

## The Principal's Leadership Role in Improving the Quality of Education

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**Abstract:** This study aims to describe the leadership role of school principals: 1) As a manager in improving the quality of education; 2) As a leader in improving the quality of education; 3) Supporting and inhibiting factors in improving the quality of education and solutions to the inhibiting factors faced. The method used in this research is a qualitative approach with a case study research type. The data collection techniques in this study were interviews, observation and documentation. This research was conducted at SD Negeri 3 Masbagik Utara. The subjects of this research were the Principal and Teachers. The results obtained from this study are: (1) the principal's role as a manager in improving the quality of education is managing by planning, organizing, mobilizing, and evaluating; (2) the principal's role as a leader in improving the quality of education is monitoring, mediating teachers and students, disciplining, motivating, making innovations, liaising with outside parties, guiding students on an ongoing basis, fostering and improving teachers' abilities, and making decisions; (3) the supporting factors in improving the quality of education are the many relationships, support from other organizations, students are free to choose, facilitating teachers; while the inhibiting factors are conflicting systems with the office, frequent teacher turnover, the difficulty of implementing digital learning, sometimes constrained financing and lack of awareness of school community.

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### Introduction

Education is the right of all citizens, education that prioritizes a sense of justice, equity, and quality for all Indonesian citizens without exception. Justice for all Indonesian citizens in the field of education is carried out evenly throughout the territory of Indonesia, that Indonesia consists of islands separated by rich oceans, so it is inseparable from equal opportunities for its people to gain access to education (Minnah El Widdah, 2018).

In the context of school education, the role of the principal is very important. The principal is not only responsible for the day-to-day management of the school, but also leads in developing the vision, directing strategies, and motivating staff and students to achieve the set educational goals. Principal leadership has a significant impact on school culture, teacher

performance and student learning outcomes. Leadership according to Silva (2017: 3) defines leadership as "an interactive process of influence that occurs when or in a particular context. Several people accept someone as a leader to achieve a common goal". Leadership is an interactive process of influence that occurs when or in a particular context. Some people accept someone as their leader to achieve a common goal.

Leadership according to Renz & Herman (2017) states that "Leaders are people who are trusted and have accountability for an organization or institution." The meaning of this opinion is that leaders are people who are given trust and have responsibility for an organization or institution. According to Michael Fullan (2018), an expert on educational change, Fullan emphasizes the importance of strong leadership in directing change towards effective and innovative schools. According to him, successful schools are those that are able to combine the latest educational innovations with practices that have been proven effective.

According to James Spillane (2017), an expert in educational leadership studies, Spillane examines how principals influence social interactions and the formation of school culture. James suggests that effective principals not only manage operations, but also facilitate collaboration among staff and strengthen collective capacity for better decision-making. Andy Hargreaves (2018) is known for his work in understanding the dynamics of organizational change in education. Andy promotes collaborative leadership that enables principals to work together with staff, students and the community to achieve common goals. His approach includes aspects of sustainability in educational change and managing complexity in school systems.

While the role of the principal as an educational leader according to Pertiwi, et al., (2018) the principal must act as a consultant for teachers who can help solve their problems, trying to improve the ability of staff to work and think together. Nurkholis (2017) states that the principal as a leader must be able to mobilize other people to consciously and voluntarily carry out their obligations properly as expected in order to achieve goals.

The principal is the key to the success of a school, because the success of achieving school goals and quality is strongly influenced by the principal's leadership. Principal leadership is inseparable from the role of the principal which aims to improve the quality of education. The quality of education in public and private schools is influenced by the role of the principal where the principal must be able to act as a manager and leader. An institution with good quality or quality must have good principal leadership in it, so that the role of the principal determines the success or failure of the quality of education in schools.

However, the current problem in the field at SD Negeri 3 Masbagik Utara is that the principal's leadership still has to be developed with regard to attitudes and competencies (Cohen, 2015). The low performance of teachers and staff cannot be separated from the low contribution of principals in leading at school (Koswara, et al., 2018). The low performance of teachers, staff, and principals will have an impact on student learning outcomes. Principal leadership plays an important role, but some principals are unable to carry out their duties properly. This will certainly greatly affect school activities that have an impact on the quality of education. So, the current principal leadership cannot be said to be good because this can be seen from the performance that is not optimal. If this is left unchecked, it will certainly have an unfavorable influence on the quality of learning. Therefore, what can be used as a measure

of the success of the principal in leading the school is the quality of the school. As a leader, the principal must have a strategy so that the changes can be realized and provide new innovations aimed at improving the quality of learning. Changes in a school are efforts made by a leader or principal to increase the effectiveness of the school as seen from the level of achievement of predetermined goals. In this case the change aims to improve the quality of education in the school.

The principal plays a role in realizing a change in a school, namely creating an effective work collaboration, shifting manager functions, leading by example, influencing others, developing team work, involving subordinates in decision making, making empowerment to subordinates a way of life, and building commitment (Raberi et al., 2020). Efforts to improve the quality of education can be done in the commitment of the principal and other school members. It takes the participation of all school members to commit to improving the quality of education in schools. Principal leadership plays a significant role in improving the quality of education in a school. Several studies have found that factors that influence teacher performance are principal leadership (Gumilar and Munjir, 2018) and teacher motivation in carrying out tasks (Setiyati, 2016). So, the success of teachers in completing tasks and showing good performance cannot be separated from the leadership of the principal.

This study is different from previous research conducted by Mutiara (2017) which discusses the role of principals as educators, managers, administrators, supervisors, leaders, work climate creators, and as entrepreneurs. Similar to the research conducted by Damayanti (2017), the difference is that there are additional functions of the principal. Rohman's research (2017) discusses quality planning, quality control, and quality improvement. This research is also different from Rahayu's (2015) research which discusses the role of school principals in realizing a variety of cooperative learning. Mistrianingsih's research (2015) discussed the role of principals in implementing school-based management. Pradhani's research (2015) discusses the role of principals in the continuous professional development of certified teachers. Meanwhile, this study discusses the role of the principal as a manager in improving the quality of education, the principal as a leader in improving the quality of education, supporting and inhibiting factors, and solutions to overcome inhibiting factors in improving the quality of education.

## **Research Method**

The type of research used is qualitative research. According to Creswell (2016), qualitative research is a method used to explore and understand the meaning given by individuals or groups to social or human problems. This research often involves collecting rich and in-depth data through interviews, observations, and documents. This research uses qualitative research. The data collection techniques used by researchers in this study include interview techniques, observation techniques, and documentation techniques. The research data was then analyzed using the interactive analysis model data analysis technique from Miles and Huberman (2017).

Data were collected through observation, interviews and documentation. Observation was conducted by analyzing the influence of the principal's leadership on the effectiveness of driving schools in improving the quality of education. Structured interviews were conducted

involving informants, namely principals and teachers. Documentation related to image documents, archival documents, data in the form of images obtained by photographing objects in different situations. While archival documents are obtained from data on learning activities and existing school documents.

Research instruments are tools that will later be used as data collection. According to Sugiyono (2019) research instruments are tools used to measure observed natural and social phenomena. Data collection techniques are the most important step in research, because the main purpose of research is to obtain data (Sugiyono 2019). Data collection techniques can be done using observation, questionnaire, interview, and documentation techniques or a combination of the four.

Observation is a technique or way of systematically collecting data on research objects both directly and indirectly (Hardani et al., 2020). Data collection techniques by observation are used when research concerns human behavior, processes, work, natural phenomena and if the observed respondents are not too many. An interview is an oral question and answer between two or more people directly or a conversation with a specific purpose. The conversation is carried out by two parties, namely the interviewer who asks questions and the interviewee who provides answers to these questions (Hardani et al., 2020).

This research was conducted on the resource person, namely the Principal of SD Negeri 3 Masbagik Utara, which is located in Masbagik Utara Village, Masbagik District, East Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara. Data analysis was carried out through 4 stages, namely: data collection, data reduction, data presentation and conclusion drawing. The collected data were summarized, focused on important aspects and presented in the form of narratives to facilitate understanding and drawing conclusions.

## **Result and Discussion**

This data was obtained through interviews conducted in the living room of the principal of SD Negeri 3 Masbagik Utara by involving the resource person, namely the principal. The results of the data reduction process will certainly be presented in this study using qualitative research and researchers will briefly describe the findings. This discussion is of course related to the formulation of the problems that researchers have made previously which will be used as the basis for this research. This means that the subject matter of this research is about the leadership role of school principals in improving the quality of education.



**Picture 1.** School Location Maps

### **The Principal's Role as a Manager in Improving Education Quality**

The results showed that the principal's leadership role as a manager in improving the quality of education at SD Negeri 3 Masbagik Utara is by planning, organizing, implementing and evaluating. Planning is done in three stages. First, the principal meets with the structural team first to formulate and determine the program, costs and time used for the next year. Second, the principal held a meeting with the teachers to socialize the program that will be implemented in the next year and divide the tasks to each teacher. Organizing is done by the principal by dividing tasks, dividing the person in charge, and dividing the structural team. Implementation is carried out inseparable from the goals and vision and mission of the school, while the implementation of activities to improve teachers' abilities through teacher meetings and teacher coaching. At the evaluation stage, the principal conducts it flexibly, namely at any time, a fixed schedule for the evaluation meeting itself is carried out every month. Before that, each structural team meets with its members and the person in charge, then the coordinator submits it to the principal so that the principal gets the material to be presented at the monthly evaluation meeting.

Based on research conducted by researchers at SD Negeri 3 Masbagik Utara, researchers obtained information that the role of the principal as a manager in improving the quality of education at SD Negeri 3 Masbagik Utara, the principal begins with the planning stage which is carried out before the new school year. Planning is done by budgeting the costs for each program that will be run in the next year and determining the implementation time.

The planned programs are adjusted to the vision and mission of the school, so the planned programs focus on tutoring, IPAS (Natural and Social Sciences), Mathematics, Scouting and Tahfidz. Planning to improve the quality of education at SD Negeri 3 Masbagik Utara, the principal conducts with 3 stages, first the principal meets with the structural team to plan and formulate programs that will be run in the next year, second the principal meets with all teachers to socialize the program and divide the tasks. After the planning stage, organizing in improving the quality of education is carried out by the principal of SD Negeri 3 Masbagik Utara, the quality assurance team, and the administrative team with 2 members and 1 coordinator whose job is to coordinate with the principal. In addition to dividing the structural team, the principal also divides the person in charge of each program such as Olympic coaching and the person in charge of rooms such as the library and the UKS room. So that in improving the quality of education, the principal utilizes and maximizes the coordination of the structural team and the person in charge.

Based on this description, the principal of SD Negeri 3 Masbagik Utara realizes it by being guided by the planning carried out previously in the new school year. Implementation is carried out by the principal by mobilizing all teachers, especially the structural team and the person in charge who have previously been divided into tasks. So that the implementation in improving the quality of education is more maximized to the coordination of the structural team and the person in charge. Implementation in improving the quality of education at SD Negeri 3 Masbagik Utara is inseparable from the school's vision and mission.

Supervision in improving the quality of education at SD Negeri 3 Masbagik Utara is carried out by the principal flexibly, namely at any time or during teacher meetings, but the schedule for carrying out the evaluation itself is carried out every month which is called a monthly evaluation meeting. Before the monthly evaluation meeting is held, each structural team holds an evaluation meeting first with its members, then the team coordinator reports to the principal on the 13th so that the principal gets material to evaluate at the monthly evaluation meeting held on the 17th.

### **The Principal's Role as a Leader in Improving Education Quality**

The results showed that the role of the principal as a leader at SD Negeri 3 Masbagik Utara are: (a) monitoring, the principal actively monitors students, teachers, infrastructure, and the school environment; (b) mediating teachers and students, the principal becomes a counseling place for teachers and students when they have problems so that their relationship is very close; (c) disciplining teachers and students, if there is something inappropriate then the principal advises the teacher concerned through other teachers, while disciplining students is more left to their respective homeroom teachers, but if the teacher cannot handle it then the principal handles it; (d) being a liaison between the school and outside parties, the relationship is continuously carried out by the principal to improve the quality of education; (e) guiding students on an ongoing basis, the principal conducts student mapping and facilitates students according to their interests and potential; (f) fostering and improving teachers' abilities, the principal holds a program to improve teachers' abilities such as digital learning training and including teachers in outside trainings; (g) making decisions; and (h) making innovations, the principal always makes new innovations to improve the quality of education.

Based on research conducted by researchers at SD Negeri 3 Masbagik Utara, researchers know that the role of the principal as a leader in improving the quality of education is to monitor, mediate teachers and students, discipline teachers and students, motivate, become a school liaison with outside parties, guide students on an ongoing basis, foster and improve teacher abilities, make decisions, and make innovations. The principal of SD Negeri 3 Masbagik Utara is a democratic leader, although the decision rests with the principal, but the decision is based on the results of deliberation from the teachers so that it does not decide based on the principal's personal wishes. Nawawi (2018) revealed that leaders must be brave and able to make a decision by consensus in the midst of deliberation activities and the decisions taken must be consensually agreed upon by other meeting members. Approaching all school members is something that is often done by the principal of SD Negeri 3 Masbagik Utara. The principal acts as an intermediary between teachers and students, when teachers have problems in teaching and students have problems during learning, the principal acts as a counselor, where they tell the problems they face. The principal provides solutions and follows up on any problems faced by teachers and students, so the principal's closeness to the school community is very good. The principal also acts as a motivator, motivating all school members, both teachers and students. The school is a private school where most teachers are non-permanent teachers so the principal often provides motivation and advice to teachers and staff to make them more enthusiastic about working.

The principal always has innovations, every year the principal holds a program that is featured or focused on according to the vision and mission of the school. The featured programs are tahfidz, tutoring and scouting programs. Innovations are sometimes different or the same, innovations are not only made in each program but also in the school environment such as making ecobrik in the classroom which is intended for students and made by students. The principal of SD Negeri 3 Masbagik Utara is very responsive, when the program does not go as desired, the principal makes new innovations to overcome this, as stated by Barlian (2016), namely one of the things that marks the movement and progress of educational institutions is how much and how many innovations the educational institution makes every year. Apart from being an innovator to improve the quality of education, the head of SD Negeri 3 Masbagik Utara also plays a role in monitoring and disciplining school members, namely teachers and students. Continuous monitoring is something that is often done by the head of SD Negeri 3 Masbagik Utara to ensure that the school environment is conducive, starting from students, teachers and infrastructure. Monitoring is also done as an evaluation material in the future so that it becomes an improvement material.

### **Supporting Factors, Barriers and Solutions to Barriers Faced in Improving Education Quality**

The results found that the supporting factors in improving the quality of education at SD Negeri 3 Masbagik Utara are (a) many relationships; (b) facilitating students to choose freely; and (c) facilitating teachers. Meanwhile, the inhibiting factors faced in improving the quality of education at SD Negeri 3 Masbagik Utara are: (a) system clashes with the office; (b) frequent teacher turnover; (c) lack of awareness of school community; (d) difficulty in

implementing digital learning; (e) the team coordinator is not always at school; (f) calculating finances manually; and (g) sometimes constrained by costs.

Based on research conducted by researchers at SD Negeri 3 Masbagik Utara, researchers know the inhibiting factors faced by school principals in improving the quality of education. SD Negeri 3 Masbagik Utara is mostly a conflicting system with the office and frequent teacher turnover. These problems are the biggest of the other inhibiting factors. Other inhibiting factors at SD Negeri 3 Masbagik Utara are the lack of awareness of the school community in terms of learning and utilizing existing facilities and the difficulty of implementing digital learning by teachers so that teachers are less innovative in learning. Meanwhile, the inhibiting factors faced by several teachers in receiving assignments from the principal are that the team coordinator is not always at school because teaching hours are not every day, the difficulty of managing data on overseas students, schools still calculate finances manually, and program implementation is sometimes constrained by costs. Meanwhile, the inhibiting factors felt by some teachers in accepting the principal's assignment are that the coordinator is not always at school so coordination with the principal is constrained. Another barrier is that the school still calculates finances manually, the difficulty of calculating finances manually is also due to the uncertain number of students each year.

Meanwhile, the supporting factors at SD Negeri 3 Masbagik Utara are the school's many relationships with outside parties, facilitating students to choose freely, and facilitating teachers. The principal establishes relationships with outside parties to improve students' abilities and teachers' abilities. This is also because the principal has many relationships both at home and abroad, so that the school becomes sheltered to establish cooperation. Supporting factors perceived by the principal and some teachers mostly come from the education office, because the school is under the auspices of the education office.

Solutions to deal with inhibiting factors faced in improving the quality of education at SD Negeri 3 Masbagik Utara are: (a) the clash of systems with the office, namely continuing to follow the office but adjusting the vision and mission of the school; (b) frequent teacher turnover, namely offering through a statement letter to continue / at least and providing sufficient salary; (c) lack of awareness of school members, namely providing understanding, assignments, and motivating; (d) the difficulty of implementing digital learning, namely including certified training and fulfilling infrastructure facilities; (e) the team coordinator is not always at school, namely communicating and transferring to members; (f) calculating finances manually, namely by using a weekly, quarterly, semester, annual report system; and (g) sometimes constrained by costs, namely postponing programs.

Based on research conducted by researchers at SD Negeri 3 Masbagik Utara, researchers know the solutions to deal with the inhibiting factors faced in improving the quality of education. In dealing with conflicts with the office, the principal still follows the office but is also adjusted to the vision and mission of the school so as not to deviate from school goals. While the lack of awareness of the school community is done by the principal by providing understanding, assignments, and motivating teachers and students to be more serious in learning and teaching.

The school still calculates finances manually, this is done by using a quarterly and annual report system to make it easier to work on financial reports. In addition to financial

reports, teachers must also be included in various trainings and fulfill the lack of infrastructure is a solution to improve the ability of teachers, especially in the application of digital learning. Meanwhile, the certification policy is carried out by paying attention to the rights of students who are also entitled to maximum teaching. The postponement program is a solution if there is a shortage of costs carried out by the principal to cover the shortage of costs. The solution to the obstacle in coordinating because the coordinator is not always available is that the principal communicates and transfers it to team members.

### **Conclusion**

The leadership role of the principal as a manager is by managing the school. The management carried out by the principal of SD Negeri 3 Masbagik Utara includes planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating as follows: (a) planning is carried out with the structural team first to formulate and determine the program, costs, and time used for the next year; (b) the principal holds a meeting with the structural team and the foundation to seek approval because the school is under the auspices of the boarding school; (c) the principal holds a meeting with the teachers to socialize the program that will be implemented in the next year and divide the tasks to each teacher. Organizing is done by the principal by dividing tasks, dividing the person in charge, and dividing the structural team. While the implementation stage is that the principal implements the planning that has been approved by the relevant agencies. Implementation of activities to improve teachers' abilities through teacher meetings and teacher coaching. Evaluation is carried out by the principal flexibly, namely at any time, a fixed schedule for the evaluation meeting itself is carried out every month. Before that, each structural team meets with its members and the person in charge, then the coordinator submits it to the principal so that the principal gets the material to be delivered in the monthly evaluation meeting. The role of the principal as a leader at SD Negeri 3 Masbagik Utara is: (a) monitoring; (b) mediating between teachers and students; (c) disciplining teachers and students; (d) motivating; (e) liaising between the school and outside parties; (f) guiding students on an ongoing basis; (g) fostering and improving teachers' abilities; (h) making decisions; and (i) making innovations.

Supporting factors in improving the quality of education are: (a) many relationships; (b) facilitating students to choose freely; and (c) facilitating teachers. Meanwhile, the inhibiting factors faced in improving quality are: (a) system clashes with the office; (b) frequent teacher turnover; (c) lack of awareness among school members; (d) difficulty in implementing digital learning; (e) the team coordinator is not always at school; (f) calculating finances manually; and (g) sometimes constrained by costs. Solutions to deal with these inhibiting factors are: (a) system clashes with the office, still following the office but adjusted to the vision and mission of the school; (b) frequent teacher turnover, offering through a statement letter to continue or not and providing sufficient salary; (c) lack of awareness of school members, providing understanding, assignments, and motivating; (d) the difficulty of implementing digital learning, including certified training and fulfilling infrastructure; (e) the team coordinator is not always at school, communicating and transferring to members; (f) calculating finances manually, using a weekly, quarterly, semester, annual report system; and (g) sometimes constrained by costs, the program is postponed/taking the lowest nominal.

## Recommendation

Based on the results of the research and discussion, researchers provide the following suggestions, for principals as managers in schools in order to carry out their duties well in school management. Principals must also often hold trainings to develop teacher competence in improving the quality of education and schools adjust department programs with school programs so that they are still implemented. For principals to provide encouragement and motivation for teachers to attend training and provide direction to be active in all school programs.

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