

The Role of the Principal in Optimizing Educational Management in Schools with Limited Resources

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the role of the principal in optimizing educational management in schools with limited resources through a case study of Bahrul Ulum Islamic Junior High School in South Tangerang. This school serves orphaned and underprivileged students, and therefore faces various limitations, particularly in funding, facilities and infrastructure, and the availability of teaching staff. This research used a qualitative approach with a case study method, with data collection conducted through interviews, observation, and documentation. The results indicate that the principal plays a strategic role in various aspects of educational management, including program planning oriented towards strengthening faith and piety (IMTAQ) and science and technology (IPTEK), adaptive human resource organization, optimizing the use of facilities and funding through collaboration, and implementing ongoing supervision and evaluation. These findings indicate that the principal's collaborative, humanistic, and socially oriented leadership is able to maintain and improve educational quality despite limited resources.

Keywords

Educational Management, Limited Resources, Private Schools, Role Principal, School Leadership.



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INTRODUCTION

Education is a key pillar of national development because it plays a strategic role in developing human resources with character, knowledge, and the ability to actively contribute to community life. Education plays a fundamental role in building national civilization and improving the quality of social, economic, and cultural life (Tilaar, 2012). Therefore, the success of education significantly determines the direction and future of a nation.

However, in practice, many educational institutions in Indonesia still face various resource limitations, including funding, facilities and infrastructure, and the

availability of teaching staff. Limited resources are often a major obstacle to the implementation of effective educational management, particularly in private schools that do not receive substantial government funding (Mulyasa 2013). This situation poses a serious challenge for socially oriented schools that serve students from underprivileged backgrounds.

Bahrul Ulum Islamic Junior High School, established in 2013 under the auspices of the Bahrul Ulum Pondok Aren Foundation, is one such school committed to providing free education to orphans and underprivileged children in the South Tangerang area. With the vision of "Becoming a religious and modern educational institution prioritizing IMTAQ (Faith, Faith, and Religious Faith) and IPTEK (Science and Technology)," this school strives to integrate religious values and mastery of science and technology into the learning process. Ideal education should balance the spiritual, intellectual, and social aspects of students (Sagala 2011).

As a private school that does not charge tuition fees, the challenges of managing the school are increasingly complex. Limited funding requires the school to efficiently manage existing facilities, optimize the role of teaching staff, and create effective learning innovations with minimal resources. Good management is characterized by an organization's ability to optimally manage resources to achieve established goals, even under conditions of limited resources (Terry (2010).

In such situations, the role of the principal becomes highly strategic. The principal functions not only as an administrator but also as an educational leader capable of mobilizing all components of the school. The principal plays a central role in planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising all educational activities in the school (Wahjosumidjo 2011). Effective principal leadership is crucial to the success of educational management, particularly in schools with limited resources.

Furthermore, visionary and participatory principal leadership can improve teacher performance, learning quality, and school sustainability even under less-than-ideal conditions (Bush and Glover 2014). Therefore, principals are required to possess high managerial, leadership, and innovative skills to ensure educational goals are achieved.

Based on this description, research is needed to understand in-depth the role of the principal in optimizing educational management in schools with limited resources. This research focuses on leadership practices, management strategies, and innovative steps implemented by junior high school principals. Bahrul Ulum Islamic School faces various challenges. The results of this study are expected to provide a concrete picture

of the educational management model in low-cost schools and serve as a reference for other schools with similar characteristics.

METHODS

This research employed a qualitative method with a descriptive approach through a case study design. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore social phenomena in depth and understand the realities that occur naturally in the field. Through the case study method, the research focused specifically on the role of the principal in optimizing educational management at Bahrul Ulum Islamic Middle School, a school that operates with limited resources. This approach enabled the researcher to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the strategies, leadership practices, and managerial decisions implemented by the principal in improving the effectiveness of educational management despite existing constraints. In addition, the descriptive nature of the study helped present factual and systematic explanations regarding the conditions, challenges, and solutions found during the research process.

Data collection in this study was conducted through interviews, observations, and documentation techniques to ensure the credibility and richness of the data obtained. Interviews were carried out with the principal and several related participants to gather detailed information regarding leadership roles, decision-making processes, and school management practices. Observations were conducted directly within the school environment to examine real activities, interactions, and management implementation in everyday educational settings. Meanwhile, documentation techniques were used to support and validate the findings obtained from interviews and observations, including school records, administrative documents, activity reports, and other relevant materials. By combining these three techniques, the research was able to produce more accurate, comprehensive, and trustworthy findings regarding the optimization of educational management at the school.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Principal's Role in Educational Management Planning.

Description of Research Findings

Based on interviews with the principal of Bahrul Ulum Islamic Junior High School, educational management planning was developed taking into account the actual conditions faced by the school, particularly limitations in funding and facilities and infrastructure. The principal explained that the planning did not adhere to ideal

standards, as is generally the case in other schools, but rather was tailored to the school's internal capabilities and actual needs. Therefore, each program and activity was designed realistically and contextually to ensure effective implementation despite limited resources. This allowed for optimal implementation of policies without exceeding the school's capacity while still striving to meet the educational needs of students.

Planning focused on priority programs directly related to the continuity of the learning process and student character development. The planned programs included core learning activities, religious activities, and simple yet structured school operational management. The principal emphasized that each plan must be practically implementable, even with limited facilities.

Furthermore, the principal also involved teachers in the planning process, particularly in determining student learning and activity needs. The purpose of teacher involvement is to ensure that the plans drawn up are truly in accordance with field conditions and can be implemented together.

Analysis and Discussion

The planning carried out by the principal of Bahrul Ulum Islamic Junior High School demonstrates an adaptive and contextual planning approach. Effective educational planning must consider the school's internal conditions so that the programs developed can run optimally (Mulyasa 2013). In this case, the principal implemented reality-based planning, not idealistic planning.

This approach also aligns with the concept that planning is the process of determining goals and the best way to achieve them using available resources (Terry 2010). The principal is able to prioritize and direct limited resources to support the school's primary goal, namely the sustainability of free, quality education.

Teacher involvement in the planning process reflects the application of participatory leadership, which is not merely administrative but also substantive in building internal school collaboration. A principal who actively encourages teacher participation in program development will be more effective in fostering a sense of ownership, collective responsibility, and long-term commitment to the success of the school's programs (Wahjosumidjo, 2011). This participation also has implications for improving the quality of decision-making because it considers the practical perspectives of those implementing it in the field. This is reflected in the teachers' readiness, adaptability, and consistency in implementing the jointly planned program, despite various facility limitations, demonstrating strong internalization of

organizational goals and alignment between planning and implementation at the operational level.

Interim Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion outlined above, it can be concluded that the principal of Bahrul Ulum Islamic Junior High School has effectively carried out the planning function in educational management through a realistic, adaptive, and priority-oriented approach. The plan is not merely an administrative document but also serves as a strategic foundation for directing all school activities to ensure they remain aligned with established educational goals. Therefore, this contextual planning serves as a primary foundation for maintaining the stability, sustainability, and quality of educational delivery amidst resource constraints.

The Principal's Role in Organizing School Resources

Description of Research Findings

Based on interviews and observations, the principal of Bahrul Ulum Islamic Junior High School carries out an organizing function by adapting to the school's limited resource requirements. Organizational management focuses on human resource management, particularly teachers and educational staff, to ensure all school activities continue to run effectively.

The principal explained that the distribution of teacher tasks is flexible and proportional, based on their respective competencies. Due to the limited number of teaching staff, some teachers are given dual responsibilities, both in teaching and supporting activities. However, this division of tasks is carried out through communication and mutual agreement to avoid excessive workloads.

In addition to organizing human resources, the principal also systematically and efficiently manages the use of school facilities and infrastructure. Limited facilities are not a major obstacle; instead, they are addressed through alternating use and structured scheduling, ensuring that all learning and other school activities can continue to run optimally. This organizational pattern demonstrates a strategic effort to optimize the function of each available facility while ensuring fair and proportional distribution of use among all school members.

Analysis and Discussion

The organizational practices implemented by the principal of Bahrul Ulum Islamic Junior High School demonstrate a flexible and adaptive management pattern. The principal plays a crucial role in managing the division of tasks and responsibilities so that the school organization can run effectively. In this study, the principal was able

to optimize the role of teachers despite a limited number of teaching staff (Wahjosumidjo 2011).

Organizations with limited resources require a flexible structure to survive and function optimally (Robbins 2013), who stated that this flexibility allows schools to continue implementing learning activities without relying on the availability of resources.

The efficient organization of facilities and infrastructure reflects the principal's capacity to optimize the use of available resources in a strategic and targeted manner. In the context of educational management, an organization's effectiveness is not solely determined by the completeness or luxury of its facilities, but rather by managerial ability to manage, allocate, and maximize the function of each available resource to optimally support the achievement of organizational goals (Terry, 2010). This demonstrates that limitations are not the primary obstacle, but rather a challenge that can be overcome through appropriate, adaptive, and efficient management.

Temporary Conclusions

Based on the research results and discussion, it can be concluded that the principal of Bahrul Ulum Islamic Junior High School has effectively organized school resources through flexible task allocation, good communication, and efficient utilization of facilities and infrastructure. This organization is a crucial factor in maintaining the continuity of education amidst limited resources.

The Principal's Role in Learning Implementation

Description of Research Findings

Based on interviews and observations at Bahrul Ulum Islamic Junior High School, the principal plays an active role in ensuring the continuity of learning despite the school's limited resources. The principal provides guidance and motivation to teachers to ensure effective learning by utilizing available facilities.

The principal encourages teachers not to rely on expensive, high-tech learning media, but rather to optimize the use of simple media and the surrounding environment as contextual learning resources. This approach not only adapts to limited resources but also enriches students' learning experiences through direct connections to the realities of everyday life. In implementing learning, teachers are also directed to apply varied, creative, and relevant methods to students' circumstances, thereby increasing student activity, participation, and overall engagement in the teaching and learning process.

In addition to academic aspects, the principal also emphasizes the integration of IMTAQ (Islamic Principles) values into all learning activities. The inclusion of religious

activities and moral development are essential components of learning at Bahrul Ulum Islamic Junior High School. Thus, the learning process is oriented not only toward cognitive achievement but also toward the development of student character.

Analysis and Discussion

The principal's role in implementing learning demonstrates strong instructional leadership. Instructional leadership emphasizes the principal's involvement in improving the quality of learning through coaching and support for teachers (Bush and Glover 2014). In this study, the principal fulfilled this role by encouraging teacher creativity and innovation.

Effective learning is not solely determined by the availability of facilities and infrastructure, but rather by the teacher's ability to manage the learning process creatively, adaptively, and in a way that orients students' needs (Sanjaya, 2011). In this regard, the principal's support is a crucial factor in encouraging teachers to innovate, explore various methods, and utilize alternative learning resources. This support is not only administrative but also includes providing motivation, trust, and space for experimentation, enabling teachers to develop more effective learning practices despite limited resources.

The integration of IMTAQ values into learning also demonstrates that the principal implements a holistic educational approach. Character education integrated into learning is more effective than learning that focuses solely on academic aspects (Zamroni 2016). This is evident in the inculcation of religious values and discipline implemented at Bahrul Ulum Islamic Middle School.

Interim Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that the principal of Bahrul Ulum Islamic Middle School plays an active role in the implementation of learning through instructional leadership that encourages teacher creativity, utilizes simple learning resources, and integrates IMTAQ values. This role contributes to maintaining the quality of learning despite the school's limited resources.

The Principal's Role in Learning Supervision and Evaluation

Description of Research Findings

Based on interviews, the principal of Bahrul Ulum Islamic Junior High School conducts ongoing supervision and evaluation of learning, albeit in a simple manner. Supervision is not always conducted formally through written instruments, but rather through direct observation of the learning process and intensive communication with teachers.

The principal frequently holds informal discussions with teachers to identify challenges faced in the implementation of learning. Through these discussions, the principal provides input and guidance as a form of coaching to maintain the quality of learning. Evaluation of school activities is also conducted through joint reflection to assess the achievement of planned programs.

The supervisory approach applied is persuasive and based on a family atmosphere, thus creating a climate of open and trusting communication between the principal and teachers. This allows teachers to feel more comfortable and less pressured in expressing various problems and obstacles encountered in the learning process. With this openness, the principal obtains more comprehensive and factual information, enabling them to take corrective measures that are more appropriate, contextual, and aligned with the actual conditions of the school.

Analysis and Discussion

The implementation of supervision and evaluation at Bahrul Ulum Islamic Junior High School demonstrates a coaching approach to supervision. Academic supervision aims to help teachers improve their professional skills through ongoing guidance, not just administrative assessments (Sagala 2011). The principal's approach aligns with this concept.

The principal needs to build harmonious and communicative relationships with teachers as a primary prerequisite for effective and sustainable supervision (Mulyasa, 2013). This relationship, based on trust and openness, creates a conducive working environment, allowing teachers to perceive supervision not only as a form of oversight but also as a form of coaching and professional development. In the context of schools with limited resources, this approach is more relevant and realistic to implement, as it can boost motivation, improve performance, and strengthen teacher commitment without relying on adequate facilities.

The reflective evaluation conducted with teachers demonstrates ongoing efforts to improve. This is crucial to ensure that school programs remain relevant and can be implemented optimally despite limitations.

Interim Conclusion

Based on the research results and discussion, it can be concluded that the principal of Bahrul Ulum Islamic Junior High School has effectively carried out his role in supervising and evaluating learning through a persuasive, communicative, and sustainable coaching approach. This role contributes to maintaining the quality of learning and enhancing teacher professionalism amidst limited resources.

The Principal's Strategy in Addressing Limited Resources

Description of Research Findings

Based on interviews, limited resources are the main challenge faced by Bahrul Ulum Islamic Junior High School, particularly in terms of funding, infrastructure, and the number of teaching staff. However, the principal does not view these limitations as a barrier to educational delivery.

The principal implements a management strategy oriented toward efficiency and collaboration. One strategy is building strong partnerships with foundations, teachers, and the surrounding community. Furthermore, the principal instills the values of sincerity, dedication, and social responsibility in all school members to maintain their commitment to providing free education for orphans and the underprivileged.

Another strategy is maximizing available resources through simple yet focused management. The principal encourages all school members to support each other and work together to ensure the continuity of educational activities.

Analysis and Discussion

The strategies implemented by the principal of Bahrul Ulum Islamic Junior High School demonstrate adaptive and collaborative leadership. According to UNESCO (2015), schools with limited resources require leaders capable of building collaboration and leveraging social capital to maintain educational quality. The findings of this study reinforce this view.

The instillation of sincerity and dedication in the principal's leadership practices reflects the application of a values-based leadership approach, where moral and ethical aspects serve as the primary foundation for guiding organizational behavior. School values and culture play a strategic role in shaping attitudes, increasing loyalty, and strengthening the work commitment of teachers and education personnel (Mulyasa, 2013). In the context of Bahrul Ulum Islamic Junior High School, the internalization of religious values not only serves as an institutional identity but also serves as a source of intrinsic motivation that fosters dedication, resilience, and a spirit of service throughout the school community, thereby compensating for various structural limitations faced.

The achievement of organizational goals is ultimately determined not solely by the quantity of resources available, but also by the extent to which these resources can be utilized optimally, effectively, and strategically within a focused management framework (Terry, 2010). This indicates that organizational success depends more on managerial capacity in planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising all existing potential.

Thus, limited resources are not always a determining factor, but can be transformed into a challenge that encourages innovation, efficiency, and creativity in educational management. When managed with an appropriate, adaptive, and contextual approach, limited conditions can actually lead an organization to optimally and sustainably achieve educational goals.

Interim Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that the principal of Bahrul Ulum Islamic Junior High School implemented an adaptive, collaborative, and values-based management strategy in dealing with limited resources. This strategy was able to maintain the continuity of education and support the achievement of school goals despite existing limitations.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results and discussion, it can be concluded that the principal of Bahrul Ulum Islamic Junior High School plays a highly strategic role in optimizing educational management in a school with limited resources. The principal is able to develop realistic, priority-based educational plans, organize school resources flexibly and efficiently, and ensure effective learning through instructional leadership that encourages teacher creativity and integrates IMTAQ values into the learning process.

Furthermore, the principal carries out ongoing supervision and evaluation of learning using a persuasive and communicative coaching approach. In the face of limited resources, the principal implements adaptive, collaborative, and religious-value-based management strategies through collaboration with foundations, teachers, and the community. The findings of this study confirm that effective, values-based principal leadership can maintain the continuity and quality of education, even when the school faces limited resources.

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