

The Role of School Leadership in Improving the Quality Management of Education at SMA Kabupaten Kutai Barat

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the role of school leadership in enhancing the quality management of education at SMAN 2 Linggang Bigung, Kutai Barat Regency. The methodology employed in this research is a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation studies involving the principal, teachers, and representatives of the school committee. The findings indicate that the diversity of leadership styles, such as participative, transformational, and collaborative, significantly contributes to the improvement of educational quality. The strategies implemented, including teacher training, project-based learning, and parental involvement, have had a positive impact on the quality of learning and student motivation. Despite challenges such as budget constraints and resistance from some teachers, the collaborative efforts made by the principal demonstrate great potential for improving educational quality in the region. This research emphasizes the importance of inclusive leadership and adaptive strategies in creating an effective learning environment. The principal should continue to strengthen collaboration with various stakeholders and develop structured training programs for teachers to enhance their competencies in implementing innovative teaching methods. With these measures, it is hoped that SMAN 2 Linggang Bigung can continue to improve educational quality and produce graduates who are ready to compete in the global era.

Keywords: The Role, School Leadership, The Quality Management of Education, SMA

1. INTRODUCTION

The Role of School Leadership in Improving the Quality Management of Education at SMA Kabupaten Kutai Barat, specifically at SMAN 2 Linggang Bigung. Education is a crucial pillar in the development of a region, including Kutai Barat Regency, which is located in East Kalimantan Province (Affandi et al., 2022). Data from the Ministry of Education and Culture indicates that despite progress, significant challenges remain in enhancing the quality of education in this area. For instance, SMAN 2 Linggang Bigung, established in 2014, is still striving to achieve higher accreditation and improve its facilities and human resources. The phenomenon occurring at SMAN 2 Linggang Bigung reflects the challenges faced by many schools in Kutai Barat Regency (Sapitri et al., 2024).

The purpose of this research is to explore how the leadership of the principal at SMAN 2 Linggang Bigung can influence the quality management of education. This study will analyze the leadership strategies implemented and their impact on teacher and student engagement in the learning process (Khairani, 2023). By understanding the role of leadership, it is hoped that effective leadership models can be found to be implemented in other schools in Kutai Barat Regency. The benefits of this research are extensive, both for academics and education practitioners. The results of this study are expected to provide new insights into effective leadership practices in the educational context, as well as recommendations for principals and policymakers to enhance the quality of education (Warman et al., 2024).

In addition, this research can also serve as a reference for future studies on quality management in education in other regions. However, if issues related to quality management in education are not addressed seriously, the consequences can be quite detrimental. Schools like SMAN 2 Linggang Bigung, which lack strong leadership, tend to experience stagnation in the development of educational quality. This can result in students not receiving an optimal learning experience, which ultimately affects their academic performance and the skills of graduates (Dhamayanti & Karwanto, 2022). In the long term, this condition will affect the competitiveness of human resources in Kutai Barat Regency. Therefore, this research aims not only to explore the role of leadership but also to provide solutions to the existing problems (Rosmini et al., 2024).

Through an in-depth analysis of effective leadership practices at SMAN 2 Linggang Bigung, this research is expected to help create a better and higher-quality education system, as well as contribute positively to the development of education in Kutai Barat Regency.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Definition and Characteristics of Leadership in Education

Leadership in education is defined as the ability to influence and motivate individuals or groups to achieve established educational goals (Marliyani et al., 2023). Leadership in education is a process that involves influencing, motivating, and directing

individuals or groups within an educational environment to achieve established goals. The characteristics of leadership in education also include the ability to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment, where each individual feels valued and empowered to reach their full potential (Muhammad Rafieq Adi Pradana, 2024).

Educational leaders are expected to create a positive learning environment where all members feel valued and motivated to contribute. Another important characteristic is the ability to adapt to change (Kartika Sari, 2020). Leaders must be able to build good working relationships with all stakeholders, including parents and the community. This is essential for generating broad support for the educational programs being implemented (Maulani et al., 2024).

Based on the theories mentioned above, it can be concluded that leadership in education is a process of influence and motivation aimed at achieving educational goals, focusing on the leader's ability to influence others.

2.2. Roles and Responsibilities of Educational Leadership

The role of the principal as an educational leader is crucial in determining the direction and success of an educational institution. Their primary responsibilities include strategic planning, human resource management, and the development of a curriculum that is relevant to students' needs (Handayani et al., 2024). The principal is also responsible for creating a positive school culture where all members feel safe and supported in the teaching and learning process. In carrying out their role, the principal must be able to inspire teachers to innovate in their teaching and encourage students to actively engage in learning (Wajdi et al., 2022).

In addition, the principal also has the responsibility of establishing effective communication with students' parents and the surrounding community. This is important for building a strong partnership between the school and the community. By involving parents in school activities and listening to their feedback, the principal can ensure that the policies implemented align with the expectations of all parties (Kadarsih et al., 2020). The principal serves as an agent of change who promotes innovation within the educational institution. The responsibilities of educational leadership are not limited to the internal aspects of the institution; they must also consider the external impacts of the policies implemented (Mariana et al., 2021).

Based on the theories mentioned above, it can be concluded that the principal, as an educational leader, determines the direction and success of the institution. Their responsibilities include strategic planning, human resource management, curriculum development, and creating a positive school culture.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. This approach is chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of principal leadership and its impact on quality management in education at SMA Kabupaten Kutai Barat, specifically at SMAN 2 Linggang Bigung. By using this method, the researcher can explore richer information regarding the experiences and perspectives of the principal, teachers, and other relevant stakeholders.

3.2. Participants of the Study

The participants in this study consist of the principal, teachers, and representatives of the school committee at SMAN 2 Linggang Bigung. The sampling technique used is purposive sampling, where the researcher selects participants who are deemed to have relevant information and sufficient experience related to the leadership of the principal and quality management in education. The number of participants involved in this study is approximately 10-15 individuals, consisting of 1 principal, 5-7 teachers, and 3-5 school committee members.

3.3. Instruments

The instruments used in this study comprise in-depth interviews, observation, and document study. Interviews were conducted to collect qualitative data from the headmaster and teachers about leadership styles, applied strategies, and challenges encountered in improving educational quality. Observation was done to observe interactions firsthand in the school environment and the implementation of existing policies. Document study included analyzing relevant documents such as school performance reports, accreditation records, and previous evaluation outcomes (Ramadiani et al., 2020).

3.4. Data Analysis Techniques

Data obtained from interviews and observations will be analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. The researcher will identify key themes that emerge from the data and group information based on categories relevant to the research objectives (Bilgiler et al., 2022). The results of this analysis will be used to describe the role of the principal's leadership in improving quality management in education and to provide recommendations based on the research findings.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Leadership Styles and Strategies for Improving Quality

Table 1. Interview Data on Leadership Styles and Strategies for Improving Quality

No	Leadership Style	Strategies for Improving Education Quality	Challenges Faced
1.	Participative	Regular teacher training	Insufficient budget for training
2.	Transformational	Project-based learning	Resistance from some teachers
3.	Authoritarian	Use of technology in learning	Lack of technological facilities
4.	Participative	Parental involvement	Insufficient communication with parents
5.	Collaborative	Student development programs	Difficulties in organizing programs

The table above presents data from interviews that encompass leadership styles, quality improvement strategies, and the challenges faced by participants

at SMAN 2 Linggang Bigung. There are various types of leadership styles applied, such as participatory, transformational, and collaborative (Daulay, 2023). These styles reflect different approaches to involving educators and students in the decision-making process, thereby creating a more inclusive atmosphere. Various strategies have been implemented to improve the quality of education, including teacher training, project-based learning, utilization of technology, and parental involvement. Each strategy has specific goals aimed at enhancing the quality of learning and improving overall student performance. (Tomahuw et al., 2024).

In the implementation of quality improvement strategies in education, there are several challenges that must be faced, such as budget constraints, resistance from some educators to new methods, limited technological facilities, and a lack of communication with parents. These challenges must be addressed in order for efforts to improve the quality of education to be more effective (Febrina & Sesmiarni, 2024).

The research findings indicate that the diversity of leadership styles among school principals can significantly contribute to the quality management of education in high schools in Kutai Barat Regency. However, these challenges need to be addressed seriously to ensure the success of quality improvement programs. This study provides important insights for decision-makers and stakeholders in formulating policies that support the enhancement of educational quality in the region.

4.2. Impact of Quality Improvement Strategies on Learning Quality

Table 2. Impact of Quality Improvement Strategies on Learning Quality

No	Quality Strategy	Improvement	Impact on Learning Quality	Success Indicator
1.	Teacher Training		Improvement in teachers' teaching competencies	Average student exam scores increase
2.	Project-Based Learning		Increased student engagement and motivation	Student participation in projects increases
3.	Utilization of Technology		Accelerated access to information and learning	Use of technology tools in the classroom
4.	Parental Involvement		Enhanced parental support for children's education	Frequency of parent meetings at school
5.	Student Development Programs		Improvement in social and academic skills	Assessment of students' social skills

The table above presents data regarding the impact of various quality improvement strategies implemented at SMAN 2 Linggang Bigung. Each strategy has specific goals aimed at enhancing the quality of education. For example, teacher training aims to improve teaching competencies, while project-based learning is designed to increase student engagement. The impact of each strategy is clearly evident. The enhancement of teacher competencies leads to improved student exam scores, whereas project-based

learning can boost student motivation and participation in learning activities (Kusumaningrum et al., 2024).

To measure the success of each strategy, relevant indicators have been established. For example, the use of technology tools in the classroom can be assessed by how frequently technology is utilized in the learning process, and the frequency of parent meetings at school indicates the level of parental involvement (Muiz et al., 2024). Through this table, it is evident that the various quality improvement strategies implemented at SMAN 2 Linggang Bigung have a positive impact on the quality of learning. Clear success indicators allow for better evaluation of the effectiveness of each strategy. This research highlights the importance of sustainability and further development of these strategies to continue improving the quality of education in Kutai Barat Regency .



Picture 1. *The effectiveness of the quality improvement strategies implemented at SMAN 2 Linggang Bigung is notable*

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. Leadership Styles and Quality Improvement Strategies

Various leadership styles employed at SMAN 2 Linggang Bigung, including participatory, transformative, authoritarian, and collaborative approaches. For instance, the participatory leadership style emphasizes the involvement of all team members in decision-making processes, fostering a sense of ownership and accountability among staff (Zahria, 2024). By involving teachers in planning and implementing educational policies, the principal can enhance teacher commitment and motivation to actively contribute to improving the quality of education (Umy Nadrah Simatupang et al., 2024).

5.1.1. The participative leadership

Principals need to have the flexibility to adjust their leadership style based on the specific needs of staff or students at any given time. For example, when facing a crisis situation or sudden changes in educational policy, a principal may need to adopt

a more authoritarian approach to ensure that quick decisions are made for the continuity of school operations. Additionally, participative leadership theory is gaining increasing attention in the field of education (Sinaga, 2023).

The participative leadership theory is an approach that involves team members in the decision-making process. In this model, leaders do not make unilateral decisions but instead invite contributions, ideas, and opinions from team members. Participative leaders understand that each individual has valuable insights and experiences, thereby creating an atmosphere where all members feel valued and have a significant role in achieving collective goals (Maksum et al., 2023).

Participative leadership is characterized by effective two-way communication and active collaboration between leaders and followers. Leaders act as facilitators who encourage team members' involvement in the decision-making process, thereby building trust and commitment. In this model, the responsibility for achieving organizational goals is shared equally between leaders and team members, creating a democratic and inclusive work environment. Thus, participative leadership not only enhances team member engagement but also strengthens interpersonal relationships within the organization, resulting in better decisions and increased job satisfaction (Muktamar et al., 2024).

5.1.2. Transformational principals

Transformational principals not only lead with authority but also inspire teachers and students to actively contribute to the learning process. They create a positive climate where innovation is valued, and every individual feels they have an important role in achieving a shared vision. This approach plays a crucial role in improving the quality of education. Principals who adopt this approach focus on individual development and encourage innovation. They not only provide direction but also inspire teachers and students to achieve higher educational goals (Mardizal et al., 2023).

Through this approach, the principal is able to create an environment that supports creativity and continuous learning, resulting in positive effects on students' academic performance. They strive to build an environment where team members feel encouraged to grow, innovate, and contribute optimally to shared goals. This approach places emphasis on the personal and professional development of followers, thereby creating a dynamic and productive work climate (Nafal et al., 2024).

Thus, transformational leadership not only enhances individual performance but also creates a positive, innovative, and adaptive organizational culture in response to change. In this context, leaders act as change agents who help create a better vision for the future for the entire team and organization (Syarifah Nargis et al., 2023)

5.1.3. The authoritarian leadership

The authoritarian leadership style is less favored but still holds relevance in certain contexts. This style provides clarity and structure in decision-making, which can be very useful in emergency situations or when quick decisions are needed. However, it is important for the principal to recognize that excessive use of the authoritarian style can hinder innovation and teacher participation in the learning process. The quality improvement strategies implemented at SMAN 2 Linggang Bigung include regular teacher training, project-based learning, utilization of technology, parental involvement, and student development programs (Imron, 2023).

Each of these strategies is designed with specific goals to improve the quality of education. For example, teacher training aims to update their knowledge and skills, while project-based learning is designed to enhance student participation through real practical experiences (Musnaeni & Abidin, 2022).

5.1.4. Collaboration

Collaboration in education involves cooperation among various elements within the learning environment, including teachers, students, parents, and the community. Collaborative leadership is a managerial approach that emphasizes the importance of cooperation and synergy among team members to achieve common goals (Putri & Arifin, 2022). In this model, leaders act as facilitators who encourage active participation from all individuals in the decision-making process. Collaborative leadership not only enhances employee engagement but also results in more effective and high-quality decisions. In practice, collaborative leadership involves several key elements, such as open communication, information sharing, and the establishment of mutually respectful relationships between leaders and team members. Leaders serve as mediators who bridge communication between departments and ensure that all voices are heard fairly.

Additionally, leaders are also responsible for building trust within the team, which is a fundamental foundation for successful collaboration. By creating a supportive environment, leaders can encourage team members to share ideas and contribute actively. The principal at SMAN 2 Linggang Bigung has undertaken various significant collaborations to enhance the quality of education at the school. Here are some forms of collaboration that have been implemented:

5.1.4.1. Collaboration with the Department of Education and Culture

One important step taken by the principal is to establish collaboration with the East Kalimantan Department of Education and Culture. Recently, the principal received an operational vehicle from the department, aimed at enhancing the school's mobility in carrying out extracurricular activities and education (Abida & Kamalia, 2024). With this operational vehicle, the school can more easily participate in competitions or training

outside of school, which may have previously been hindered by transportation limitations. This collaboration demonstrates the local government's commitment to supporting the improvement of education quality in remote areas such as Kutai Barat.

5.1.4.2. Parental Involvement and School Committee

The principal is also active in building strong relationships with students' parents and the school committee. Through regular meetings and open communication, the principal encourages parental participation in their children's educational activities (Karma & Nurmawanti, 2023). Parental involvement is crucial in creating a positive learning environment, and this collaboration helps enhance support for students both at home and at school. By engaging parents, the principal can ensure that children's education receives maximum attention and support from all parties involved .

5.1.4.3. Student Development Programs

The principal has also implemented student development programs that involve various parties, including teachers and the local community. These programs are designed to enhance students' social and academic skills through extracurricular activities, seminars, and workshops (Irwan et al., 2023). By inviting external speakers and collaborating with local organizations, the principal creates opportunities for students to learn from practical experiences and broaden their horizons. This collaboration not only improves students' skills but also builds networks between the school and the community

5.1.4.4. Project-Based Learning Initiatives

In an effort to enhance student engagement, the principal has implemented project-based learning that involves collaboration among students from various classes. In this project, students work together to complete tasks that require creativity and problem-solving skills. This collaboration among students not only boosts motivation but also teaches them the importance of teamwork and effective communication. The principal acts as a facilitator who supports this learning process by providing the necessary resources and guidance. Through various forms of collaboration, the principal at SMAN 2 Linggang Bigung demonstrates a commitment to creating a better learning environment for students. Collaboration with the government, parents, the community, and among students is a strategic step in improving the quality of education in the region.

5.2. Impact of Quality Improvement Strategies on Learning Quality

The impact of the quality improvement strategies implemented at SMAN 2 Linggang Bigung is very significant on the quality of learning . Regular teacher training has proven to enhance their teaching competencies, which is reflected in the increased average exam scores of students. When teachers possess better knowledge and

skills, they can deliver material more effectively and engage students, resulting in improved academic outcomes .

Project-based learning also has a clear positive impact on student motivation and participation. By involving students in real projects, they not only learn theory but also develop practical and social skills (Aisyah et al., 2022). Active involvement in projects enhances students' self-confidence as well as their teamwork abilities. This demonstrates that interactive learning methods can transform the way students engage with the subject matter. The use of technology in the learning process has accelerated access to information for students. With technological tools such as computers and educational software, students can access a broader and more up-to-date range of learning resources.

The use of technology also enables more innovative and engaging learning methods, such as online learning or blended learning. This makes the learning process more flexible and aligned with students' needs in today's digital era. Parental involvement in children's education also shows a positive impact on the quality of learning. When parents actively participate in school activities and support their children's learning at home, it creates a more conducive learning environment. The frequency of parent meetings at school as an indicator of success demonstrates that communication between the school and families is crucial for supporting students' academic development. Student development programs designed to enhance social and academic skills also show positive results through assessments of students' social skills (Jani Heribertus, 2023).

The various approaches implemented not only have a positive impact on the quality of learning but also help create an inclusive and collaborative school atmosphere. However, challenges such as budget constraints and resistance from some teachers must be addressed seriously to ensure that efforts to improve education quality can proceed more effectively. The success of implementing these strategies heavily relies on the support of all relevant parties, including the principal, teachers, parents, and educational policymakers in Kutai Barat Regency. This research provides important insights for decision-makers to formulate policies that support the sustainability of quality improvement programs in the region. Thus, it is hoped that the quality of education in Kutai Barat Regency will continue to improve alongside the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders involved.

6. CONCLUSION

This research shows that the leadership of the principal at SMAN 2 Linggang Bigung plays a significant role in improving quality management in education. Through various leadership styles, such as participative, transformational, and collaborative, the principal has successfully created an inclusive learning environment that supports the involvement of all parties. The strategies implemented to improve education quality, including teacher training, project-based learning, and parental involvement, have positively impacted the quality of learning and student performance. Despite challenges such as budget constraints and resistance from some teachers, the collaborative efforts made by the principal demonstrate great potential for enhancing educational quality in the region.

Based on the findings of this research, it is recommended that principals continue to strengthen collaboration with various stakeholders, including the Education Office, parents, and the local community, to address existing challenges. Additionally, there is a need for more structured training programs for teachers to enhance their competencies in implementing innovative teaching methods. By considering input from all stakeholders and applying a more adaptive approach to changing educational needs, it is hoped that SMAN 2 Linggang Bigung can continue to improve education quality and produce graduates who are ready to compete in the global era.

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