

The Implementation of Managerial Competence of School Principals in Improving the Quality Culture of Public High Schools in West Aceh

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ABSTRACT

The managerial competence of school principals plays a key role in creating and maintaining a quality culture in schools. In education, a quality culture is the collective commitment of all school members to consistently achieve and maintain high standards. This study aims to describe the implementation of school principals' managerial competence in improving school quality. A qualitative approach with a descriptive method was used. The subjects were 5 principals and 20 teachers from public high schools in West Aceh. Data collection techniques included interviews and observations. The study concluded that: 1) Principals involve teachers in school planning and management, fostering an organizational culture through collaboration, good communication, and teacher empowerment. Resources are managed transparently and accountably. Regular supervision ensures effective program implementation. 2) The quality culture is reflected in the principal's role as a manager, creating a conducive learning environment with adequate facilities and enforcing discipline to ensure a high-quality learning atmosphere. 3) Obstacles include limited resources, lack of student interest, maintaining teacher and parent cooperation, time constraints, and low school motivation in implementing a quality culture.

INTRODUCTION

Education in the current era of revolution plays a crucial role in developing human resources. The quality and competitiveness of human resources (HR) are key to achieving national goals and advancing Indonesia. High-quality HR in education significantly contributes to student achievement and improving the quality of education. According to Irwansyah (2021), education quality is reflected in various aspects, such as facilities, funding, HR, community support, student input, a conducive environment, and school management. Arifudin (2021) adds that the school climate is influenced by the role of the school principal.

Wahjosumidja (Tanjung, 2020) defines the school principal as a functional teacher assigned to lead a school. Principals bear great responsibility in improving school quality by effectively managing all resources to create efficient learning processes. According to the Regulation of the Minister of National Education No. 28 of 2010, a school principal is a teacher assigned additional duties to lead various types of schools, ranging from kindergartens to high schools.

An effective principal is a critical factor in a school's success. Even with adequate facilities and resources, schools will not achieve optimal results if the principal cannot manage them professionally. Juhji (2020) emphasizes that principals hold an essential role and must be able to influence and guide others to achieve the school's objectives. The principal's competence is a key indicator of education quality.

As a leader, the principal is the driving force for teachers, guiding the school towards its vision, mission, and goals. Leadership involves effort, the ability to execute, and authority. Kristiawan & Asvio (2018) suggest that successful principals foster respect, cooperation, and understanding of their staff's behavior. The principal also handles managerial duties such as policy-making and operational decisions, ensuring the institution achieves its goals. Arifudin (2018) notes that educational institutions are organizations that must be managed using a strategic approach to meet their objectives.

A principal must serve as a manager, overseeing the school's organization, development, and educational process. They are responsible for implementing school management functions, including planning, organizing, executing, and supervising activities. Based on the Minister of Education's decision, a principal's managerial competencies must be evident in their school management duties.

Research Focus

This study focuses on the managerial competence of school principals in creating and maintaining a quality culture within schools. According to Thahir (2023), a quality culture in education is the collective commitment of all school members to consistently achieve high standards. This involves ongoing professional development, continuous performance evaluation, and a focus on student needs and growth. Schools with a strong quality culture encourage collaboration, communication, and a commitment to innovation and improvement.

Research observations in public high schools in West Aceh show varying levels of quality culture and accreditation. These differences reveal diverse approaches by principals in fostering school quality. The researcher is particularly interested in analyzing the principals' competence in shaping a quality culture amidst increasing educational competition.

Research Problem

How is the implementation of managerial competence of school principals in improving the quality culture of public high schools in West Aceh?

Research Objectives

1. General Objective :
To describe the implementation of principals' managerial competence in enhancing school quality.
2. Specific Objectives :
 - To understand the implementation of managerial competence in improving the quality culture of public high schools in West Aceh.
 - To explore the quality culture of these schools.
 - To identify obstacles faced by principals in improving school quality.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of a School Principal

According to Murni (2016:368), a school principal is synonymous with the term "school principal," whose daily tasks involve "principalship," which refers to all duties and functions related to being a principal. This definition is essential as there are various terms used for the role, such as school administrator, school leader, or school manager.

The term "school principal" consists of two words: "principal" and "school." The principal refers to the leader of an organization or institution, while the school is an institution where students receive formal education. According to Fitria et al. (2022:12), a school principal is a teacher with the additional responsibility of leading the school, where teaching and learning interactions occur between teachers and students.

Mulyasa (Irfan, 2023:2097) states that the school principal plays a crucial role in improving the quality of education. They are responsible for managing education, school administration, staff development, resource utilization, and supervising the school. Becoming a school principal is a career progression from the functional role of a teacher.

The school principal is the leader of an educational institution and is responsible for the components within it. The success of the institution heavily depends on the principal's leadership. Therefore, strict criteria are essential for selecting principals. According to Muspawi (2020:403), leadership is the ability to mobilize resources, both internal and external, to achieve school goals optimally.

In summary, a school principal is a leader in an educational institution responsible for overseeing the teaching and learning process and facilitating

interactions between teachers and students. The role encompasses school administration, staff development, maintenance of facilities, and educational supervision. Thus, the selection process for principals requires stringent criteria to ensure they can fulfill their duties and achieve educational objectives.

Role of the School Principal

According to Purwanto (Suratman, 2020:2), a school principal has ten roles: implementer, planner, expert, mediator among members, group representative, reward giver, arbitrator, bearer of responsibility, creator, and father figure.

School Principal Leadership

Leadership is the effort to influence the behavior of individuals or groups to achieve personal or organizational goals (Stapa et al., 2023:1287). Kause (2022:42) defines leadership as the ability to influence and guide others in achieving predetermined organizational goals. Leadership is about influencing others to collaborate and reach objectives.

A leader should not impose their will but instead fulfill the needs of the group while adhering to agreed-upon plans. According to Al Ghozali (Noer, 2021:58), leadership is emphasized in Islam as an essential responsibility. The school principal, as both an educator and leader, plays a crucial role in improving educational quality. Andriani et al. (2024:21) identify four leadership behaviors: giving clear instructions, setting schedules, and providing specific guidance for tasks.

School Principal Competence

Competence refers to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for a specific job (Wahjosumidjo, 2005:19). Andang (2018:248) define competence as the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes reflected in habitual thinking and actions. In education, principals are responsible for managing resources to ensure effective and efficient learning processes. According to Permendiknas No. 13/2007 (Basuki, 2020:45), principals should have five competencies: personality, managerial, entrepreneurship, supervision, and social. These competencies ensure the school's quality and student achievement are maintained.

Effective school principals demonstrate commitment to the school's vision, use it as a guide, and focus on learning and teacher performance. Competence involves consistent knowledge, skills, and values that enable principals to make decisions to improve educational quality.

Managerial Competence

Managerial refers to leadership and management abilities. Husaini & Fitria (2019:44) describe management as handling and organizing resources effectively. Management involves planning, organizing, leading, and controlling organizational efforts to achieve goals. It is a process that requires skillful coordination of activities to meet objectives.

According to Stoner (Tanjung, 2020:73), school principals in a managerial role are responsible for planning, organizing, coordinating, supervising, and controlling school activities. They must work through others, make decisions, and manage the school efficiently and effectively.

School Culture Definition

School culture refers to the values, norms, beliefs, and behaviors shared by the entire school community, shaping how individuals interact and learn. A strong, positive culture promotes academic success, character building, and social development by fostering a supportive and inclusive environment. Teachers, staff, and leadership play key roles in modeling and maintaining these values, creating a productive atmosphere where students can thrive.

A positive school culture boosts student confidence, motivation, and engagement in learning, leading to better academic outcomes and the development of essential social and emotional skills. Maintaining this culture requires collaboration among all community members, clear vision, regular evaluation, and adaptability to overcome challenges like diverse backgrounds and leadership changes.

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method, focusing on collecting and analyzing data to explore current issues. Anggita & Setiawan (2018:79) state that qualitative research yields descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from observed subjects. Through this approach, the researcher gathers detailed data about the research object from observed sources.

Place and Time of Research

The research was conducted in five public high schools (SMA) in West Aceh from August to September 2024, with a detailed schedule provided for each school. The subjects of this study include school principals and teachers selected through purposive sampling.

Research Instrument

The main instrument in this qualitative study is the researcher, supported by interview guides, observation guides, and documentation. These tools are used to gather data on the implementation of school managerial competencies in enhancing the quality culture in West Aceh's public high schools.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using observation, interviews, and document analysis. The observation used a non-participant approach, while interviews were semi-structured, allowing for in-depth exploration of managerial competencies and quality culture at schools.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis follows Miles and Huberman's model (Sugiyono, 2019), including data collection, reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. Data were collected, summarized, and displayed narratively before drawing conclusions to address the research questions. This systematic analysis ensures accurate and reliable findings on the implementation of school managerial competencies in creating a quality culture at public high schools in West Aceh.

RESEARCH RESULT

1. Implementation of Managerial Competence of School Principals in Enhancing Quality Culture in State Senior High Schools in Aceh Barat

The research conducted in August to September 2024 analyzed how school principals implement managerial competencies to enhance the quality culture in state high schools in Aceh Barat. Interviews with principals from five schools revealed that they actively engage teachers in planning processes, both for short-term and long-term objectives. This collaborative approach in school development, resource management, and financial transparency is key to creating a conducive learning environment. Principals emphasize the importance of setting clear goals, leading by example, and encouraging teamwork among teachers and staff to foster adaptability to educational changes. They also promote continuous teacher development through training and workshops. Regular supervision and transparent program monitoring ensure that the school activities align with the set objectives.

2. Quality Culture in State Senior High Schools in Aceh Barat

The study highlighted that the quality culture in state high schools in Aceh Barat significantly depends on the leadership of the school principals. They create a conducive learning environment through effective communication, adequate infrastructure, and discipline. Principals support teacher professionalism by encouraging active participation in training and fostering teamwork. Collaboration with external partners is also pursued to enhance educational programs. Regular school evaluations, along with a reward and punishment system, aim to boost motivation and performance. Observations in the schools showed positive interactions between students and teachers, varied teaching methods, and effective program implementation, with a focus on improving the use of technology.

3. Challenges Faced by School Principals in Enhancing Quality Culture

Challenges identified include low student interest in learning, lack of team cohesion, limited facilities, time constraints, and low motivation among the school community. Strategies to address these challenges involve developing engaging learning activities, fostering team collaboration, requesting facility upgrades, optimizing time management, and holding training sessions to increase motivation and teamwork. These steps are essential to building a stronger quality culture within the schools in Aceh Barat.

DISCUSSION

1. Implementation of School Principals' Managerial Competence in Enhancing the Quality Culture in Public High Schools in West Aceh

The research findings indicate that the implementation of school principals' managerial competence in enhancing the quality culture in public high schools in West Aceh is evident in their active involvement of teachers in planning and school management processes. Principals foster a positive organizational culture through collaboration, effective communication, and empowering teachers to adapt and develop. They manage facilities, infrastructure, and finances transparently and use information technology to improve decision-making and learning. Regular supervision ensures that school programs are well-executed.

The principal's managerial competence is a key factor in enhancing the quality culture in schools. As educational leaders, principals must design and implement policies that support educational quality goals. They need a clear vision that inspires the entire school community, including teachers, students, and parents, to create an environment that supports quality education. Principals should act as change agents, encouraging innovation and collaboration among stakeholders to achieve shared goals.

Principals' managerial competence also includes effectively managing resources, such as budgeting, facilities, and human resources, to support quality learning processes. Good management practices help create an orderly and conducive learning environment. Effective resource management includes continuous evaluation and improvement of existing programs to ensure that all educational aspects operate optimally and meet quality standards.

Principals should build strong relationships with the community and other stakeholders. Effective communication with parents and community involvement in educational activities enhance support for quality education. A strong relationship with the community not only fosters parental involvement but also creates a broader quality culture within the school environment.

2. Quality Culture in Public High Schools in West Aceh

The research concludes that the quality culture in public high schools in West Aceh highlights the principal's role in advancing education. Principals create a conducive learning atmosphere through effective communication and adequate infrastructure. They support teacher professionalism, staff collaboration, and external partnerships. Routine evaluations and a reward-and-punishment system motivate performance. These efforts contribute significantly to enhancing the school's quality culture.

A quality culture in schools reflects the shared commitment and values held by the school community to achieve high educational standards. It involves proactive efforts to improve teaching, learning, and school management. The quality culture is shaped not only by teachers and facilities but also by student, parent, and community involvement in the educational process. A strong quality culture fosters an environment that supports both academic and non-academic growth.

Implementing a quality culture in schools involves creating a conducive environment for continuous improvement. It includes engaging all school

members in contributing to better learning processes and outcomes. Best practices, teacher training, and professional development programs aimed at enhancing skills are key components. Additionally, motivating students to take responsibility for their learning ensures they play an active role in fostering the school's quality culture.

Parental and community involvement is crucial in building a quality culture in high schools. Effective communication between the school and parents strengthens educational support and creates synergy in achieving shared goals. A strong partnership helps establish a sustainable quality culture that focuses not only on academic achievements but also on character and social skills development.

3. Challenges Faced by School Principals in Enhancing the Quality Culture in Public High Schools in West Aceh

Interviews with principals in public high schools in West Aceh reveal several challenges in enhancing educational quality, such as low student motivation, maintaining staff cohesion, limited facilities, long travel distances, time constraints, and lack of motivation among school members. To address these, principals implement strategies like developing engaging learning programs, enhancing staff communication and collaboration, improving facilities, better time management, and conducting training to build awareness and motivation. These efforts aim to create a conducive learning environment and strengthen the quality culture.

Principals often face challenges in enhancing the school's quality culture, primarily due to limited resources, both financial and infrastructural. Schools with budget constraints struggle to provide adequate facilities and modern educational tools. A shortage of skilled teachers also hampers the effective implementation of quality improvement programs.

Another significant challenge is the lack of support from stakeholders, including parents, the community, and the government. Without robust support, efforts to build a quality culture may progress slowly. Existing cultural practices within the school may also resist change, making it difficult to foster a new quality-oriented culture. Principals need strategic approaches like awareness-building, training, and effective communication to promote the importance of quality culture and encourage active participation from all school members..

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

1. The implementation of the school principal's managerial competence in improving the quality culture of public high schools in West Aceh is carried out by involving teachers in planning and management processes, fostering a collaborative organizational culture, and transparent management of resources. Regular supervision ensures effective execution of school programs.
2. The quality culture in public high schools in West Aceh is characterized by the principal's role in creating a conducive learning environment and

ensuring the availability of adequate educational facilities, promoting discipline, professionalism, and collaboration.

3. The challenges faced by school principals in enhancing the quality culture include limited financial and infrastructure resources, low student motivation, maintaining cohesion among teachers and parents, time constraints, and low motivation among school members.

Implications

1. Strengthening the Role of Principals: Managerial practices involving teachers in planning and management create a collaborative and adaptive work culture, enhancing overall school management effectiveness.
2. Support for Teacher Professionalism: A conducive learning environment and discipline implemented by principals lead to improved educational quality and strengthened school culture.
3. Collaboration to Overcome Challenges: Addressing resource limitations and low motivation requires stronger collaboration between schools, government, and private sectors to enhance facilities and encourage active participation in building a quality culture.

Recommendations

1. Enhancing Principals' Managerial Competence: Principals should continuously improve their managerial skills, especially in collaboration and communication, through regular leadership and educational management training.
2. Improvement of Facilities: Increasing the availability of educational resources like laboratories, libraries, and learning technology is essential. Collaboration with the government and private sector can help address resource constraints and boost educational quality.
3. Motivation and Innovation in Learning: Teachers should motivate themselves and their students to achieve educational goals through innovative teaching methods that support a higher quality culture.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

1. Exploration of Specific Managerial Strategies: Future research could focus on examining specific managerial strategies employed by school principals that have proven effective in fostering a quality culture, and how these strategies can be adapted to different educational contexts.
2. Impact of Stakeholder Collaboration: Further studies might investigate the role of collaboration between schools, government, parents, and the private sector in overcoming challenges related to resource limitations and motivation, and its direct impact on the quality culture in schools.
3. Innovative Teaching Methods and Student Engagement: It would be beneficial to explore innovative teaching methods that increase student engagement and motivation, as well as how these methods contribute to sustaining a strong quality culture in schools.
4. Comparative Analysis: Conducting comparative studies between schools that have successfully implemented quality culture improvements and

those that struggle could provide insights into the factors that make a significant difference.

5. Longitudinal Studies: Future research could involve longitudinal studies to assess the long-term effects of managerial interventions and strategies on the overall development of a school's quality culture.

These areas of study could help build a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to the successful implementation of a quality culture in schools.

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