

OPTIMIZING TEACHER QUALITY THROUGH INNOVATIVE EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP: A STUDY OF PDCA-BASED TQM STRATEGY BY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

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Abstrak

Kualitas pendidikan erat kaitannya dengan kualitas tenaga pengajar di semua jenjang pendidikan. Guru memainkan peran sentral dalam membentuk generasi yang unggul dan kompetitif. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi strategi kepala sekolah untuk meningkatkan kualitas guru dan tenaga kependidikan lainnya. Untuk lebih memahami tindakan yang dilakukan oleh kepala sekolah untuk mengoptimalkan kualitas pengajaran melalui penerapan Total Quality Management berbasis siklus Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA), penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metodologi studi kasus. Berdasarkan temuan penelitian, kepala sekolah Insan telah menerapkan pendekatan yang terstruktur dan berkelanjutan untuk meningkatkan kualitas guru melalui berbagai strategi, antara lain rekrutmen guru selektif, pengembangan kepribadian dan kompetensi guru, keterlibatan dalam pelatihan dan lokakarya, serta pemberian penghargaan kepada guru berprestasi. Penerapan siklus PDCA dalam setiap langkah strategis memungkinkan kepala sekolah untuk memantau, mengevaluasi, dan melakukan perbaikan yang diperlukan secara berkala. Implikasi penelitian ini memperkaya kajian manajemen mutu pendidikan berupa kualitas pembelajaran, efektivitas guru, dan budaya perbaikan berkelanjutan di sekolah. Selain itu, strategi (Plan, Do, Check, dan Act). Kemudian memberikan rekomendasi kepada pembuat kebijakan pendidikan, baik di tingkat sekolah, dinas pendidikan, maupun pemerintah.

Keywords: Guru, Kepemimpinan, Kualitas, TQM

Abstract

The quality of education is closely related to the quality of teaching staff at all levels of education. Teachers play a central role in shaping a superior and competitive generation. This research aims to explore the strategies of school principals to improve the quality of teachers and other education personnel. To better understand the actions taken by school principals to optimize the quality of teaching through the implementation of Total Quality Management based on the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle, this study uses a qualitative approach with a case study methodology. Based on the findings of the research, Insan principals have implemented a structured and sustainable approach to improving teacher quality through various strategies, including selective teacher recruitment, teacher personality, and competency development, involvement in training and workshops, and awarding outstanding teachers. The implementation of the PDCA cycle in each strategic step allows school principals to monitor, evaluate, and make necessary improvements on a regular basis. The implications of this study enrich the study of education quality management in the form of learning quality, teacher effectiveness, and a culture of continuous improvement in schools. In addition, strategies (Plan, Do, Check, and Act). Then provide recommendations to education policymakers, both at the school level, the education office, and the government.

Keywords: Teachers, Leadership, Quality, TQM

Introduction

Quality at various levels of education significantly impacts educational standards in a country. The superior and outstanding generation is mostly produced by teachers at the forefront of the teaching and learning process [1]. In this context, to ensure that every student receives a quality education, improving the quality of teachers is an important agenda. Therefore, the leadership position of school principals in improving the quality of teachers with innovative strategies is very crucial [2] Effective leadership can provide clear direction, create a conducive work climate, and encourage the development of teachers' professional competencies. One of the approaches that can be applied in improving the quality of teachers is (TQM) focusing on *Continuous improvement*, which is further synergized with the PDCA cycle[3]

TQM is known as a quality-oriented management approach, which originated in the industrial world but has been adapted in the education sector. Through TQM, educational institutions strive to meet and exceed the expectations of all stakeholders, including students, teachers, and the community[4]. This approach emphasizes quality management that is structured, data-based, and involves all elements in educational institutions. The principal, as the top leader in the school unit, has an important role in implementing TQM effectively. The PDCA cycle, which consists of four stages, namely planning (*Plan*), carrying out (*Do*), check (*Check*), and act (*Act*) to be a strategic tool to carry out TQM in a sustainable manner. This cycle allows school principals to continue to evaluate and improve the quality management of teachers in their schools.

The integration between TQM and the PDCA cycle which is applied holistically in the context of teacher quality development is a unique feature of this study. Although many studies have discussed TQM as a quality management approach in the education sector, few specifically link the application of TQM to the PDCA cycle for teacher quality improvement. In this study, the PDCA approach is not only seen as an evaluation tool but also as a strategic framework that encourages comprehensive and sustainable quality improvement. In addition, this research also offers a new perspective on how innovative leadership of school principals can be key in the effective implementation of TQM, where school principals act as agents of change who are able to create a culture of quality in the school environment. This research contributes to the education management literature by emphasizing the importance of the role of leadership in the development of human resources, especially teachers, through quality-based management.

In the midst of efforts to improve the quality of teachers, a number of challenges have arisen, both outside and inside. The biggest challenge is adaptation to modern technology and teaching methods in the digital era. With the accelerating development of information technology,

teachers are expected to be able to utilize learning technology to produce interactive and interesting learning experiences. However, not all teachers have adequate digital skills, so ongoing training and support are needed. In addition, resistance to change is also a challenge that school principals often face in implementing quality improvement programs. Some teachers may be reluctant to step out of their comfort zone and tend to stick to conventional teaching methods. Another challenge is the limited education budget which often limits the optimal implementation of teacher development programs. In this context, school principals must be able to be effective managers in maximizing existing resources and creating an environment that supports collaboration and innovation.

By addressing these challenges through a PDCA-based TQM approach, school principals can lead educational institutions towards better quality, where high-quality teachers are the main pillars in producing a future-ready generation.

Research Methods

The study uses a case study methodology and a qualitative approach[5]. Since this study focuses on the detailed experiences, procedures, and curriculum activities carried out by principals, teachers, and vice principals to improve teacher quality, case studies were chosen as the appropriate approach. Data analysis is carried out through three steps: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification. The data collected will be summarized to identify key themes, allowing researchers to observe trends and relationships between leadership tactics and the results achieved. Conclusions will be drawn gradually and verified throughout the analysis process[6] This analysis model is expected to provide an in-depth understanding of how the PDCA-based TQM strategy is implemented in the context of improving teacher quality.

Discussion

The methodical approach using the PDCA cycle is the subject of research conducted at SDIT Baitul Insan about the principal's plan to improve the quality of teachers. This approach is made to ensure that every step in the process of improving the quality of teachers is carried out in a structured manner and can be evaluated and improved on an ongoing basis[7] The four main strategies implemented are teacher recruitment, teacher personal development, participation in workshops, and a reward system for outstanding teachers.

The first strategy: Recruitment of New Teachers The teacher recruitment process at SDIT Baitul Insan is carried out very selectively and can be analyzed using the PDCA cycle. In the first

phase, namely *Plan*, the principal determines the qualification standards that must be met by prospective teachers. These standards include academic competence, personality, and teaching skills. Once the qualifications are set, the phase of *Do* was held, where the principal together with the Foundation opened registration for new teachers. As well as examining the files after this procedure, which are included in the phase *Check*. In this phase, the applicant's file and qualifications are carefully checked to ensure that the candidate is eligible. Finally, in the phase of *Act*, the decision is made based on the results of the previous stage. This process includes written tests, discussions, microteaching, and contract interviews, so that the best candidates can be selected. Teachers who are selected after a rigorous selection process are usually more motivated to perform at the highest level.[8] This process gives them a sense of achievement and recognition, so they are more motivated to maintain high standards in teaching and contribute to the school to the fullest.

Strategy two: Teacher Personal Development Teachers' personal development is carried out regularly, namely once a month, with a focus on improving the quality of teachers. In the *Plan*, the principal identifies the personal development needs of each teacher. This need is based on performance evaluation and current learning needs. Furthermore, in the *Do*, the principal supervises the implementation of the development program that has been designed, such as discussions with teachers about the material that will be delivered in class. In the *Check*, the principal monitors the results of the teacher's personal development during the discussion session or material presentation. This evaluation allows school principals to measure the extent to which the quality of teacher teaching has improved. In the *Act*, the principal reviews the results of the evaluation and makes continuous improvements, ensuring that the teacher's personal development improves. With continuous self-improvement, teachers can be better prepared to face the latest developments in the world of education, such as learning technology, new curricula, and innovative teaching methods[9] This is important so that educational institutions can adapt to rapid changes in the world of education and remain relevant.

Third strategy: Participation in the Workshop This strategy is focused on empowering teachers through professional training in the form of workshops[10]. In the *Plan*, the principal chooses a workshop that is of high quality and relevant to the needs of teachers' professional development. The selection of the workshop is based on the credibility of the organizer and the relevance of the training material to the needs of the school. In the *Do*, the principal encourages the active participation of teachers by providing support, both in the form of leisure time and incentives. Teachers are given an understanding of the importance of participating in workshops to

improve their competence. After participating in the workshop, the phase *Check* It is carried out by observing changes in teacher performance in the classroom. The principal monitors whether there is an improvement in the implementation of workshop results, both in terms of teaching methods and interaction with students. In the *Act*, the principal takes action based on the evaluation. If the workshop proves to be effective, teachers are encouraged to implement the results of the training in their daily activities in the classroom. In addition, recommendations for the next workshop were also made, so that the training was more in line with the needs of teacher development in the future[11].

Fourth strategy: Reward System The reward system implemented at SDIT Baitul Insan aims to motivate teachers to continue to improve their performance. In the *Plan*, the principal determines the reason for giving rewards, such as to encourage innovation in teaching or increase participation in school activities. This criterion is compiled based on teachers' achievements in various aspects, such as student learning outcomes, innovations in teaching methods, and contributions to school activities. In the *Do*, the principal together with the management team monitor the performance of teachers regularly, measuring their achievement based on predetermined criteria. After some time, the phase *Check* conducted, where the principal evaluates the impact of the reward system on teacher motivation and performance. If there is an improvement in performance, then the reward is considered effective. In the *Act*, the principal followed up on the results of the evaluation by making adjustments to the reward system. If the reward system proves successful, it will be continued and further developed. If problems are found, such as unclear criteria or lack of motivational impact, improvements will be made to make the reward system more effective. In addition, teachers who get rewards tend to be more motivated to maintain or even improve their performance[12] The award is an incentive to achieve higher targets, develop more effective teaching methods, and continue to strive to improve the quality of their professionalism.

Additional tactics that can be applied by the principal of SDIT Baitul Insan to improve quality, according to researchers, can start with the implementation of strategies to improve teacher discipline[13] Discipline is the main key to building a productive work environment. School principals can implement a discipline assessment system based on attendance, punctuality, and involvement in school activities. Providing incentives and rewards for teachers who show high discipline will encourage motivation and foster a positive work culture. In addition, the implementation of planned and structured supervision on a regular basis is very important[14] Through supervision, school principals can provide constructive feedback for teacher performance improvement as well as evaluate areas that need improvement.

Another strategy that needs to be strengthened is the implementation of MGMP and KKG[15] This activity allows teachers to share experiences, learning methods, and challenges faced in class. School principals can facilitate MGMP and KKG activities on a regular basis to strengthen collaboration between teachers. In addition, the improvement of educators' professional competence can also be achieved by supporting their efforts in pursuing higher education[16] With a combination of good supervision, improved discipline, active MGMP/KKG activities, and further study, SDIT Baitul Insan can continue to improve the quality of teaching and the quality of education in schools.

Conclusion

The principal at SDIT Baitul Insan has implemented a systematic and sustainable approach to improve the quality of teachers. The use of the PDCA cycle in each strategy allows the principal to continuously monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of each step taken. This contributes to improving the quality of learning in schools, ultimately having a positive impact on student academic achievement. This approach also shows that good and structured school management can be key in improving the quality of education, especially in terms of teacher professional development.

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