Function

The study results show the principal's leadership role through good cooperation and communication with all school residents. The principal of SMKN 1 Karawang was able to synergize all school residents to achieve common goals. In establishing collaboration with school residents, especially staff who are given the opportunity and assigned to help formulate new ideas to improve the quality of education. In its implementation, the principal builds two-way communication so that there is a conducive and professional interaction relationship without prejudice to a sense of family. However, some obstacles, such as misunderstandings in communicating, cause the tasks given not to be adequately completed or not achieve the goal.

After all, the principal must be able to perform the role of a leader in an educational institution. This is an effort by the principal, who must be able to influence, encourage and mobilize all school residents to achieve common goals. After all, the principal must be able to perform the role of a leader in an educational institution. This is an effort by the principal, who must be able to influence, encourage and mobilize all school residents to achieve common goals. In addition to implementing the function, the principal must collaborate with employees in an effort to improve the quality of teaching by formulating new ideas with staff assistance. Two-way communication must be established between the principal as the leader and his subordinates for a productive interaction connection to develop. To accomplish effective leadership, a leader must possess a unique personality.

According to Schein (2004) conveyed that as leaders working to make our organizations more effective in the face of solid environmental constraints, we are sometimes shocked by the extent to which individuals and groups in the organization will continue to operate in blatantly unproductive ways, often risking its survival. As we try to work with other groups, we often find that they don't communicate and that organizational and community conflict is shockingly prevalent.

Innovator Function

Based on the results of research in innovating at SMKN 1 Karawang, there are obstacles faced by the principal. The problem is that in realizing a program, it turns out that it has financial difficulties. In this case, the principal innovates

by providing opportunities for external schools to interfere in these activities. In the issue of improving the quality of education, the principal innovates by involving the active participation of parents to be able to participate in the success of achieving and improving the quality of education.

The principal's ability as an innovator means that he can also make changes following the development of the needs of the world of education. In this case, the principal has been able to identify the problem at hand and try to provide alternative solutions to the problem. In line with what was conveyed by Ananda & Amiruddin (2017), innovation is a change that concerns certain aspects or is specific, intending to be a problem-solving tool. It is strengthened by Kholifah et al. (2021) that innovation aims to solve educational problems innovatively by looking at opportunities for school resources effectively and efficiently. As an innovator, the principal will do his duties in a constructive, creative, delegative, integrative, rational, objective, pragmatic, exemplary, disciplined, adaptable, and flexible manner. The principal must make improvements following the needs of the times and scientific progress. The alterations are consistent with the paradigm that develops in the realm of education in which he is involved. Innovating requires a school principal to take risks, be proactive, and be committed to his responsibilities.

Motivator Function

Based on the study results, in carrying out the function of a motivator. A principal must have the right strategy to motivate educators to perform their various tasks and processes. In its implementation, the principal creates a conducive and comfortable school environment. Study rooms, teacher's rooms and other infrastructure will provide a comfortable work environment and generate motivation. A comfortable layout will create a pleasant teaching and learning atmosphere. The attitude of cooperation, cooperation and mutual assistance will also cause high motivation. In addition, the principal also applies discipline as a form of efficiency and effectiveness that will motivate work productivity.

Furthermore, it encourages attention, guidance and appreciation of the achievements made by the education staff. This aims to improve the quality of education at SMKN 1 Karawang. It is strengthened by Saifuddin (2018) as a motivator; this motivation is carried out so that his subordinates are enthusiastic in carrying out their duties which aim to improve the quality of education.

Based on the findings of research and discussion, the principal's efforts to improve the quality of education through the implementation of functions can go successfully. This research can guide the principal in effectively enhancing efforts to carry out all required responsibilities. To improve the quality of education. The success of principals in enhancing the quality of education can be examined in a future study by analyzing how they execute their responsibilities to improve the quality of education with a greater emphasis on implementing each aspect.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, the researcher concluded that the principal carries out some activities in SMKN 1 Karawang to improve the quality of education at SMKN 1 Karawang. In its implementation, several functions are carried out, such as the educator function, function manager, function administrator, supervisor function, leader function, innovator function, and motivator function. The principal activities, for instance, build the mentality of school residents, instill positive moral values both culturally and religiously, implement a healthy life, and Provide supervision and direction to trusted staff to solve administrative problems. Other activities include involving teachers in various pieces of training to improve the learning process, Establishing good cooperation and communication with all school residents, identifying problems faced and trying to provide alternative solutions to these problems, and creating a conducive and comfortable work environment.

However, improving the quality of school education is not only the responsibility of the principal but the responsibility of all school residents who work together to achieve the vision by carrying out a mission that has been mutually agreed upon. Creating a school with high competitiveness and integrity requires cooperation from various parties to develop the organization. In addition, to improve the quality of education, it is also necessary to make an effective program design. Implementing the program that has been designed and evaluated is unsuitable for their expectations and goals.

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