

The Strategic Role of Education Quality Management Function on Competitiveness in High School

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ABSTRACT. This research aimed to explore the role of quality management in enhancing school competitiveness at SMAN 5 Serang City. The study focused on four key questions: (1) how does educational quality planning improve school competitiveness? (2) How does the implementation of educational quality enhance competitiveness? (3) How does the evaluation process of educational quality contribute to school competitiveness? And (4) what actions are taken during the evaluation process to improve competitiveness? This study used a descriptive qualitative research method with a case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations and field notes. Data analysis used narrative analysis from existing data sources. The findings revealed that (1) the planning process for improving educational quality included several strategic steps. (2) Implementation involved meeting targets set in the planning stage, though the school still needed to work on optimizing competitiveness and managing facilities effectively. (3) Educational quality evaluations were conducted through regular monitoring, focusing on the curriculum and human resource development. However, competitiveness and facilities management still need to be improved. (4) The school implemented in-house training and improved school information systems to address these challenges. The researcher recommends further studies on the role of quality management in school competitiveness, either in this location or in different settings. Future research could also focus on other topics in the exact location, such as at SMAN 5 Serang City.

Keywords: *Competitiveness, education management, total quality management*

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INTRODUCTION

As formal institutions, schools hold a significant role in society, serving as trusted resources to address educational challenges and enhance the quality of children's development (Braden et al., 2001; Hohlfield et al., 2010; Keshavarz et al., 2010). Schools are essential because they are responsible for offering a space for students to showcase their skills and interests, motivating them to engage in critical thinking and articulate their viewpoints (Ali, 2018). As stated above, the central role of schools is to provide total education because education is essential for continuously and sustainably improving quality (Sudadio, 2022). In line with this statement, education can be managed with quality assurance that it continues to grow because it is necessary to have essential managerial elements that can manage further education. Education, especially in the current era, refers to a person's development of how to view things, present solutions with their insights, and reason critically. Increasing awareness of resource use through training and public outreach and fostering teachers' and students' understanding of resource conservation and efficient usage establishes the foundation for cultivating good resource management habits. Additionally, by

leveraging technical support and innovation, modern technologies like artificial intelligence recommendation systems can enhance resource efficiency, leading to optimal utilization. Furthermore, according to this opinion, education is said to be quality if there is interaction in its environment to create a healthy situation of education (Ngaripin, 2023).

Increasing awareness of resource use through training and public outreach and fostering teachers' and students' understanding of resource conservation and efficient usage establishes the foundation for competitiveness habits (Liu, 2024). Additionally, The competitiveness of educational institutions is influenced by six factors, including the principal's leadership, the innovation in teaching methods, the quality of educators, infrastructure, the quality of collaboration, and the institution's achievements (Tholkhah, 2016). Those mean that a supportive work environment is appreciated, where the management leader understands how to engage with their colleagues and enhance their skills to help teams adapt to new initiatives (Díez et al., 2020). Moreover, the key strategies to optimize organizational effectiveness and quality management include overseeing the educational program, ensuring staff satisfaction and development, restructuring the school organization, enhancing the school environment, and more (Parveen et al., 2024). Conversely, in factual circumstances, some common issues arise within educational institutions, specifically at SMAN 5 Serang City. A significant challenge relates to the less-than-ideal management of educational resources and staff. Insufficient focus on the professional development of teachers, coupled with limited support in learning tools such as classroom technology, laboratory equipment, and other facilities, can hinder the school's ability to offer a comprehensive learning experience. This inefficiency in the learning process may also negatively impact student motivation and academic performance.

Research on educational resource management's role, including human and infrastructure aspects, in facilitating effective management has emerged as a significant topic in educational literature. The research (Elems-Ikwegbu, 2023) proves that it is essential for promoting ongoing improvement, effective decision-making, and accountability among educational institutions, teachers, and stakeholders. The additional studies were carried out by (Díez et al., 2020; Khoirudin et al., 2023; Fathonah & Ayuni, 2022; Aisah et al., 2018). Nonetheless, there is a significant gap in the academic literature regarding the strategic role of the educational management function. The results of this gap analysis highlight the need for more in-depth research to explore how the strategic role of the educational management function can effectively improve the performance of teachers and staff in high schools. In addition, the current literature has not fully paid attention to applications of all aspects (total quality management, principal leadership, and management competitiveness) that impact educational management to competitiveness.

Competitiveness exists between educational institutions, so each must conceptualize itself through various system modifications to create its characteristics and advantages. Long-term competitive advantage can be enhanced by aligning strategic initiatives with control systems (Liem & Hien, 2024). It arises when institutions continually search for innovative methods to sustain or enhance their competitive edge (Almanza Floyd et al., 2024). The current level of competition between educational institutions is increasingly attractive, especially with the presence of new educational institutions that offer innovation and better quality, which, as underlined by (Iddris et al., 2023), is produced by transformational leaders who inspire employees to take the initiative and increase productivity, helping an insurance company achieve a competitive edge. In this context, it is essential to identify and face new challenges that arise to improve the quality of learning at SMAN 5 Serang City. One aspect receiving increasing attention is how educational resource and infrastructure management can be improved to ensure optimal management effectiveness. Although several studies have investigated this topic, this research makes a significant contribution by emphasizing the planning, implementation, evaluation, and action of educational resource management of educational facilities and infrastructure in public high schools. By focusing attention on this, this research aims to investigate the planning, implementation, evaluation, and

action of the educational resource and infrastructure management at SMAN 5 Serang City, focusing on its effectiveness in improving the quality of educational management in competitiveness.

METHOD

The method used in this research is a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the strategic role of quality management function on competitiveness in high schools. The research location was chosen because SMAN 5 Serang City still needs to address several issues related to weak management within the school, including suboptimal leadership, inadequate management of facilities data by staff, and insufficient use of technology to promote the school to society. The research focuses on the school's resource management, facilities or human units. Primary data was obtained through interviews with the school principal, three vice principals, and related staff, while secondary data was from books, journal articles and other sources. Research subjects included vice principal for facilities and infrastructure, the deputy head of the curriculum department, the deputy head of the public relations department, elected teachers, students, ex-student, and student's parent.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Based on the research findings, involvement in the student affairs sector begins with participation in monthly and annual planning meetings. These meetings, which include all elements of the school structure, such as the Deputy Principals, focus on planning student affairs. After the meetings, the program outcomes and implementation plans are presented. The Deputy Principal responsible for student affairs, along with other stakeholders, then decides on the number of students to be admitted. The annual student admission quota at SMA Negeri 5 Serang City is determined based on the school's capacity and in coordination with the provincial government.

As researchers have conducted research, SMAN 5 Serang City carried out detailed planning to produce quality educational results. It was conveyed in an interview with the school principal: *"Our planning is carried out every year, even every few months because sometimes there is an urgent need. We also have a copy of the data in E-Kinerja for each teacher. We think several programs are still possible for us to maintain, and if they are still not possible, then delete them. Because there are extracurriculars that we see as not being adapted to today's times, we automatically delete them."* In determining several plans to meet student admission needs, SMAN 5 Serang City involves several critical stages. The deputy Principal for public relations said, *"During the Implementation of new student admissions, the school also provides information displayed in front of the school. Apart from that, we provide an information desk team at the front of the school, because we do not want parents of prospective students to be confused about what requirements must be met. We also provide information on the website and on Instagram, basically it has completed wherever it is. After the acceptance process, there is an announcement of graduation, so we also inform about that on the school website, and also on the website of the Banten provincial education office."*

Program development planning at SMAN 5 Serang City is a strategic step to improve the quality of education and school competitiveness. This plan aims to identify needs, set targets, and implement programs that align with the school's vision and mission. With careful planning, it is hoped that SMAN 5 Serang City can become a superior educational institution at the local and national levels. The principal stated regarding the determination of the school program, *"When we talk about determining the program, so far we have just looked at the conditions of the current era, try to pay attention, nowadays people are already technologically literate. From that, we took the opportunity to develop programs using technology, now we have started to have a short film program, the films are posted on YouTube and then promoted on Instagram. There are other programs that we have removed, such as Mading extracurriculars. Why did we delete them, because they are no longer relevant to the times, and there is minimal interest from students?"*

Implementing strategies to improve the quality of educational competitiveness involves establishing policies. SMAN 5 Serang City conducted an environmental analysis in this process, which included identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the environment and school conditions. This analysis provides essential information for organizational policy-making as a basis and consideration for decision-making and actions. In this case, the principal informed, *"Well, in implementation, we pay attention to the process that has been planned using a system of checking strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges. This method is very effective for us because we can monitor what needs improvement regarding the ongoing program."*

Regarding the program implementation, the Deputy Principal for Curriculum states, *"The implementation of what has been planned must continue to be monitored because we want to provide quality education. Then, we can do this by giving each other input. The input here is during meetings and when we take a break in the teacher's room, for example. "From that meeting, we will give each other encouragement and motivation so that during implementation, it will not be easy to slack off."* The evaluation of the quality of education at SMAN 5 Serang City is carried out comprehensively to ensure high educational standards. This process involves analyzing students' academic performance through exams, assessments, and satisfaction surveys from parents and students. The evaluation team identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum, teaching methods, and available facilities. Regarding the evaluation of the quality of education, one of the teachers explained, *"The aim of evaluation at this school is none other than to improve the quality of education. For example, I'm here as an extracurricular coach for Paskibra, so I also carry out evaluations. Thank God, the achievements obtained continue to last. Evaluations are not only carried out annually, but they are also evaluated every month as to whether the activities carried out are appropriate or not."*

A comprehensive evaluation was also carried out, and SMAN 5 Serang City was able to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges in improving the quality of education. The results of this evaluation can be the basis for developing a more focused and effective school development plan. It is important to involve all stakeholders in this evaluation process, including students, parents, teachers, staff, and alumni. With all parties' cooperation and active participation, SMAN 5 Serang City can consistently continue to provide quality education and become a school of excellence and achievement. In line with this, the principal revealed that *"At SMAN 5 we also hold evaluations, evaluations in the form of monitoring which are held every month, semester evaluations and annual evaluations. Why do we do so many evaluations? Considering that nowadays there are many quality schools, especially with the addition of private schools, which are starting to mushroom everywhere. That is why we took the initiative to do this so that our (SMAN 5) quality will be above and beyond."*

The actions or follow-up taken by schools based on evaluating programs and activities carried out include actions taken during implementation if improvements or adjustments are needed. In addition, actions or follow-ups are taken to improve programs and activities that will be proposed to be continued in the following year. All actions or follow-ups are based on the evaluation results. The principal stated, *"Yes, the problem of improvement begins with monthly evaluations; there are notes from supervision activities and the various forms of these evaluations. We are also open to each other in program discussions, so there are no barriers between those who want to talk. "When it comes to follow-up, we don't look at who it is, as long as there is a lack we provide input, the response we get is up to each individual, after this is also for the good of the continuity of the school program."*

An interview with the principal revealed that the program faced several financial challenges. The school's funding relies solely on operational assistance funds. Another challenge is the need for more facilities and infrastructure; the school needs a dedicated laboratory. As a result, practical activities are conducted alternately with regular classes. The research found that SMA Negeri 5 Serang City has adopted an inclusive and structured approach to school management and student development. By actively involving the student affairs sector in the planning process, including determining student needs and quotas, the school is dedicated to making decisions that reflect the needs and aspirations of all stakeholders. A wide range of extracurricular programs, supported by professional teachers, enables students to explore their interests and talents with adequate support.

However, the school still faces limited funding and infrastructure, which must be addressed to enhance the effectiveness and accessibility of educational programs at SMA Negeri 5 Serang City. Continued support from the education department and ongoing evaluation efforts are crucial.

Discussion

The educational management context, as the management process in general, includes planning, organizing and controlling several subjects from individuals, finances, methods and marketing, which involves direction, coordination and leadership to achieve the targets desired by the institution (Terry, 1953; Royhatudin et al., 2020; Al Farisi et al., 2023; Zulkifly et al., 2023). The continuity of the educational quality planning process includes several things, namely having targets that can be achieved within a specific time and determining programs, methods and learning media (Praja Tuala, 2018; Djuhartono et al., 2021; Farida et al., 2024). However, the opposite opinion is that the implementation of management often does not recognize the underlying selection process and does not consciously consider the selection criteria (Saborío & Hertzberg, 2019).

The formulation applied by this school is already at a sound stage, as the school understands the relevant programs for contemporary development. It includes extracurricular programs that bring professional coaches with expertise from trusted institutions. As highlighted by (Syamsi et al., 2023), who informed that to plan the quality of education, educators and teaching staff are also involved because they understand what must be done. The planning process implied by the high school starts from formulating the vision and mission, analyzing the environment internally and externally, and determining the optimal strategy. In addition, Effective planning requires input from subordinates and involves a structured process to achieve organizational goals (Tanzeh, 2018). By carrying out this and planning logically and consistently, the school can achieve the goals and objectives set. Apart from that, it is necessary to work hand in hand with fellow school members to plan strategies to achieve maximum results. Variations in interests, backgrounds, and needs make it challenging to create effective and inclusive programs to nurture student talents in high school (Salsa Nur Aqrima et al., 2024). Even with this, implying too many stakeholders can inhibit decision-making and lead to efficient planning (Saputra & Sriyanto, 2021).

One of the management functions in implementing education is activity-oriented, including interactions between individuals in educational institutions. Improved implementation of quality assurance ultimately positively impacts institutions' educational standards, enabling them to meet international quality requirements (Chien, 2023). Implementation Refers to all efforts, approaches, techniques and strategies used to motivate organizational members to work with enthusiasm and dedication to achieve organizational goals effectively, efficiently and cost-effectively (Tamam, 2021); into the bargain, implementing strategies and policies involves developing clear plans, allocating necessary resources, and following established procedures. SMAN 5 Serang City applies strategies designed to boost the quality of its educational competitiveness by raising the standard of education. It is accomplished by encouraging students to participate in various competitions, which help to refine their achievements, expand their knowledge and experience, develop their skills, and promote the school's reputation.

Meanwhile, another result did not match expectations; school principals must be executed optimally, particularly concerning internal relationships among school members, where gaps still exist between teaching staff. Additionally, the leadership effectiveness of school leaders should be more substantial. On the contrary, service is more emphasized in an organization's service practices, so service quality management in an educational institution is committed to achieving customer satisfaction (Khaeroni & Farhurohman, 2020). Furthermore, one school leader said strong partnerships are like a launchpad for teachers, helping them grow and evolve in their careers (Bohannon et al., 2024).

The evaluation is the final result of the formulation and implementation stages, used as a basis for assessment or results determined at the planning and implementation stages. Evaluation is a structured and planned process for measuring, assessing and classifying the implementation and success of a program (Prajatmaja, 2018). The evaluation must be implemented intensively so that the school teachers or students can be competent as intended. In carrying out the evaluation, the teaching staff, especially the extracurricular coaches, were involved in strategies to improve the quality of educational competitiveness at SMAN 5 Serang City and in various championship events. Evaluations carried out by teaching staff are based on the initial plans that have been determined. This evaluation includes the student achievement test results and whether or not they have met the target within the agreed time. The strategic management process can produce decisions that significantly impact the long term. Most strategists agree that strategy evaluation is very important for the sustainability of an institution. The implementation functions are based on the plans made by the school; this evaluation stage includes an overall assessment of the management of all areas within the educational institution. These fields also include evaluation of technical fields, such as curriculum, human resources and infrastructure.

The corrective actions in a school signal its potential to meet excellence criteria. As underlined by Sagala (2017), a successful school demonstrates mastery of knowledge, strong leadership, effective staff management, and cohesive teamwork and produces quality graduates. Implementing these actions fosters a favourable organizational structure and improves school quality. Quality goes beyond merely meeting standards; it also involves enhancing or evolving the organization toward a more positive trajectory (Surahman, 2022). SMAN 5 Kota Serang has implemented several strategic steps, including 1) a teacher development program (House Training), 2) reducing less relevant programs, 3) using Computer Testing, and 4) ongoing monitoring to improve the performance of educators. However, utilizing online school information through the website and social media needs to be optimized to demonstrate a commitment to enhancing the school's competitiveness. These platforms have yet to be fully utilized in the interval to reflect a commitment to improving the school's competitiveness. Meanwhile, as highlighted by (Purwanto et al., 2023), Social media offers a digital space for individuals globally, fostering awareness and encouraging people to engage and share information online.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the strategic role of quality management at SMA Negeri 5 Serang City is vital for enhancing the school's competitiveness. Efforts to improve educational quality have involved comprehensive planning, including assessing student needs, training educators, and developing non-academic programs aligned with current trends. However, despite implementing key initiatives such as student grouping, educator preparedness, curriculum and resource assessments, and in-house teacher training, challenges persist, particularly in leadership effectiveness and internal communication. Additionally, underutilized facilities and limited optimization of digital platforms continue to hinder the school's full potential. While significant progress has been made, further improvements are essential to maximize competitiveness.

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