



SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' STRATEGIES IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

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Abstract:

Education is an important foundation in the development of a nation. Therefore, this research was conducted to describe the strategies implemented by the school principal in an effort to improve the quality of education at Taruna Dra Zulaeha Middle School, Leces. This research methodology uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods, exploring data through in-depth interviews with school principals, teachers, as well as direct observation in the school environment, as well as documentation data. Data analysis was carried out through data reduction, data presentation and verification, with a focus on the strategies implemented by the school principal. Research findings show that school principals have implemented various holistic strategies. First, the school principal plans the program carefully, paying attention to the needs of educators and education staff, designing the curriculum, and establishing policies for adding subjects. Second, teacher development programs are an integral part of the strategy. Third, the school principal supervises the teaching and learning process, output and student development from the admissions process to graduation. In addition, the school principal is active in motivating and involving stakeholders, including parents and the community, to support improving the quality of education in schools. Through implementing this strategy, the quality of education at Taruna Dra Zulaeha Middle School, Leces, has experienced a significant increase. The research results show that the active participation of school principals in planning, implementing and evaluating educational policies has a positive impact on the quality of learning and student achievement.

Keywords: *Principal Strategy, Quality of Education*

INTRODUCTION

Education has an important and strategic role in increasing the excellence of a nation, not only superior in natural resource wealth but also superior in human resources. A quality school will produce quality output and outcomes, able to compete in facing increasingly rapid and complex global challenges.

Cadet Middle School Dra. Zulaeha Leces has a strategic position as an educational institution that plays a role in shaping the character, knowledge and skills of its students. In facing the ever-growing dynamics of education, the principal's leadership strategy is a critical factor that can influence the quality of education in this school. Therefore, the school principal has a central role in formulating and implementing strategies that can answer this challenge, with a focus on improving the quality of education at Taruna Dra Middle School.

Zulaeha Leces.

In meeting educational goals, the principal's leadership abilities and understanding are very important. The principal is an educational leader who has an important role in developing educational institutions, namely as the holder of control in educational institutions. In this case, the role of the madrasa head must be moved in such a way that it is in accordance with his role in improving the quality of education, namely as a manager so that he can influence the teaching staff, both directly and indirectly. Apart from that, the head also seems to have a very big role in developing the quality of education in the educational institution.

The principal is a school official where the principal manages school resources and educates students with teachers. The principal must be able to manage school administration, communication, commitment and integrity, be charismatic, and think about school progress (Wibowo Adi & Subhan Ahmad Zawawi, 2020). In today's world of global competition, educational and non-educational institutions must excel in effective management to become profitable schools. According to Fauzia & Falah, the principal's role is to bring about change in a school, namely creating effective work collaboration, shifting manager functions, leading by example, influencing others, developing team work, involving subordinates in decision making, making empowerment of subordinates a way of life, and building commitment (Sari A Jean Dwi Ritia et al., 2021).

Abdurrahman Shaleh in Muhammad Faturrohaman (2012: xiv) states that there are three factors that cause the quality of education to decline and experience uneven development. First, the national education implementation policy uses an educational production function or input-output approach which is implemented inconsistently. Second, the implementation of national education is carried out in a bureaucratic-centralistic manner, so that placing schools (madrasas) as education providers is very dependent on lengthy bureaucratic decisions and sometimes the policies issued are not in accordance with the conditions of local schools (madrasas). Third, the role of the community, especially parents of students, in the implementation of education so far has generally been more in the form of input support (funds), not in the education process (monitoring, evaluation and accountability decision making) (Kuntoro, 2019).

The quality of education contains many different meanings and many meanings. So there needs to be an operational understanding as a guideline in education management. To arrive at an understanding of educational quality, we first look at the meaning of educational quality. According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary, Quality is a measure of the good and bad of an object, situation, level or degree (smartness, intelligence, and so on). According to Hamalik (2006), quality can be seen from two sides, namely the normative aspect and the descriptive aspect. In the normative sense, quality is determined based on intrinsic and extrinsic considerations (criteria). Based on intrinsic criteria, the quality of education is a product of education, namely. educated human. In accordance with ideal standards. Based on extrinsic criteria, education is an instrument for educating a trained workforce. In a descriptive sense, quality is determined based on actual conditions, for example the results of learning achievement tests (Ketut et al., 2019).

The quality of education is important. However, in reality, in order to realize good quality education, we are faced with problems that have not yet

been resolved. Inayawati (2020) explains the problems related to education quality, such as: a) lack of infrastructure to support teaching and learning activities (KBM). The available infrastructure is not used optimally, and the provision of learning facilities and infrastructure is unequal; b) very strict rules and regulations which cause students to feel pressured; c) teaching staff who do not yet meet competency (Bilah Izzani & Rifqi Nafindra Ainur, 2022).

In previous research, (Wibowo Adi & Subhan Ahmad Zawawi, 2020) which discussed the Madrasah Head's Strategy in Improving the Quality of Education, namely that the Madrasah Head, in improving the quality of education, first plans a program by detailing the needs of educators and education staff who will carry out their duties, planning a suitable curriculum. will be implemented, planning a policy for adding subjects, then there are obstacles experienced by personnel who are still undisciplined, lack of communication between the head of the madrasah and some of the personnel. In other research according to (Bilah Izzani & Rifqi Nafindra Ainur, 2022) it is stated that the school principal's strategy in improving the quality of education consists of a strategy for developing teaching staff, a strategy for developing academic and non-academic achievements, a learning strategy, a strategy for facilities and infrastructure, a cost strategy, Public Relations strategy, monitoring and evaluation strategy. Meanwhile, according to (Hayudiyani et al., 2020), his research explains that the principal acts as an educator, the principal acts as a manager, the principal acts as an administrator, and as an administrator, the principal acts as a supervisor, and the principal acts as an entrepreneur.

The novelty of this research lies in how the school principal's strategy stands out in designing and implementing innovations to improve the quality of education. In the role of catalyst, the principal is not only an administrative leader, but also an agent of change who inspires creativity, adaptability, and the achievement of superior educational outcomes at Taruna Dra Zulaeha Middle School.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses descriptive qualitative methods. The data source was obtained from respondents using it as is. The place of research was carried out at Taruna Dra Middle School. Zulaeha Leces, Probolinggo. Based on the research focus on school principal strategies in improving the quality of education, the data sources or subjects in this research are: 1. Principal of Taruna Middle School, Dra. Zulaeha, 2. Deputy Principal of Taruna Middle School Dra. Zulaeha, 3. Taruna Middle School teacher Dra. Zulaeha. The data collection techniques are as follows: (1) Interview, (2) Observation, (3) Documentation. Analysis of data obtained from research is analyzed using certain procedures to produce findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Education is a very important human need in human life itself. In essence, humans will not only depend on nature without any other influence. In this process, the influence that humans will receive from other humans emerges, which will bring about changes in the attitudes of the humans they influence. This is in line with the definition of education stated in the National Education System Law no. 20 of 2003 article 1 which reads "Education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning

process so that students actively develop their potential to have religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble morals, and the skills they need, society, nation and state". Therefore, the education system must be able to guarantee equality of opportunity to improve the quality as well as the relevance and efficiency of education management to face challenges in accordance with the demands of changing life at home and abroad, so that educational change is needed in a planned, directed and sustainable manner (Baharun, H., Muali, C., Rozi, F., & Fajry, 2022).

Improving the quality of education is an effort to develop human resources which has an influence on national development (Rahman Mohammad Rafsanjani Algantara & Darmayanti Aastuti, 2022). Quality resources are obtained from quality educational institutions. A quality educational institution will be achieved with the effective leadership of the school principal in carrying out his role. Therefore, improving quality is a strategy carried out by school principals as leaders in creating quality education. Quality education will be achieved if it is supported by all components of well-organized education. These components are input, processes, output, teachers, facilities, infrastructure, costs, all of which need to receive full support from parties who have an important role in educational institutions, in this case the school principal (Manora Hecksa, 2019).

According to Sri Purwanti, a school principal can be defined as a functional teacher who is given the task of leading a madrasa where the teaching and learning process is held, or a place where interaction occurs between teachers who give lessons and students who receive lessons. From the explanation above, it can be concluded that the school principal is the locomotive responsible for determining the direction of an institution, the school principal is the organizer and controller of the implementation of school programs. Because it is hoped that the school principal will be able to bring the work spirit of teachers and build school culture in improving the quality of education at Taruna Dra Zulaeha Middle School, Leces. As a school principal manager, of course you must have various skills. According to (Wibowo Adi & Subhan Ahmad Zawawi, 2020), namely: 1) mental ability to coordinate all organizational interests and activities; 2) humanitarian skills, the ability to work by understanding and motivating other people both as individuals and groups; 3) technical skills, namely the ability to use equipment, procedures, techniques from a particular field such as machines, and so on; 4) administrative skills, namely planning, organizing, staffing and supervision.

Talking about quality certainly cannot be separated from taste, because a person's quality determines a person's style and taste. This is closely related to the style and taste of an education manager or school principal in controlling the wheels of education to achieve educational goals. Whether or not the quality of an educational institution is successful or not is determined by school principal leadership. School principals are advised to understand the role of school principals in improving the quality of education. By having this understanding, school principals will be able to improve the quality of education. Being able to improve the quality of education in the school he leads means that the school principal shows his responsibility in his work.

Based on the results of interviews and observations at the research location as well as conducting documentation studies. The strategy for improving the quality of education at Taruna Dra Zulaeha Middle School, Leces is through several school programs carried out by the principal and teachers by

equipping students with skills through extracurricular activities such as: music, dance, batik, hadroh, Youth Red Cross, Scouts. , Basic Leadership Training, Karate, English language club, Mathematics and Science club as well as coaching in various sports fields (Suhermanto, 2023). By providing guidance through extracurricular activities, we can maintain and improve the quality of students who are moral, characterful, skilled, religious and humanist. This program is implemented by the relevant subject teachers and collaborates with training and related stakeholders so that students not only know theory but have direct experience.

The head of the madrasah as manager includes planning the program. In planning the program, the head of the madrasah starts from: (1) planning human resources by detailing the needs of teaching staff who will carry out teaching duties; (2) planning policies such as the principal's program and the curriculum that will be implemented in this school; (3) in formulating policies, madrasah heads involve teachers and experts by going through several stages such as holding several meetings with PKS, teachers, school committees and other stakeholders such as supervisors; (4) Based on the policy of the madrasa head (Wibowo Adi & Subhan Ahmad Zawawi, 2020).

The second strategy is to improve the quality of education with teacher development programs in terms of performance. Teachers and lecturers are regulated by the Teachers and Lecturers Law of 2005, known as Law Number 14 of 2005. Teachers are defined by this law as professional educators who are responsible for teaching their students from early childhood to secondary school, as defined by the Ministry of Education (Siregar et al., 2022). So teachers must be able to have competence in teaching and educating students, therefore first teachers will be involved in training carried out by foundations and related agencies to develop and explore teachers' potential in teaching and educating students. The Kertas Leces Family Education and Welfare Foundation (YPKK) provides training to all levels of foundation employees, including teachers as educators. The form of training is in the form of independent curriculum training with various types of activities including training on teaching methods in the technological era, learning training on the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project, learning integration method training and training on exploring the skills possessed by teachers.

The school principal must also be able to facilitate and encourage teachers to take part in activities outside of school such as: training/seminars held by the education department and other related agencies as well as joining the Subject Teachers' Deliberation (MGMP) community whose meetings are held every month where the discussion in the meeting is the method learning, curriculum changes, self-development, collaboration etc. Apart from that, it is also hoped that there will be more colleagues outside the school to exchange ideas and thoughts.

The principal supervises or observes the class when the teacher teaches. This supervision activity schedule is carried out twice in one learning semester, namely once every three months. However, this is different from implementation in the field, which is often carried out suddenly to see the teacher's readiness in teaching starting from lesson plans, learning media, and other learning supports. Because sometimes there are teachers who haven't prepared everything thoroughly before starting learning. The aim of supervision is to organize teacher administration and teacher readiness in teaching starting from the planning stage, use of relevant media, implementation and evaluation

of learning outcomes to be used as a benchmark for the quality of education (Fadhilla Aisya Rahma & Istiningsih, 2020).

As a school principal, his responsibilities are not only limited to school administration but also involve supervision of the entire teaching and learning process, learning output, and student development. This supervision is important to ensure that schools achieve their educational goals and that students develop optimally. In this context, the principal can take several actions and focus his attention on several main aspects. First, supervising the teaching and learning process by conducting classroom observations, collaborating with teachers, and applying educational technology. Second, evaluate learning output by analyzing exam and assignment results in accordance with the school culture of reporting every month on student learning outcomes. Third, monitoring students by checking report cards and student progress records reported by the guidance and counseling teacher as well as checking the violation point book to record violations and each violation has a point weight and requesting counseling reports and support for student development. If the three things above are done properly, they will be able to improve the quality of learning and improve the quality of education at Taruna Dra Zulaeha Middle School.

CONCLUSION

From the discussion above, the author can conclude several things, namely: 1) The madrasa head's strategy in an effort to improve the quality of education at Taruna Dra Zueha Middle School, Leces is to equip the students' skills with extracurricular activities; 2) that the school principal, in improving the quality of education, first plans a program by detailing the needs of educators and education staff who will carry out their duties, plans the curriculum that will be implemented, plans policies for adding subjects; 3) The principal's strategy in improving the quality of education at Taruna Dra Zulaeha Middle School, Leces is creating a teacher development program as an educator through training carried out by the Foundation and the department and encouraging teachers to join the Student Teachers' Deliberation (MGMP) community so that teachers are able to collaborate and exchange ideas with teachers from other institutions; 4) supervise output, PBM, and students starting from the admissions process until completion of graduates at the school.

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