

# Optimizing Educational Processes: Strategies for Enhanced Primary and Secondary Education Implementation

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**ABSTRACT.** The research aims to describe the implementation of primary and secondary education in schools. The type of research used in this research is descriptive qualitative. The subjects of this research were school principals, teachers, and students—data collection techniques through observation, interviews, documentation, questionnaires, and triangulation (combination). Data analysis techniques are carried out by reducing data, compiling data presentation, drawing conclusions, and verification. The research findings are that strategies for improving the implementation of primary and secondary education in optimizing the educational process can be implemented by schools and madrasas by planning the implementation of education, expansion and equalization of opportunities for quality basic education, including the development of alternative education; developing curriculum according to the needs of educational institutions (modifying); preparing school activity plans and budgets, managing according to technical instructions, making accountability letter and financial reports. The need for improvements in several crucial aspects of the education system, namely the development of a more relevant and effective curriculum, strategies for managing education funds that can optimize the use of available financial resources, effective education expansion, and equity strategies, increasing the competence of teachers and teaching staff are also important implications. This research stimulates innovation in the education system, such as the development of new learning methods or the integration of technology in the learning process, with concrete steps that educational institutions and policymakers can take to improve the quality and access to primary and secondary education, ensuring that all individuals have an equal opportunity to receive a quality education.

**Keywords:** *Curriculum and management, educational equality, implementation of education, improvement strategy*



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## INTRODUCTION

The low quality of a nation's education greatly influences its quality. The high quality of a nation's education will improve the quality of a nation (Efferi, 2015; Fadil et al., 2023; Winarsih, 2017). Husaini Usman believes that three factors influence the low quality of education (Na'im, 2018; SILVA, 2017). *First*, in national education policy and implementation, the approach used is educational production function, namely inconsistent analytical input; *Second*, the administration of education is centralized; *Third*, community involvement, especially parents/guardians of students, in the education process is still low. Quality standards are needed to realize quality education. Apart from being a reference for making strategic decisions and policies, this standardization also serves as material for evaluating educational levels. In fact, in the long term, it is hoped that the risk of inequality and disparities between regions will be reduced, especially between public and private schools (Sammara & Hasbi, 2023).



Schools or educational institutions are not only state-owned but there are madrasas whose education prioritizes Islamic religion but still uses an integrated curriculum like other formal schools (Aimah, 2021; Sutisna et al., 2023). The problem of quality of education is an educational process as one of the factors that can hinder the provision of human resources as the main capital for national development in various fields, especially in the quality of education at the primary and secondary education levels (Astawa, 2017; Dacholfany, 2018; Riowati & Yoenanto, 2022; Sulastri et al., 2020). Each school has its strategy to compete, and this has become a requirement that must be carried out to improve the quality and increase the quality of education. Realizing the importance of improving the quality of education, the government continuously strives to realize this mandate, including through developing and improving the curriculum and evaluation system, improving educational facilities, developing and procuring teaching materials, as well as training for teachers and education personnel (Arifin, 2020; Dacholfany, 2017; Nasruji, 2018).

In national education standards, one of the aspects of the implementation of primary and secondary education is the practice of implementation (Alida et al., 2024; Rohani, 2020; Ulum, 2020). A curriculum structure is needed for organizing primary and secondary-level education because the curriculum structure determines how learning material is arranged, taught, and evaluated at the school level. The curriculum structure is the pattern and arrangement of subjects that must be taken by students in learning activities (Firmansyah, 2007; Fitriana et al., 2022; Zakaria, 2018). The depth of the curriculum content in each subject in each educational unit is outlined in the competencies that students must master in accordance with the learning load stated in the curriculum structure. A good curriculum structure is very important in the provision of primary and secondary education because it influences how students learn, what they learn, and how their progress is evaluated.

Providing primary and secondary education requires complex preparation, including the availability of funding resources, human resources, and appropriate educational infrastructure according to needs. Various related parties have different responsibilities according to their main tasks and functions. The State guarantees the provision of primary and secondary education for all its citizens to obtain their rights in the field of education (Hamidi, 2016; Nanggala, 2020; Rahmiati et al., 2021).

Based on research related to optimizing the education process: strategies for improving the implementation of primary and secondary education including (Anjani & Dafit, 2021; Hizriah et al., 2023; Mukhsin, 2019; Noprika et al., 2020; Oktriani et al., 2021; Sammara & Hasbi, 2023; Sujoko, 2017; Yumnah et al., 2023). Previous studies tend to focus on individual strategies or specific components in primary and secondary education, such as strategies to optimize the educational process in the context of limited resources, parental involvement, specific teaching methods, or the use of technology. However, there is a lack of emphasis on a holistic approach that covers aspects of the educational process, especially the curriculum. The uniqueness or difference from previous research lies in planning the implementation of education, challenges for schools and madrasas in providing education, and supporting and inhibiting factors in providing education. Meanwhile, this research focuses on the implementation of primary and secondary education, namely in elementary schools, vocational high schools, and madrasah aliyah in Bandar Lampung City, namely SDN 3 Way Laga, Vocational School BLK Bandar Lampung, and MAN 1 Bandar Lampung. Based on the problem topics above, the researcher aims to identify and evaluate strategies or approaches that can increase the effectiveness of the implementation of primary and secondary education.

## METHOD

The type of research used in this research is descriptive qualitative. The research locations were elementary schools, vocational high schools, and madrasah aliyah in Bandar Lampung City,

namely SDN 3 Way Laga, SMK BLK Bandar Lampung, and MAN 1 Bandar Lampung. The reason the researcher chose the location was because it was strategic in collecting data related to the research focus and adequately represented the criteria for sampling. Apart from that, the researchers took three schools because they related to the focus of the research carried out on primary and secondary education, both in public schools and madrasas. The focus of the research is to find out how to optimize the education process: strategies to improve the implementation of primary and secondary education. The subjects of this research were school principals and teachers.

This research was conducted for two months, starting from January 2024 to March 2024. The data sources in this research consisted of primary data and secondary data. Primary data sources were obtained from informants (humans), namely the principals and teachers of SDN 3 Way Laga, SMK BLK Bandar Lampung, and MAN 1 Bandar Lampung. Secondary data sources include official documents in the form of archives, journals, and relevant books. Data collection techniques through participatory observation, where the researcher is involved with the daily activities of the school being observed, semi-structured interviews using in-depth interviews where the party being interviewed is asked for opinions and ideas, documentation in the form of photos, books, archives, notes and related to optimizing the education process: strategies for improving the implementation of primary and secondary education, and triangulation (combination) of data sources, data collection techniques, and data collection techniques in different times and situations.

The data analysis technique was carried out using qualitative descriptive adopting Miles and Huberman, which includes three activities, namely first, data reduction (summarizing, summarizing or selecting the collected data, which is then categorized, focused, and adapted to the problem being studied), second, data presentation (presented in text form narrative, matrix, network and charts to make it easier to conclude), third, data verification (repeatedly reviewing existing data, grouping what has been formed, and reporting research results). Data obtained in the field is analyzed interpretatively to explain and compare the selected theories with the processed data.

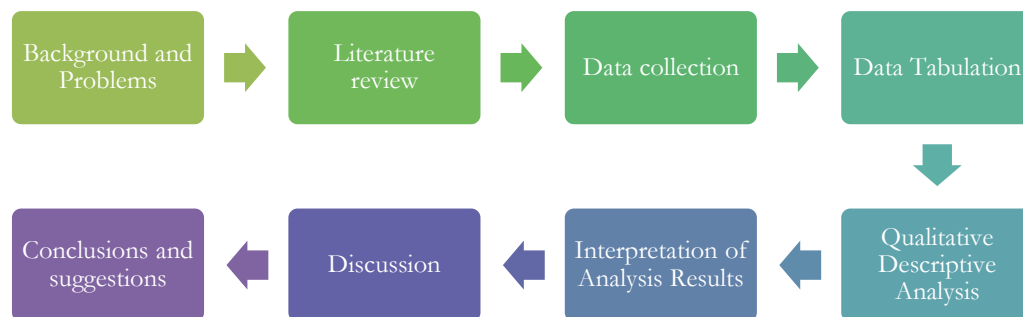


Figure 1. Descriptive Qualitative Research Flow

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

Primary and secondary education is organized to develop attitudes and abilities, provide the knowledge and skills needed to live in society and prepare students who meet the requirements to attend education at the next level. In optimizing the education process, several strategies were found to improve the implementation of primary and secondary education. *The first* is planning for the implementation of education. Planning in the implementation of education is very important in order to know the progress of educational institutions. Schools and madrasas need to make comprehensive general plans and then make specific plans to facilitate the implementation of educational activities so that the implementation of educational activities will be more systematic, focused, effective, and efficient. The urgency of planning in the implementation of education is to provide clarity of direction for each activity so that each activity can be attempted and implemented as efficiently and effectively as possible to maintain the quality of the institution. It is in line with

an interview with the principal at SDN 3 Way Laga, Mr. A, who stated that: *"As a school principal, I believe that careful planning is the key to achieving success in providing education. We at this school have adopted a comprehensive and structured approach in planning all aspects of education. First of all, we carry out an in-depth analysis of student needs, both from an academic and non-academic perspective. We involve teachers, parents, and even the students themselves in this process to ensure that our plans truly reflect their needs and expectations. We also pay attention to developments and trends in the world of education. We continually update our plans to reflect the latest developments in teaching methods, educational technology, and school policies. We regularly evaluate our progress against our goals and objectives, and we do not hesitate to make adjustments if necessary. We involve the entire school staff in this process to ensure that everyone feels a sense of responsibility for student success. We ensure transparency and good communication in our planning process. We involve all stakeholders, including parents, teachers and students, in decision-making and implementation of our plans."*

With this comprehensive and structured planning approach, it is possible to provide a high-quality education that prepares students well for a bright future. The institutional development planning system implemented in each school and madrasah must be able to facilitate and accommodate the five main pillars outlined in the management standards, namely independence, partnership, participation, openness, and accountability. Educational institutions are expected to take the time to examine and analyze themselves and their environment, identify their needs to gain superiority over others and carry out continuous communication and consultation with various parties both from within and outside the institutional environment during the planning process. In addition, strategic planning is also expected to encourage the development of steps to achieve strategic goals, continuously monitor the implementation of the plan, and regularly carry out reviews and improvements to keep the plans relevant to various conditions that continue to develop.

*The second strategy in improving the implementation of primary and secondary education is to expand and equalize opportunities for quality basic education, including the development of alternative education, which can be used as a vehicle for actualizing the principles of lifelong education. The development of various alternative education models, such as inclusive schools, affordable private schools, or community-based schools, can help meet the educational needs of children from various backgrounds. The curriculum in alternative education must be designed to meet the needs of diverse students, including students with special needs, students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and students with different cultural backgrounds. Like the Bandar Lampung BLK Vocational School, which has a diversity of students, it uses the development of alternative education to make education easier. It is in accordance with an interview with the Principal of SMK BLK Bandar Lampung, Mr. R, who stated that: "The importance of expanding and equalizing quality educational opportunities for all students. To achieve this goal, it has developed several strategies. One of these strategies is the development of alternative education which can be a solution for students who may have difficulty accessing conventional education. We have launched programs such as distance learning with the development of automation technology. In addition, the school actively collaborates with local governments, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector to provide scholarships, financial aid, and other support to students who need it. This aims to ensure that the cost of education does not become a barrier for potential students."*

Through these strategies, we can expand and equalize quality educational opportunities for all students so that every child has the same opportunity to achieve a bright future through education. The school has taken concrete steps in developing alternative education, such as distance learning with the development of automation technology, in addition to collaborating with various parties to provide scholarships for potential students. The school is aware of the diverse needs of students and is committed to providing appropriate solutions. Collaboration with the government, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector to provide financial assistance and other support shows that schools do not work alone in efforts to equalize educational opportunities but also involve other stakeholders in achieving goals. Schools are involved in awareness and education

campaigns for the community, showing that schools do not only focus on internal solutions but also try to influence the surrounding environment to support efforts to expand and equalize educational opportunities.

*The third* strategy, namely in learning where developing the curriculum according to the needs of educational institutions (modifying), teachers must complete learning tools, develop IT-based learning, develop varied learning (outing classes, school visits, entrepreneurship), monitor and evaluate the learning process, guide staff educators to create effective learning, create a school environment that supports learning (the school atmosphere is safe and comfortable), formulate rules and regulations for students so as to increase their discipline.

*The fourth* strategy is financing, which is implemented through preparing School Activity Plans and Budgets (RKAS), managing according to technical instructions, and making SPJ and financial reports. Schools may seek partnerships with private companies or philanthropic institutions to obtain additional funding or sponsorship for specific projects, such as building facilities or extracurricular programs. Creating a transparent and accountable fund management system can help ensure that education funds are used efficiently and on target. Provide training to school administrative staff on efficient financial management and strict supervision of the use of school funds. They are building a sustainable evaluation and monitoring system to measure the effectiveness of the use of funds and educational results. Ensure that there is a scholarship or financial assistance program for students who are less fortunate or have special needs so that they are not left behind in access to education. Adopt a rights-based approach to education funding to ensure that every child has equal and appropriate access to education. By implementing a smart and comprehensive financing strategy, it is hoped that the primary and secondary education process can be optimized to achieve better and more inclusive results.

Apart from implementing this strategy, schools face challenges. The challenge faced is that schools do not receive sufficient funding allocations from the government, so they require collaboration with various parties to minimize the funds obtained to manage the school well. Another challenge is curriculum change, where frequent changes in education policy can make it difficult for schools to adapt and develop long-term strategies. Not only the curriculum but technology is also a big challenge in schools, especially schools must provide internet or computer equipment and provide training for teachers and school staff so they can apply technology in school-related activities. In addition, parents' non-participation or lack of support in their children's education can be a serious obstacle.

## **Discussion**

Primary and secondary education are critical stages in human and societal development. A holistic and integrated strategy, including planning, curriculum development, and fund management, as well as efforts to expand and equalize education, is needed to improve quality at this level. Planning has an important position in an organization. Without planning, the direction and goals of the organization will not be clear. Therefore, planning is important because with planning it is hoped that a direction of activities will develop, there will be guidelines for implementing activities aimed at achieving goals; with planning, estimates can be made regarding matters in the implementation period that will pass; planning provides the opportunity to choose various alternatives about the best way or the opportunity to choose the best combination of ways; with planning, a priority scale can be prepared; With a plan, there will be a measuring tool or standard for monitoring or evaluating work.

An effective planning strategy requires an in-depth analysis of the educational needs in each region, as well as the active involvement of various stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and local communities. Developing a relevant and dynamic curriculum is the key to ensuring that students receive learning that is in line with current needs and industrial developments. Efficient

and transparent fund management is very important so that educational resources can be utilized optimally, by paying attention to equitable and needs-based allocation of funds. In addition, expanding access to education and equalizing learning opportunities is a top priority, including improving the quality of teachers, developing educational infrastructure, and providing equal access to education for all children, regardless of their social or geographic background. By implementing this strategy comprehensively, it is hoped that primary and secondary education in elementary schools, vocational high schools, and State Madrasah Aliyah can improve its implementation and provide a significant positive impact on the development of society and the country.

Teachers are key players in the teaching and learning process that takes place in schools. In Indonesia, the unequal distribution of teachers is an obstacle to improving the quality of education. The quality of teachers as educators is still an issue, with the number of teachers available being relatively small compared to the number of children in foster care. Furthermore, a teacher must have four skills: pedagogical, personal, social, and professional if he does not master the material, curriculum, and professional content (Risdiyana, 2021).

There are challenges faced in the implementation of primary and secondary education. *The first* is the rapid development of science, technology, social change, and globalization, which is not accompanied by acceleration in conceptual, methodological, and administrative techniques management in the madrasah environment. *Second*, bureaucratic obstacles in structuring development procedures for school/madrasah institutions, organizations, and administration, as well as curriculum and methodological techniques. *Third*, the demands for computerization in the educational administration system, as well as the completeness of laboratory and library equipment that is still needed, have increased widely and professionally in relation to the demands it faces. *Fourth*, the implementation of partnerships and the provision of primary and secondary education between supervisors and the school/madrasah management community has not been developed optimally and professionally. *Fifth*, there is unpreparedness in the implementation of education regarding the demands of the curriculum, developments in science and technology, as well as social changes, especially in the relationship between methodological technical capabilities and educational management. Sixth, educational development is generally carried out by communities with low economic backgrounds. However, it must accommodate students who come from less fortunate sections of society. So, you will always be faced with difficulties in financing educational operations, and this will result in the low quality of the education provided. Seventh, unpreparedness for the implementation of education regarding knowledge and technology as well as social change, especially in terms of technical methodology and educational management capabilities.

Apart from that, some factors support and hinder the implementation of education. In the implementation of education, there are supporting factors, including internal factors (factors from within) and external factors (factors from outside). External supporting factors include good cooperation between teachers and parents/guardians of students. This collaboration aims to ensure that education can be implemented well. Gusti (2021) adding that there is a synergistic communication pattern between the school and the student's parents. The school invites parents to provide information on the progress academic and social development achievements of their students (children). On the other hand, internal supporting factors are the use of facilities and infrastructure available at the school to support the implementation of teaching and learning activities.

Mardiana and Khoiri (2021) emphasized that teachers are an important factor that must be considered in the implementation of education. An important factor that needs to be considered in the implementation of education is inhibiting factors. Several things are indicated as inhibiting factors: parents who are indifferent to their children's development, the economic situation of parents who are middle to lower class, cognitive, affective, and psychomotor abilities, and the conditions possessed by students. To resolve this problem, Gusti (2021) emphasizes that all parties,

namely schools, teachers, and parents, must find the best solution to continuously control and guide the academic and social development of students who experience functional obstacles. Parents are expected to pay optimal attention to their child's development (Poerwanti et al., 2015). Indicates that there are still parents who have an adequate understanding of the development of children who experience functional obstacles. It is often an obstacle shared by parents and teachers regarding the lack of understanding regarding appropriate treatment patterns for children who experience functional barriers. According to him, this inequality Oktradiksa (2016) also influences teachers' teaching patterns and abilities, which are not in accordance with the school/madrasah concept. Therefore, there is still a need to reach out to various parties about the importance of handling students who experience functional barriers.

Several similar studies relate to optimizing the educational process: strategies for improving the implementation of primary and secondary education such as Aithal and Aithal (2020), Damanik (2015), Fitriani et al. (2022), Hakim (2016), Han et al. (2023), Hartono and Achmad (2021), Ilham (2021), Issa et al. (2023), Niu et al. (2023), Nurhayati et al. (2022), Sahlberg (2007), Yulianti and Qomisatun (2022), and Yunus et al. (2023) discusses (1) education policies in certain countries (India and Indonesia) and efforts to improve the quality of education through national policy implementation strategies; discussing (2) education management at the school level in an effort to improve the quality of education services; (3) the role of school principals and education financing management; (4) efforts to improve the quality of education through certain strategies, such as management of inclusive education, equitable access to education, and optimization of educational processes to reduce resource costs; (5) strategies to optimize the learning process, especially in the context of the pandemic and the "new normal" era. From a comparative perspective, this research focuses on concrete strategies for improving the implementation of primary and secondary education. In contrast, several previous studies discussed more general themes such as policy, management, and optimizing the educational process. However, there is potential to draw correlations between the findings of this research and findings from other research, especially in terms of curriculum development strategies and fund management.

## CONCLUSION

To optimize the educational process in primary and secondary education, schools and madrasahs can implement several strategies, including meticulous planning, expanding and equalizing access to quality education, and developing a curriculum that meets institutional needs. These institutions should also prepare detailed School Activity Plans and Budgets (RKAS), manage them according to technical guidelines, and maintain accurate financial reports. However, challenges such as the rapid development of science and technology, bureaucratic hurdles, the demand for complete facilities, and unprofessional management of partnerships must be addressed. Additionally, schools must adapt to evolving curriculum demands social changes, and accommodate students from underprivileged backgrounds. Effective collaboration between teachers and parents/guardians is crucial to overcome these challenges and utilize available resources optimally. Future research should explore the opportunities and processes for implementing primary and secondary education in line with advancements in science, technology, and the current curriculum.

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