

## **The Role of School Heads in Improving the Quality of Education**

**Nurhafizah**

Universitas Negeri Medan

Indonesia

hafizahsd82@gmail.com

### **ABSTRACT**

This research aimed at describing the strategy of principal on upgrading the educational quality. Type of this research was qualitative, case study. Data were collected by using observation, interview and documentation. The results were 1)the planning by organizing the strategic school program; 2) the program implementation by upgrading school discipline, upgrading score of National Examination, holding extracurricular and cooperating with the society.

**Keywords:** Principal's Strategy, Educational Quality

### **Introduction**

In line with the challenges of global life, education is very important because of the education of one of the determinants of the quality of Human Resources. Where today the superiority of a nation is no longer marked by the abundance of natural wealth, but rather the superiority of Human Resources (HR). Where the quality of Human Resources (HR) is positively correlated with the quality of education. The quality of education is often indicated by good conditions, fulfilling the requirements, and all the components that must be included in education. These components are input, process, output, education personnel, facilities and infrastructure, and costs.

Being a professional education staff will not be realized without any effort to improve it, as for one way to make it happen is by developing professionalism. This requires the support of those who have an important role, in this case the principal, where the principal is an education leader that is very important because the principal is directly related to the implementation of education programs in schools. The achievement of educational goals depends very much on the skills and wisdom of the principal's leadership which is one of the leaders of education. Because the principal is a professional officer in the school organization who is responsible for managing all sources of the organization and cooperating with teachers in educating students to achieve educational goals.

With this principal's professionalism, the development of professionalism in education personnel is easy to do because it is in accordance with its function, the school principal understands the school needs he leads so that the teacher's competence is not only stagnant in the competencies he had before, but is increasing and developing well so that the professionalism of teachers will be realized. Because professional education personnel not only master the appropriate fields of science, teaching materials, and methods, but are able to motivate students, have high skills and broad insight into the world of education.

There are two factors that can explain why efforts to improve the quality of education have been lacking or unsuccessful. First, the education development strategy has been more input oriented. Such a strategy relies more on the assumption that when all educational inputs have been fulfilled, such as the provision of books (teaching materials) and other learning tools, provision of educational facilities, training of

*“Emerging foreign language towards Industrial Revolution*

*4.0”*

teachers and other education personnel, automatically educational institutions (schools) will be able to produce quality output as expected. It turns out that the input-output strategy is not fully functioning in educational institutions (schools), but only occurs in economic and industrial institutions.

Second, education management has been more macro-oriented, governed by the bureaucracy at the central level. As a result, many factors that are projected at the macro (central) level do not occur or do not go as they should at the micro (school) level. Or briefly it can be said that the complexity of the scope of the problem of education often cannot be thought of in a complete and accurate manner by the central bureaucracy.

### **Quality of Education in Schools**

One indicator of the success of the leadership of a principal is measured by the quality of education in the school he leads. In the context of education, the definition of quality includes the input, process and output of education. The input of education is everything that must be available because it is needed for the ongoing process. The process of education is a change in something into something else by integrating school input so as to create enjoyable learning situations, able to encourage motivation and interest in learning, and truly able to empower students. The output of education is a school performance that can be measured by its quality, effectiveness, productivity, efficiency, innovation, and work morale.

In a broader concept, the quality of education has a meaning as a level of overall educational processes and outcomes that are determined according to certain approaches and criteria. A quality education process is determined by various dynamic elements that will exist in the school itself and its environment as a unified system. There are ten determinants of the realization of a quality education process, namely the effectiveness of the principal's leadership; participation and sense of responsibility of the teacher and staff; effective teaching and learning process; programmed staff development; relevant curriculum; have a clear vision and mission; conducive school climate; self-assessment of strengths and weaknesses; effective communication both internally and externally; and intrinsic involvement of parents and society.

Based on the concept of education quality, it can be understood that education development is not only focused on providing educational input factors but also must pay more attention to the educational process factors. Input education is an absolute thing that must exist within certain limits but does not become a guarantee that it can automatically improve the quality of education (school resources are necessary but not sufficient condition to improve student achievement). During 2002 the world of national education was marked by various changes that came repeatedly, simultaneously and with very high frequencies. Not yet complete the socialization of one change, another change came.

Some of the innovations that dominated the educational stage during 2002 included Broad Based Education (PBL / BBE) with its life skills, Competency Based Curriculum (CBC / CBC), School Based Management (SBM / SBM), National Final Examination (UAN) replacement for EBANAS, formation of school boards and district / city education councils. Each update has its own story and problem. An interesting phenomenon is that changes generally have the same nature, namely using word based (based). If observed further, changes that are "based" are generally from top to bottom; from the centre to the regions; from management at the top level to school; from the government to the community; from something that is national to local.

Other terms that are popular and have the same nuance as "based" are empowerment, grass root, bottom up, and the like. Just look at the change labels that are currently milling about in the world of national education (sometimes understood in various ways): school-based management, school based quality improvement, competency-based curriculum ), competency-based teaching / training (competence based teaching / training), broad based education, community based education, class based evaluation (classroom based evaluation), student based evaluation (student based evaluation) also known as portfolio evaluation, local-based educational management, community-based educational financing, internet-based learning, education unit level curriculum (KTSP) and whatever else.

Various conditions need to be taken into account, starting with the substance of the innovation itself until the local conditions where the innovation will be implemented. In essence, a fundamental change, involving many parties, and on a broad scale will always require time. An innovation should be clear in its criteria, measurable and realistic in its objectives, and the benefits felt by those who carry it out.

Many educational innovations launched in Indonesia today are less fully lived by the implementers (including principals), in addition to being conceptually "disabled from birth", in a hurry, instantaneous, the target is unrealistic, based on linear assumptions as if an innovation will run smoothly once launched and implicitly laden with obsession to instil "political assets" in the future. So of course the innovation of a model like this contains a big risk of failure.

### **Principal Leadership**

Leadership is one of the most important factors in an organization because most of the successes and failures of an organization are determined by leadership in the organization. What is meant by leadership as stated by James M. Black in *Management: a Guide to Executive Command* is the ability to convince and move others to cooperate under his leadership as a team to achieve a goal certain.

Leadership as an activity in guiding a group in such a way that the goal is achieved. Leadership is the ability possessed by someone to be able to influence others, so that he wants to do something that can help achieve a purpose and purpose. Based on several definitions above, it can be concluded that leadership is the ability that someone has in influencing others to cooperate in order to take action and actions in achieving common goals.

The principal is a school leader or leader of an institution where they receive and give lessons. The principal is a functional staff teacher who is given the task of leading a school where the teaching and learning process is held, or a place where there is interaction between the teacher who gives lessons and students who receive lessons. The principal is a teacher (functional position) who is appointed to occupy a structural position (principal) in school. The principal is a teacher who has the ability to lead all resources in a school so that it can be utilized maximally to achieve common goals.

The principal is one of the components of education that plays the most role in improving the quality of education. As stated in Article 12 paragraph 1 of PP 28 of 1990 that principals are responsible for carrying out educational activities, school administration, coaching other education personnel, and utilizing and maintaining facilities and infrastructure. The principal is appointed through certain procedures and requirements that are responsible for the achievement of educational goals through efforts to increase the professionalism of education personnel which implies increasing the learning achievement of students. The headmaster who is professional will think to

*"Emerging foreign language towards Industrial Revolution*

*4.0"*

make changes no longer think how a change is as it is so that it is not crushed by the change. To realize a professional school principal is not as easy as turning the palm of the hand, it all takes a long process.

But the reality in the field there are still many principals who do not carry out their duties and functions as education leaders. This is because in the appointment process there is no transparency, low mentality of the principal characterized by lack of motivation and enthusiasm and lack of discipline in carrying out tasks, and frequent late arrivals and many other inhibiting factors to improve the quality of education which implies low productivity of the principal's work. Also on quality (input, process, and output). The achievement of educational goals depends very much on the skills and wisdom of the principal's leadership which is one of the leaders of education. Because the principal is a professional officer in the school organization who is responsible for managing all sources of the organization and cooperating with teachers in educating students to achieve educational goals.

With this principal's professionalism, the development of professionalism in education personnel is easy to do because it is in accordance with its function, the school principal understands the school needs he leads so that the teacher's competence is not only stagnant in the competencies he had before, but is increasing and developing well so that the professionalism of teachers will be realized. Schools as formal education aim to shape human beings with personality, in developing students' intellectuals in order to educate the lives of the nation. The principal as a leader in a formal education institution, has a very important and decisive role in helping teachers and students.

In its leadership the headmaster must be able to understand, overcome and correct the deficiencies that occur throughout the school environment as a whole. To improve the quality of education in the schools he leads, a school principal must be able to improve the performance of educators, including education personnel who are under his authority. Many factors can influence a teacher's performance. So as the highest leader in school, a school principal must be able to provide positive energy that is able to move the teachers to carry out their duties seriously and responsibly so that their performance is better and better. As a leader who has influence, a principal must continue to strive so that ideas, advice, suggestions and (if necessary) instructions and orders and policies are followed by the teachers who are guided. Thus he can make changes in the way of thinking, in attitude and in acting or behaving. So being a demand for a principal must always refresh his knowledge and scientific insight so that he can later support his duties as a leader.

There are many inhibiting factors in achieving the leadership quality of a school principal such as the appointment process is not transparent, the low mentality of the principal is characterized by a lack of motivation and enthusiasm and lack of discipline in performing tasks and often late, insights from principals that are still narrow and many other factors that hinder performance a school principal to improve the quality of education in the institution he leads. This implies the low productivity of the principal's work which also has implications for quality (input, process and output).

In carrying out its leadership function, the principal must carry out the management and guidance of all components of the school through administrative, management and leadership activities which are very dependent on the managerial ability of a school principal. In connection with this, the principal as a supervisor functions to supervise, build, correct and seek initiatives on the course of all educational

*“Emerging foreign language towards Industrial Revolution*

*4.0”*

activities carried out in the school environment. In addition, the principal as the leader of the educational institution functions to realize a harmonious human relationship (human relationship) in order to foster and develop interpersonal cooperation, so as to simultaneously move towards the achievement of goals through the willingness to carry out their respective duties seriously and responsibly. In language now packaged in professional terms.

Therefore, all the implementation of education will lead to efforts to improve the quality of education that is strongly influenced by teachers in carrying out their duties operationally. For this reason the school principal must carry out school supervision that allows the operational activities to take place properly.

### **Duties and Role of Principals**

The principal is one of the components of education that plays the most role in improving the quality of education. Therefore, a school principal must be a professional person. Professionally a school principal has the following tasks:

- a. The school principal behaves as a communication channel in the school environment he leads. All information relating to the administration of education in schools must always be monitored by the principal.
- b. The principal acts and is responsible for all actions taken by subordinates. Actions made by teachers, students, staff, and parents of students cannot be separated from the responsibility of the principal.
- c. With limited time and resources a principal must be able to deal with various problems. With all the limitations, a school principal must be able to arrange the distribution of tasks quickly and can prioritize if there is a conflict between the interests of subordinates and school interests.
- d. The principal must think analytically and conceptually. The principal must be able to solve the problem through one analysis, then solve the problem with one solution. And must be able to see each task as a whole that is interrelated.
- e. The principal is a mediator or mediator. In the school environment as an organization in it consists of people who have different backgrounds that can cause conflict. For this reason, the principal must be a mediator in the conflict.
- f. The principal is a politician. Principals must be able to establish cooperative relationships through persuasion and agreement (compromise) approaches. The political role of the principal can develop effectively, if: (1) the principle of networking for mutual understanding can be developed, (2) the formation of alliances or coalitions, such as professional organizations, OSIS, BP3, school committees, etc .; (3) the creation of cooperation (cooperation) with various parties, so that various kinds of activities can be carried out.
- g. The principal is a diplomat. In various meeting forums the principal is the official representative of the school he leads.
- h. The principal must be able to make difficult decisions. No single organization runs smoothly without problems. Similarly, school as an organization does not escape problems and difficulties. And if there are difficulties, the headmaster is expected to act as a person who can solve these difficult.

In carrying out its leadership, in addition to having to know and understand its duties as a leader, which is not less important than all of that is that the principal should understand and know his role. The role of the principal in carrying out his role as manager as expressed is: (a) The role of interpersonal relations; (b) Informational roles; (c) As decision maker      The role of interpersonal relationships includes: (a)

*“Emerging foreign language towards Industrial Revolution*

Figurehead which means symbol with the understanding of the principal as a school symbol; b) Leadership, which means the principal is a leader who must be able to move all the resources in the school so that it can generate high work ethic and productivity to achieve goals; c) Liaison which means the principal becomes the liaison between the interests of the school and the interests of the environment outside the school. While internally the principal becomes an intermediary between teachers (educators), education personnel and students (students).

Informational roles include: a) Principals as monitors, meaning that principals must always make observations of the environment because of the possibility of new information that affects the school they lead; b) The principal is a disseminator, meaning that the principal is fully responsible for disseminating and distributing information to teachers (educators), education personnel and parents of students; c) Principal as spokesman, meaning the principal has the duty to disseminate information to the environment outside the school that is deemed necessary.

While relating to the role of school principals as decision makers include: a) Entrepreneurs, meaning principals always try to improve school appearance through various ideas and thought ideas in the form of new programs and conducting surveys to study various problems that arise in the school environment; b) Disturbance handlers (people who pay attention to disturbances), meaning that principals must be able to anticipate disturbances that arise by taking into account the situation and the accuracy of decisions taken; c) A Resource Allocate (a person who provides all sources), meaning the principal is responsible for determining and researching who will obtain or receive the resources provided and must be delegated; d) A negotiator roles, meaning the principal must be able to hold talks and deliberations with outsiders in meeting school needs.

### **The Role of the Principal in Improving the Quality of Education**

Broadly speaking, the scope of duties of the principal can be classified into two main aspects, namely work in the field of school administration and work relating to educational professional development. To carry out these tasks as well as possible, there are three types of basic skills that must be possessed by the principal as the leader of education, namely technical skills (technical skills), communication skills (human relations skills), and conceptual skills (conceptual skills).

According to the perception of many teachers, the success of the principal's leadership is primarily based on his ability to lead. The key to the smooth running of the principal's work lies in stability and emotion, as well as self-confidence. This is a psychological basis for treating staff fairly, giving exemplary behaviour, behaviour and carrying out tasks. In this context, the headmaster is required to display his ability to foster cooperation with all personnel in an open working climate that is partnerships, as well as increasing active participation from parents. Thus, the principal can get full support from each work program. The involvement of principals in the student learning process is mostly done indirectly, namely through guidance to the teachers and efforts to provide the necessary learning facilities.

The principal as the communicator is tasked to be an intermediary for forwarding instructions to the teacher, as well as channelling the aspirations of school personnel to the agency to the teachers, as well as channelling the aspirations of school personnel to vertical agencies and the community. The pattern of communication from schools is generally familial by utilizing their free time. The flow of information delivery in two directions, namely top-down communication, tends to be instructive, while bottom-up

communication tends to contain statements or requests for details of the task technically operational. Communication media used by principals are: official meetings, circulars, mobile information books, data boards, oral announcements and chain messages delivered orally.

In the field of education, what is meant by quality has an understanding in accordance with the meaning contained in the learning cycle. In summary, some key terms of quality can be mentioned, namely: according to standards (fitness to standard), according to market / customer use (fitness to use), according to fitness needs to latent requirements, and according to the global environment (fitness to global environmental requirements). As for what is meant by quality in accordance with standards, that is if one aspect in the management of education is in accordance with the standards that have been set.

There are eight dimensions that can be used to analyse the characteristics of a quality, namely: (1) performance (performance), (2) features, (3) reliability, (4) confirmation (conformance), (5) durability, (6) service competency (survivability), (7) aesthetics, and (8) perceived quality of customers that are subjective. In the view of the general public it is often found that the quality of schools or school excellence can be seen from the physical size of the school, such as buildings and the number of extracurricular activities provided. There are also people who argue that the quality of schools can be seen from the number of school graduates who are accepted at the next level of education. To be able to understand the quality of formal education in schools, it is necessary to see formal education in schools as a system. Furthermore, the quality of the system depends on the quality of the components that make up the system, as well as the process that lasts to fruition.

In the implementation of quality improvement management, the principal must always understand the school as an organizational system. For this reason, the principal must act more as a leader than as a manager. As a leader, the principal must: 1) direct more than encourage or force; 2) More reliant on cooperation in carrying out tasks than relying on power or SK; 3) Always instil confidence in the teacher and administrative staff. Instead of creating fear; 4) Always shows how to do something rather than show that he knows something; 5) Always develop an enthusiastic atmosphere instead of developing a drab atmosphere; 6) Always correct existing mistakes rather than blame someone's mistakes, work with full strength instead of being reluctant because they are lacking.

The principal is one of the school's resources called human resource type managers (HR-M) who have the task and function of coordinating and harmonizing implementing types of human resources (HR-P) through a number of management inputs so that HR-P uses their services to mix hands with the rest of the resources (SD-slbh), so that the teaching and learning process can take place well to produce the expected output.

In general, the characteristics of strong school principals can be written as follows: a) Have a far-sighted insight (vision) and know what actions to take (mission) and understand correctly about the way to be taken (strategy) ; b) Having the ability to coordinate and harmonize all the limited resources available to achieve goals or to meet school needs (which are generally unlimited); c) Have the ability to make decisions skilfully (fast, precise, fixed, and accurate); d) Having the ability to mobilize existing resources to achieve goals and that are able to inspire followers to do important things for their school goals; e) Having tolerance for differences in each person and not

*“Emerging foreign language towards Industrial Revolution*

*4.0”*

looking for people who are similar to him, but totally intolerant of people who underestimate the quality, achievement, standards and values; f) Having the ability to combat the enemies of the principal, namely ignorance, suspicion, not making decisions, mediocracy, imitation, arrogance, wasteful, rigid, and duplicity in acting and acting.

The role of the principal in improving the quality of education can be explained as follows: 1) the principal uses the "system approach" as a basis for ways of thinking, how to manage, and how to analyse school life. Therefore, the principal must think system (not the unsystematic), which is thinking correctly and intact, thinking in harmony (not jumping), thinking holistically (not partially), multi-interdisciplinary thinking (not parochial), thinking entropic ally (what is changed in certain components will affect other components); think "cause and effect" (remember his creation is always in pairs); interdependence and integration thinking, eclectic thinking (quantitative + qualitative), and syncretism thinking; 2) The principal has complete and clear management input, which is indicated by completeness and clarity in the task (what must be done, accompanied by functions, authorities, responsibilities, obligations, and rights), plans (product descriptions to be produced), program (allocation of resources to realize plans), provisions / limitations (statutory regulations, qualifications, specifications, work methods, work procedures, etc.), control (intervening actions), and give a good impression to his subordinates ; 3) The principal understands, understands, and carries out his role as manager (coordinating and harmonizing resources to achieve goals), leaders (mobilizing and empowering human resources), educators (inviting favors to change), entrepreneurs (making things happen), providers (directing, guiding and giving examples), creators of work climate (making work life situations enjoyable), administrators / administrators (mengadminitrasi), reformers (providing added value), regulators (making school rules), and motivating (encouraging). The managers have eight competencies, namely: (a) people skills, (b) strategic thinkers, (c) visionary, (d) flexible and adaptable to change, (e) self-management, (f) team player, (g) ability to solve complex problems and make decisions, and (h) ethical / high personal standards.

There are 18 competencies that must be owned by a strong manager, namely: (a) efficiency orientation, (b) proactivity, (c) concern with impact, (d) diagnostic use of concepts, (e) use of unilateral power, (f) developing others, (g) spontaneity, (h) accurate self-assessment, (i) self-control, (j) stamina and adaptability, (k) perceptual objectivity, (l) positive regard, (m) managing group process, (n) use of socialized power, (o) self-confidence, (p) conceptualization, (q) logical thought, and (r) use of oral presentation.

Therefore, to meet these needs cannot be separated from the role of the principal as manager in educational institutions. What is meant by the role of the principal in improving the quality of education here are the efforts made by the principal to achieve progress and perfection of education entrusted to him, including the role of educators, managers, administrators, supervisors, leaders, innovators, and motivators?

### **Principal Leadership Requirements**

Progressing back and forth from school depends on how the principal as leader polices or plans strategies for school progress and quality. In order for the school to run well, the principal should have the requirements. The conditions referred to here are traits or attitudes that are appropriate for a leader to be able to carry out leadership successfully.

To serve as a head in the education environment, several conditions are established, namely: education that is owned, experience that is often expressed in the

*"Emerging foreign language towards Industrial Revolution*

*4.0"*



form of class / rank, and age. The special conditions that must be owned by a leader (Principal) are; 1) Having good intelligence / intelligence; 2) Self-confidence and membership; 3) Having expertise / skills in their fields; 4) Very social and friendly; 5) Discipline; 6) Likes to help and give instructions; 7) Having a high spirit of dedication; 8) Physical and spiritual health.

### **Conclusions**

The principal is one of the components of education that plays the most role in improving the quality of education. For this reason, the principal must know the tasks that he must carry out. The role of school principals in improving the quality of education includes: a) as educators (educators), b) as managers, c) as administrators, d) as supervisors, e) as leaders, f) as innovators, and g) as motivators. The conditions that must be possessed by the principal as a leader are having intelligence / good intelligence, self-confidence and membership, having expertise / skills in their fields, being able to interact and being friendly, disciplined, helpful and giving instructions, having a spirit of devotion the high, and physically and mentally healthy.

