

Teacher Empowerment Strategy in Improving the Quality of Education



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ABSTRACT: The quality of education is an important requirement in preparing superior human resources. However, in reality, the implementation of education has not been able to produce quality graduates. This condition is caused, among others, by the empowerment of teachers. This research was conducted to analyze teacher empowerment strategies in improving the quality of education. Research using a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. Data obtained through literature review and analyzed descriptively-qualitative. The results showed that improving the quality of education requires appropriate teacher empowerment strategies. Empowerment strategies: inspiring teachers to empower themselves continuously through self-taught and independent efforts; encourage teacher participation in various educational and teaching activities; encouraging the growth of innovation among teachers, by providing flexibility for teachers to come up with new ideas, approaches, methods or strategies; provide the widest possible access to information to teachers through information; encourage teachers to have high accountability.

KEYWORDS: Teacher Empowerment Strategy, Improving Education Quality.

INTRODUCTION

Education is very important and vital for the nations of the world, including Indonesia. Education is an instrument to create human resources needed by development in various fields, including economy, politics, law, socio-culture, education, and health. Functionally, education is scheduled to prepare each individual to face his future to be able to live a decent and prosperous life. But in reality, the implementation of education in Indonesia has not fully guaranteed its graduates to achieve a prosperous and prosperous life because they do not have high-quality competitiveness and according to market needs.

Deming (Karweti, 2010) states that quality (quality) is a predictable level of uniformity and dependence on low costs and according to the market. Meanwhile, Basyit (2018) argues that quality is a subjective assessment of "customers" which is determined by "customers" perceptions of products and services. In the context of education, according to Abdurrahman et al., (2018), the quality of education services is relative (according to customer needs), and not absolute. The quality of education will be good and satisfying if it matches or exceeds the needs of concerned customers. In the world of education, customers or clients are: (a) internal customers, namely: people who are in school organizations, namely: teachers, administrative staff, office boys, cleaning service, servants technical and other components; and (b) external customers (external customer), namely: people outside the school organization who get services from the school (Nofrion & Wijayanto, 2018). The quality of education, among others, is influenced by teacher empowerment (Alam et al., 2016).

Also, Bailey, Curtis, and Nunan (2001) said that through empowerment, teachers can add new knowledge and master new skills so that they will be able to overcome teaching and learning process problems faced in schools. Mokdad et al., (2014) also argued that empowerment makes teachers able to engage, share, and influence which in turn has a positive impact on their lives. In fact, according to Marcenes et al., (2013), the secret of effective teacher professional development is self-empowerment. This means that for teacher professionalism to develop effectively, teachers need to empower themselves without having to wait for regulations that come down from policyholders. Anwar & Alfina, (2019) also said that in Singapore teachers are required to participate in self-empowerment activities for one hundred hours each year. These self-development activities include making lesson plans (RPP) and classroom action research (action research), one of which is by attending workshops and conferences. Empowerment even affects performance (Nopriyono & Suswanta, 2019), so that in an educational perspective it can have implications for the quality of education.

According to Jason A. et al., (2011), psychological empowerment is a form of intrinsic motivation, because carrying out a task is an award and provides intrinsic satisfaction in the form of pleasure, workmanship, achievement, increasing knowledge and skills,

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self-disclosure, avoiding frustration, boredom, and anxiety at work. For McAndrew et al., (2012) empowerment is a process of managers helping employees acquire and utilize the skills needed to make decisions that impact themselves and their work. Langford, et al., (2020) said that the empowerment program will produce motivated employees, quality customer service, and increase company profits. Empowerment also means giving authority to employees by the organization to solve things that affect their daily work (Palojoki et al., 2013). The idea of empowerment involves a workforce that is given a greater degree of flexibility and more freedom to make work-related decisions.

According to Govindarajan & Natarajan (2015) efforts to empower teachers can be done by (1) assisting employees in achieving mastery of performance (providing proper training, training, and experience directed at results as the beginning of success); (2) allow more control (giving them the consideration of job performance, and then helping them with accountable outcomes); (3) providing success models allow them to observe colleagues who have helped success in work); (4) using social support and persuasion (giving praise, encouragement, and feedback designed to increase self-confidence); (5) providing emotional support (providing stress reduction and anxiety through better job definitions, task assistance, and honest handling).

There are several dimensions of empowerment as a process, namely: (1) enabling, namely creating an atmosphere or climate that allows potential clients to develop optimally. Empowerment must be able to free clients (individuals, communities, or groups) from cultural and structural barriers that hinder; (2) strengthening (empowerment), namely strengthening the knowledge and abilities possessed by clients (individuals, communities, or groups) in solving problems and meeting their needs. Empowerment must be able to develop all abilities and all client confidence that supports independence; (3) protecting, namely protecting especially the weak groups so as not to be oppressed by the strong groups, avoiding unbalanced competition between the strong and the weak, and preventing exploitation. Empowerment must be directed at eliminating all types of discrimination and domination that do not benefit the lowly people, protecting the weak, disadvantaged groups and isolated communities; (4) support, namely providing guidance and support so that clients can carry out their roles and tasks in life. Empowerment must be able to support clients so they do not fall into a state and position that is getting weaker and more excluded; (5) maintenance (fostering), namely maintaining conducive conditions so that there is a balance of power distribution between the various groups. Empowerment must be able to ensure harmony and balance that allows people to have business opportunities (Suharto, 2013). If these conditions can be pursued with the right strategy, then potential teacher empowerment will encourage an increase in the quality of education.

According to Denny & Quinn, (2015) strategy is a form or plan that integrates main goals, policies, and a series of actions in an organization into a unified whole. A well-formulated strategy will help organize and allocate the organization's resources into a unique and durable form. In organizational dynamics, strategies are needed for various organizational development needs, including teacher empowerment. According to Ametembun (Mustaqim, 2014), teachers are all people who are authorized and responsible for the education of students, both individually and classically, both at school and outside of school. Based on Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, teacher competence includes pedagogical competence, personality competence, social competence, and professional competence.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with the technique of researchers taking to the field, interacting with them, trying to understand their language and their interpretation of the world around them, making observations and explorations (Rahmat, 2009). The subjects or the main data sources for the principal and vice-principal, teachers, and students. This research was conducted at SMPN 1 Tanjung Jabung Timur, Jambi Province. Primary data in this study were extracted and obtained through structured and non-structured interviews. This is also in line with the opinion of Mayer (2018) that in qualitative research, interviews are one way of obtaining research data. Secondary data or supporting data are obtained through literature review analysis which includes theory and research results related to the problems discussed in this study. Thus the research data obtained from this study are in the form of activity programs as a result of the development of quality-oriented education policies for Human Resources in schools. The validity of the data in the study is guaranteed through triangulation activities, in this case including triangulation of sources and methods. Data analysis in the study was carried out in two stages: (1) reduction, namely an attempt to conclude the data, then sorting the data into certain conceptual units, certain categories, and certain themes (Rijali, 2019), and the descriptive analysis stage, which is in the form of exposure. Which is done in a descriptive narrative to give an overview of the data that has been obtained. Therefore, the focus of this study is to describe what the principal is doing to empower teachers to improve the quality of education at SMPN 1 Tanjung Jabung Timur.

RESULT AND DISCUSS

Teachers are the main actors in the learning process, so their existence is very important and vital for improving the quality of education. This means that efforts to improve the quality of education need to pay attention to the actual conditions of teachers, especially those related to their competence (pedagogic, personality, social, and professional). It is in this context that teacher empowerment gets its relevance as the main pillar of improving the quality of education through enrichment and strengthening of pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competencies. Through empowerment, teachers can add new knowledge and master

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new skills so that they can overcome the problems of the teaching and learning process. In fact, Murray (2013) states that the secret of effective teacher professional development is empowerment. Therefore, at SMPN 1 Tanjung Jabung Timur, teachers are required to take part in both MBS and MGMP activities (Sparks, 2013). This shows that empowerment is very important for enrichment and strengthening of teacher competence as one of the requirements for improving the quality of education.

In the perspective of enrichment and strengthening of competence, the teacher empowerment strategy carried out by the principal at SMPN 1 Tanjung Jabung Timur is as follows:

1. Encourage teachers to optimize their potential independently:

Self-potential is a person's main source of strength to achieve achievements in their field of work. Self-potential according to (Faqih, 2018) consists of physical potential (hearing, sight), reason, spirit which still needs development for life provision since birth. Yumnah (2016) states that one form of self-potential is intelligence. Thus the self-potential referred to in this study is related to the four basic competencies that teachers must possess, namely: pedagogical competence, professional competence, social competence, and personality competence. Self-optimization activities for teachers can be done independently by joining and collaborating with professional organizations. For this reason, the principal encourages every teacher to actively participate in various activities carried out by professional organizations, for example, the Republic of Indonesia Teachers Association (PGRI), as well as through subject teacher deliberations (MGMP), as well as activities carried out by the education office. In this way, it is hoped that the self-potential of the teacher will develop and be well optimized.

2. Encourage teacher participation in various educational and teaching activities:

Educational and teaching activities are the main elements of the education sector. For this reason, in the context of empowering teachers at SMPN 1 Tanjung Jabung Timur by providing the widest possible space for teachers to express their aspirations as educational personnel, especially aspirations related to their competence. Besides, through this strategy, teachers are also encouraged to improve their competence through various formal education programs by continuing their education at the master level. This is in line with the opinion of Ningrum (2016) and Maiza & Nurhafizah (2019) that formal education can be used as a means of developing human resources. Through this strategy, it is proven that at SMPN 1 Tanjung Jabung Timur already has several teachers who have master's degrees and some of them are currently participating in the program.

3. Encourage the growth of innovation among teachers:

Innovation in learning is a form of teacher creativity and is an important point in the world of education (Wuryastuti, 2008). Strategies and innovations in learning are also very relevant in education in the industrial revolution era 4.0 (Rohmadi, 2018). Therefore, the principal always encourages and creates various activities to foster innovation among teachers. Some of these activities, for example, by carrying out workshops and lesson study activities. With some of these activities, it has been proven that the innovation and creativity of teachers at SMPN 1 Tanjung Jabung Timur are increasingly visible, this is believed to be an important element in improving the quality of education in these schools. Besides, to foster teacher innovation and creativity, it is also carried out by giving flexibility to teachers to come up with new ideas, approaches, methods, or strategies that have the potential to enrich their teacher competencies.

4. Provide the widest possible access to information for teachers:

The next strategy undertaken by the principal at SMPN 1 Tanjung Jabung Timur to empower teachers to improve the quality of education is to provide the widest possible access to information for every teacher and educational staff. Through facilitating as much information as possible from various possible networks, both at school and outside of school. Discussion forums between teachers, seminars, training, and outreach related to teacher competency materials can be used as a means of obtaining new information.

5. Creating a conducive school organizational climate:

A conducive organizational climate is very important for the creation of the quality performance. Is as stated by Triastuti (2019) that the work environment has a positive effect on employee performance. Also, organizational climate affects work stress and employee performance (Abdillah, et al., 2017), and (Irawan & Venus, 2016). For this reason, the head always strives to create a conducive organizational climate at SMPN 1 Tanjung Jabung Timur to ensure that all human resources in the institution have optimal performance and are stress-free. Through the creation of a conducive organizational climate, enabling the potential of teachers to grow and develop optimally so that they can properly support the actualization of their teacher competencies. This effort requires school administrators to try to encourage and facilitate interaction and social relations among school members to take place in harmony so that teachers can play their educational duties calmly, comfortably, and freely.

6. Reinforce teacher work performance:

Another effort made by the principal at SMPN 1 Tanjung Jabung Timur to empower human resources is through strengthening teacher work performance. The strategy is carried out with the consideration of several research which states that giving awards or strengthening can improve employee performance, for example, research conducted by Prabu & Wijayanti, (2016) and Syahril & Nurbiyati (2016) that strengthening or rewards can improve employee performance. Also, Putri Kentjana & Nainggolan (2018) stated that awards can increase employee motivation. At SMPN 1 Tanjung Jabung Timur the implementation of this strategy is

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carried out through the provision of rewards such as simply giving praise, award certificates, prizes, incentives, and promotions (rank/position). In this way it is hoped that the teachers will be more active in solving various problems that arise in schools;

7. Provide optimal protection to teachers from oppression, injustice, and unbalanced competition between strong and weak likes and dislikes, and prevents exploitation which can reduce teachers' ability to actualize their competence.

CONCLUSION

Improving the quality of education can be carried out through enrichment and strengthening of pedagogic, personal, social and professional competencies by using empowerment strategies: inspiring teachers to empower themselves continuously through self-taught and independent efforts; encourage teacher participation in various educational and teaching activities; encouraging the growth of innovation among teachers, by providing flexibility for teachers to come up with new ideas, approaches, methods or strategies; provide the widest possible access to information to teachers through information; encourage teachers to have high accountability; creating a conducive school organizational climate that allows potential teachers to grow and develop optimally; provide strengthening of teacher competence through giving rewards; provide optimal protection to teachers from oppression, injustice and unbalanced competition; provide full support in order to actualize competencies optimally; and maintaining teachers in conducive and comfortable conditions.

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