

The Implementation of Quality Management in Elementary Education Unit in Rural Areas

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Abstract—This research aimed at finding an implementation regarding quality management in elementary level of schools located in rural areas. This research is qualitative research which observed the phenomena to find the data and information related to quality management implemented in some elementary schools in *Desa Goarie Kecamatan Marioriwawo Kabupaten Soppeng, Sulawesi Selatan*. The source of the data was collected by several techniques, including in-depth interview with some principals in the mentioned area, observation related to teaching and learning activities as well as any other outside-class activities, and documentation study to find specific and detailed information. The population of data resources was chosen using purposive sampling. The researcher presented the data using descriptive method before defining a conclusion. This research was conducted mainly with the expectation of contribution in management quality in some education units, especially in those schools located in rural areas. The result of the research showed that in order to manage the school quality in the rural areas, the schools apply and implement some efforts, such as: 1) conducting learning processes in common in accordance to the national curriculum, 2) utilizing existing resources, especially the human resources, such as skilled teachers, 3) focusing on extracurricular activities, 4) conducting some visitation or comparative studies to schools located in urban areas that have complete facilities on a regular basis, and 5) striving for the availability of adequate facilities to support student learning.

Keywords—*quality management; schools in rural areas*

I. INTRODUCTION

Education which is the spearhead of a nation's development is expected to be able to be held and carried out throughout Indonesia in accordance to the applicable minimum service standards (*Standar Pelayanan Minimal*), not least in educational institutions in areas far from the access of city facilities, which are existing educational institutions in rural areas, especially elementary school education which is the foundation of the formation of the character for future generation. However, referring from that condition where the distribution of educational facilities has not been evenly circulated, there are several obstacles that may be faced by education practitioners in order to improve the quality of education.

Rural education and rural schools have been associated with deficiencies and challenges Arnold et al. in Mukeredzi [1],

yet identifying interventions and strategies that enhance student success in these contexts is difficult because relatively few scholars study rural education. Further, they noted that there is quality inherent in rural schools and communities that should be preserved such as the desire for learning in teachers and learners.

In Indonesia, the first thing that is of concern is the location of these schools which have an impact on the difficulties and limitations of access to reach. That thing later becomes an obstacle to the availability of facilities that can support the implementation of the teaching and learning process in schools, such as the availability of public libraries or bookshops that can be a various source or reference in learning.

Nugroho quoted some arguments from some researchers stating that the remoteness of an area will create obstacles and difficulties in administering the education system. The low quality of teachers, the limited professional development program, and the inability to improve and maintain teacher quality is a real problem faced by teachers in rural areas [2].

In addition, the schools' conditions in rural areas which commonly are small schools are not supported with some facilities like those schools in urban areas in general. For example, laboratories, both computer laboratories and science laboratories, are infrastructures that are rarely found in rural schools. Access to the internet is also something that is difficult to find in those schools. The learning system applied is still conventional and traditional, without technology and digital system. Learning media such as projectors are things that are considered new for students.

Another thing that is a challenge for education practitioners who are far from urban areas is the lack of resources, especially human resources, which are teachers. The condition of schools that are far from the city center causes many teachers being reluctant to serve in rural areas, so the solution offered is to recruit honorary staff who do not have a teaching certificate or educational background that is related to their responsibilities in the institutions, or they are the recruits who graduate from non-accredited colleges.

Guenther and Weible stated that small size is, of course, a weakness in many ways [3]. In the opinion of those authors, some of the major problems associated with teachers and teaching in rural schools are as follows: The inherent small size

of rural schools restricts the scope of course offerings and related programs. Rural isolation limits or eliminates various kinds of educational experiences which might foster a more global, multicultural perspective. Most small rural schools are characterized by limited faculty and administration. Teachers in rural schools generally receive lower salaries, teach in areas of limited expertise, and are responsible for more class preparation than teachers in large communities. Teacher turnover and the problem of providing appropriate in-service instruction pose critical problems for developing effective ongoing school programs. The above list indicates that teachers who practice in rural schools, either by choice or accident, face challenges to their potential effectiveness not generalizable to all teaching situations, and that specific programs are needed to increase the competencies necessary for teaching in these schools. While a totally unique preparation program is not possible for most institutions, there is a growing concern for the need of a more adequate preparation for rural teachers.

Moulton in his research found that rural primary schools in low-income countries often suffer because they are remote from the central offices of the ministry of education, which distribute instructional resources, so their quality is poor. In addition, the national schooling model, developed in an urban context, is not so relevant to the rural setting, and rural families cannot afford the direct cost of schooling nor the opportunity cost of having their children away for many hours of the day in low quality schools [4]. This study showed that the main problem which hinders the educational process in rural areas is mostly related to the economic condition. In Indonesia, schools in rural areas, especially primary schools, are relatively affordable, even though the adequate facility for the learning process is not available.

Another research conducted by Shadreck in Zimbabwe showed that the challenges faced by rural schools are mainly in recruiting and retaining qualified teachers [5]. Similar condition happens in Indonesia as well, there are some obstacles faced to recruit and retain qualified and certified teachers. The responses to this condition, the regional government in Indonesia then offers a practical solution, recruiting some honorary teachers who only need some earnings without considering whether they are capable in teaching or not. In Zimbabwe, the government attracts teachers by offering some honorariums if they are willing to serve in rural areas.

Those constraints are feared to affect the quality of outcomes of rural schools, such as learning achievements that might be low, students' inability to compete with students from urban areas, and the inability to utilize digital technology which is inseparable from the current world of education.

The conditions mentioned above then require school authorities to carry out their roles to the possible maximum extent to implement school quality management in accordance to established standards so that rural schools are still able to produce qualified graduates or alumni who fit the needs of the community and who are able to take role in the nation's development.

The concept of quality management is understood as the part of the word meaning of management and quality.

'Management' means "how to organize, guide and lead all those who are subordinates so that the business being worked in can achieve the goals previously set" Mundir [6]. It is said further that the functions of management include planning, organizing, implementing, and monitoring. 'Management' also means science as well as the art of managing human resources and other resources to achieve the set goals. While 'quality' has several interpretations. Noronha says that 'quality' can be interpreted as continuous improvement, 'quality' also means special, and it also can be interpreted as fulfilling customer expectations [7]. Sallis stated, "the number two experts have come to the same conclusion when discussing what makes an excellent school, college or university" [8].

Barnawi & Arifin reveal that quality management is a way of managing the organization in a comprehensive and integrated manner [6]. Tenner and Toro suggest that quality management is directed at: 1) meeting consumer needs consistently, and 2) achieving continuous improvement in every aspect of organizational activities [6]. Quality management seeks to improve work quality, productivity, and efficiency through performance improvements.

Based on the identification of the problems and the explanation mentioned above, it can be said that the biggest problem faced by the Indonesian education system in the context of equitable distribution of education is the limited access to facilities in schools in non-urban areas so that it is feared that it will hamper the achievement of school quality targets. So, the role of each component of the school becomes very crucial to continue to manage the quality in the education unit. What and how the roles of each stakeholder are important things to know.

This research aims at answering the question, "How is the implementation of quality management in rural schools with minimal facilities and learning facilities in order to achieve school quality targets?"

II. THEORETICAL REVIEW

Quality management is a transformation from management to quality control that combines human factors with system factors as a technical and mechanical entity. Here are some explanations regarding integrated quality management according to experts.

- According to Feigenbaum in Noronha, integrated quality management is "an effective system integrating the quality development, quality maintenance, and quality improvement efforts of various groups in so as to enable marketing, engineering, production, and service at the most economical levels which allow for full customer satisfaction." Integrated quality management is an effective system to integrate the efforts of members of the organization in developing, maintaining, and improving quality in order to satisfy customers [7].
- Omachonu and Ross suggest that "Total Quality Management (TQM) is the integration of functions and processes within an organization in order to achieve continuous improvement of the quality of goods and

services.” Integrated quality management is the integration of all functions and processes within the organization in an effort to achieve continuous quality improvement. The main objective of this management is customer satisfaction [9].

- Sallis argues that integrated quality management is not just a philosophy, but also a methodology. This management can help organizations to manage change and manage plans to deal with external challenges. Quality management is not just a procedure or stages in solving a problem, but a philosophy and methodology to help the institution to deal with changes to always be in accordance to the needs and expectations of external parties or stakeholders [8].
- Milakovich states that integrated quality management is about “a total organizational approach to meet customer needs and expectations that all managers and employees use in continuous methods to continuously improve the organization’s processes, products, and services. “Integrated quality management is the approaches that are carried out by the organization to meet customer needs and expectations. The effort of the approach involves all people, both leaders and employees. The method used is quantitative methods. These efforts are carried out in the context of continuous improvement in terms of process, production, and service [10].
- Nawari in Mundir says that integrated quality management is functional management with an approach that is constantly focused on improving quality, so that its products are in accordance to the quality standards of the people served [6].

The writer then argues that the concept of quality management can be interpreted as a process and effort in regulating, controlling, maintaining, and even improving the quality that exists in an organization so that the objectives of the organization, which is customer satisfaction is achieved and appropriate with what is expected.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a descriptive design with a qualitative approach, so the data collected is obtained through the use of instruments in the form of guidelines for observation, interviews and documentation review. The researcher first conducts pre-research by collecting information about the condition and condition of the school under study. The researcher then compiled the research design and compiled the instrument so that the data obtained was more detailed, specific and in accordance with the research theme. Furthermore, the researchers conducted data collection through field visits.

The data needed from this study was in the form of data related to the implementation of quality management that is applied in schools located in rural areas, which are some elementary schools located in *Desa Goarie, Kec. Marioriwawo, Kab. Soppeng, South Sulawesi*. The data needed was obtained from relevant parties such as principals, educators, students and school committees, including students’

parents, by using data retrieval techniques through purposive sampling.

In this study, the author used interactive data analyst techniques, where researchers took three stages of activities; data presentation, data reduction and data conclusions.

After collecting data from the field, the writer then presented the data in detail and then reduced the data in order to obtain specific data related to the research theme which is the implementation of quality management. Then, the authors made the conclusions from the data that had been reduced.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Tilaar argues that the main purpose of education in remote areas, in the short and medium term is to raise human dignity to a more decent life, so that they can actively participate in fiber in the development process. For this reason, Tilaar offers several approaches [11]:

A. Procurement and Placement of Teachers

Procurement and placement of teachers must be one use. This means that teachers for the area are prepared in a program carefully, both in terms of physical and psychological qualifications in a special program. In addition, several other fringe benefits need to be developed, for example:

- Rotation of duties within the district after serving for 3 years.
- Special promotion for each service for 5 years in the same place or in other remote areas.
- Obtaining a scholarship to continue studies for those who demonstrate innovative achievements and academic abilities.
- Providing work at home and abroad for those who excel.
- Providing adequate housing in the assignment.

B. Management of Education Through Municipality

Handling education in rural areas must be handled by the officials closest to the location. In this case the municipal/city is the administrative unit that is relatively the closest to the rural location. This means that municipal/cities become administrative units that plan and manage this program in collaboration with relevant institutions, from procurement plans and teacher placement to all intensive system administration.

C. The Curriculum Implementation is Loaded with Local Wisdom Content

The curriculum for those schools must be specifically designed without leaving minimal demands from the national curriculum and fertilizing attitudes that are in line with the concept of *Wawasan Nusantara*.

D. Linkages with Other Sectors in an Integrated Manner

In the development process as an effort to develop human dignity, education does not stand alone. Education only has meaning if it becomes the part of an integrated effort to improve human dignity. In this connection the role of municipal/city with its tangible programs, including various activities for the development of rural area will be crucial.

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of quality management in rural schools is still applied in the midst of various limitations in order to obtain the quality of graduates or alumni who have the competencies and skills needed by society in the era of globalization and industrial revolution today.

Researchers in this case find that there are at least five things that those schools apply to implement quality management in order to improve quality in schools in non-urban areas. Those five things are:

1) *Schools located in rural areas continue to carry out learning in general based on the national curriculum:* The applied curriculum is inseparable from the national curriculum which focuses on character education. Especially in term of strengthening the local wisdom that is expected not to erode the surrounding culture, which is prioritizing politeness and respect for others. But in its implementation there are several methods applied that are based on the capacity and ability of students and the availability of existing school facilities, as well as the need for adjustments to the industrial revolution.

2) *Schools located in rural areas utilize existing resources:* The condition of schools located far from urban areas requires schools to make the most of existing resources. The role of teachers is expected to be the main support in guiding students in learning and improving their abilities. In some schools that have school libraries, it is mandatory for class teachers to schedule students to visit the library at least once a week to preserve the reading culture, even though the availability of reading books is limited. The availability of empty yards will usually also be used to introduce and train students about plantations which are also then used as learning media in related subjects such as natural science.

3) *Schools located in the rural areas focus on extracurricular activities:* Despite the conditions, the limitations of school facilities resulted in not all types of extracurricular activities being implemented, but some activities such as the sports sector can still be concerned by utilizing available field facilities. In addition, additional English classes are also held by assigning teachers who have knowledge in English or by bringing in volunteers such as students who temporarily carry out community service activities in the area around the school. However, extracurricular activities in the field of computer introduction have not been able to be carried out due to the unavailability of units that can be used.

4) *Schools located in rural areas make visits or comparative studies to schools located in urban areas that have complete facilities on a regular basis:* This effort is

meant for students, so that, even though they study in schools that do not have complete facilities, they still understand and have a glimpse about the developments in the world of education at this time. Students are also expected to be able to understand and recognize things related to the implementation of learning, such as the use of projectors, how to access and use information services such as the internet, how to obtain information and sources of learning through the internet, and other things that are not found in rural schools.

5) *Stakeholders in schools located in rural areas seek the availability of adequate facilities to support student learning:* The school realizes that in the era of industrial revolution nowadays, the introduction of students to technology and digital is mandatory in order to avoid blindness to developments that exist globally. Therefore, the responsible person still strives to procure the facilities needed to encourage students' motivation in increasing learning achievement. In this case, procuring a computer unit or computer laboratory for easier internet access in order to obtain information that might not be obtained in the classroom has become the priority of education practitioners in rural areas.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the explanation and description of the research findings and discussion above, the researcher concludes that the implementation of quality management in order to achieve the quality targets that have been determined nationally, schools in rural areas make efforts to improve as appropriate, namely: 1) implementing learning in general in accordance with the national curriculum, 2) utilizing existing resources, 3) focusing on extracurricular activities, 4) conducting visitation or comparative studies to schools located in urban areas that have complete facilities on a regular basis, 5) striving for the availability of adequate facilities to support student learning. These five steps are the first step or the basis for maintaining quality assurance in efforts to equalize education throughout Indonesia.

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