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Learning Quality Management in Enhancing School Competitiveness at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) Yusuf Abdussatar Kediri, West Lombok

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Abstract

The condition of private educational institutions with well-planned learning quality management and competitive advantages starts from planning, implementation, and tangible impacts on the institution. Therefore, structured and effective learning quality management is required to enhance its capacity and capability, enabling it to compete better with other educational institutions in terms of education quality.

This study aims to explore the implications of learning quality in enhancing school competitiveness at MI Yusuf Abdussatar Kediri, West Lombok. A naturalistic and interpretative approach with a descriptive research type is applied in this study. Data collection techniques include interviews, observations, and documentation. Data analysis is conducted iteratively through single-site and cross-site analysis using Data Condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing techniques. The validity of the data is checked through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

The findings indicate that the implications of learning quality enhance public interest, teacher welfare, and both academic and non-academic competitiveness. This research introduces the concept of "Collaborative Integrative Learning as a Unique Madrasah Approach to Achieve Competitive Learning Quality."

Keywords: Management, Learning Quality, and Competitiveness.

INTRODUCTION

Madrasah Ibtidaiyah is a distinctive educational institution under the auspices of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, characterized by its Islamic identity and the need to compete with other primary education institutions. In this context, all educational activities conducted are based on character, Islamic values, and alignment with science and technology. The uniqueness of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah as a formal educational institution with a strong Islamic foundation is intended to shape students with resilient Islamic personalities who can compete in the global world. Learning quality management and competitiveness in the educational process are reflected in the institution's excellent accreditation ranking, which embodies Islamic characteristics and is demonstrated through an organized educational implementation with contemporary quality management and competitiveness.

The outlook on educational planning ultimately leads to the routine learning activities with short-term achievement targets while also considering the substantive needs of students and their long-term educational goals. In the management of education with short-term achievements, an interesting phenomenon is observed in madrasahs. This phenomenon includes students advancing to the next grade and passing national exams. However, the goal is not merely to advance grades, pass exams, or obtain high scores but also to ensure that students develop a learning character, academic sensitivity, and a sense of responsibility as part of a learning community. This is what is meant by the substantive needs of students for their long-term achievements.

The quality of learning is often questioned by various groups, particularly concerning the low quality of education and the moral character of students. This issue is influenced by the



ineffectiveness of madrasahs in managing education, resulting in low competitiveness. However, it is widely acknowledged that high-quality and culturally rich education is sought after by all groups. Quality is at the core of both the educational process and its goals. The primary function of madrasah is to develop the full potential of students. This aligns with the expectations of parents who seek madrasah that provide added value to students in terms of spiritual, intellectual, social potential, and proficient skills. Such high-quality educational institutions are perceived as ideal institutions, preferred by society, and recognized as effective educational providers.

Educational institutions continuously strive to improve their quality and standards. Quality, in this context, refers to compliance with the applicable requirements and standards (Nur Nasution, 2005:2). Within the global competitiveness framework, there are 12 pillars used to assess the competitive position of an educational institution on a global scale. These include a supportive environment, human resources, markets, and an innovation ecosystem (Nasution, 2005:2). The aspects of a supportive environment and human resources include institutional pillars and an innovation ecosystem, both of which contribute to educational competitiveness. In the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the fourth goal is quality education (SDGs: 2002). Therefore, for an institution to be considered effective, it must be able to compete in terms of institutional management, innovation capacity, and quality.

The expectations of society toward educational institutions must be a primary concern, realized through the modernized management of educational institutions. This decision, taken by institutional leaders to improve the quality of both internal and external services, significantly contributes to the process of enhancing the quality and competitiveness of educational institutions (Prim Masrokan, 2010).

According to Muhaimin (2012:104), the characteristics of a competitive educational institution can be observed from its input, process, and output/outcome. High-quality input refers to students who are prepared to undergo the learning process based on locally and nationally established standards. A process is considered high-quality if it fosters an active, creative, innovative, and enjoyable learning environment. The outcome is deemed high-quality if graduates are quickly absorbed by other institutions and if there is high satisfaction with the graduates of the educational institution (Muhaimin, 2012:103).

To improve an educational institution, the process must begin with its management. One approach that can be implemented is Total Quality Management (TQM). The key principles of TQM are continuous improvement and quality enhancement, which aim to address the challenges faced by educational institutions in meeting user satisfaction (Edwan Salis, 2015:62).

The institutional management of madrasahs needs to establish a comprehensive concept encompassing planning, implementation, control, and continuous improvement. According to Jan M. Myszewski (2001), effective education is sustainable education,

which emphasizes effectiveness and balance in developing knowledge capacity and the commitment of stakeholders to education through the application of a sustainable development model. This presents a challenge for Islamic educational institutions in enhancing the quality of services provided to the community.

High-quality service can be achieved through effective learning quality management, enabling madrasahs to become competitive and capable of contending with other institutions. Designing high-quality learning requires ensuring that the learning process runs effectively. The achievement of learning objectives by students serves as a benchmark, while teachers must be encouraged to continuously develop and refine their teaching strategies (Prim Masrokan, 2015:15).

A competitive madrasah develops management that focuses on enhancing a culture of quality, strategies for expanding learning opportunities, quality control, as well as the efficient use of authority, knowledge, and information. A competitive madrasah is an institution developed to enhance the competitiveness of its educational outcomes. This means that a competitive madrasah is structured similarly to well-established conventional schools, ensuring that all students receive standardized treatment and opportunities for academic growth.

RESEARCH METHOD

A naturalistic and interpretative approach with a descriptive research type was applied in this study. Data collection techniques included interviews, observations, and documentation. Data analysis was conducted repeatedly through single-site and cross-site analysis using data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing techniques. The validity of the data was ensured through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The Implications of Learning Quality in Enhancing School Competitiveness

The planning and implementation of learning quality at MI Yusuf Abdussatar are aimed at student self-development and talent cultivation. This program provides opportunities for students to develop and express themselves according to their needs, talents, and personal interests. One of the primary goals of this self-development initiative is to achieve excellence at the regional madrasah level. Through this approach, students are expected to enhance their skills and self-confidence while making positive contributions in various fields they pursue.

Furthermore, the learning planning at MI Yusuf Abdussatar includes programs tailored to the characteristics of students, making it a competitive plus institution, particularly in religious, academic, and non-academic aspects. This has a positive impact on increasing public interest, improving teachers' welfare, enhancing the quality of both academic and non-academic learning, and boosting student achievements in both areas.

Education plays a crucial role in improving the quality of human resources. Achieving quality requires a process and educational output that are genuinely high in standard. Various stakeholders work together and take responsibility to enhance quality in line with their expectations. The primary factor closely related to the learning quality mechanism is its direct connection to improving educational quality (Murtafi'ah, 2022).

Therefore, the implementation of learning quality demands that madrasahs plan, execute, evaluate, and transparently account for their management. MI Yusuf Abdussatar has established planning and action as its distinctive characteristic. The implementation carried out has improved, yet further refinements are needed, making it an essential part of the next planning cycle (Deming, 1986).

Quality Actions in Enhancing the Competitiveness of Madrasahs

Quality actions to improve the competitiveness of madrasahs are not only carried out through follow-up actions based on the evaluation results of programs and activities but also involve the public promotion of the madrasah itself. These actions are taken to enhance the quality of learning for better outcomes. Michael E. Porter (1990) stated that *"a new theory must make improvement, innovation, and competitiveness in methods and technology a central element."* Thus, actions and technological innovations are essential elements in maintaining competitiveness.

Efforts in the form of continuous development, particularly within madrasahs, serve as the primary foundation and key resource of the institution. A well-structured framework and effective learning support in madrasahs can create students who are progressive, high-quality, refined, and responsive to the demands of the times. Through this approach, quality becomes evident within the madrasah as students experience changes in perspective, behavior, as well as an expansion of their knowledge and skills.

The implications of learning quality in enhancing competitiveness can be categorized into four key aspects that determine the advancement of a madrasah in fulfilling the essence of education at MI Yusuf Abdussatar, including:

Implications of Increasing Public Interest

The competition among educational institutions across various types and levels of education has become an attraction in itself. Additionally, the competition among Islamic boarding schools (*pondok pesantren*) is becoming increasingly intense. Each madrasah continuously strives to improve its quality to attract prospective students' parents to enroll their children. MI Yusuf Abdussatar, as an educational institution, plays a role in building a positive image through well-planned programs to gain the trust of the community. Furthermore, educational institutions are also responsible for fostering and managing good relationships with their internal public, such as staff members, as strong internal relationships are essential in establishing and maintaining the institution itself.

In addition to fostering good internal relationships, educational institutions must also maintain strong ties with the external public, particularly the community. Gaining public trust requires educational institutions to maintain good relations by listening to the needs and opinions of the community (Pohan, 2018).

Tilaar (2000) emphasized that educational institutions, including madrasahs, are Islamic educational institutions that originate from and serve the community. Madrasahs cannot be replaced by other institutions because they have unique visions, missions, and unquestionable quality in society, particularly in terms of culture, education, governance, and financial matters.

The presence of madrasahs is highly significant for several reasons:

1. The educational design in madrasahs is integrated with educational standards.
2. As a relatively new entity within the conventional education system, madrasahs often face unique challenges in maintaining their quality of education.

Madrasahs possess many potentials and positive qualities that can be developed. They should not be marginalized from society's positive perspective. Traditionally, the educational foundation of madrasahs has been closely associated with Islamic studies. As a competitor to public schools, madrasahs serve as a crucial pillar in human development, fulfilling societal expectations. As a result, madrasahs have become a new favorite in the modern educational landscape.

Implications of Improving Teacher Welfare

Welfare, in general, refers to the fulfillment of all aspects of life necessities. Welfare is divided into two categories: material and non-material. Material welfare includes money or valuable assets, in other words, physical wealth. Meanwhile, non-material welfare refers to the fulfillment of spiritual needs, such as love, security, and peace of mind. Efforts to enhance teachers' professionalism in their work include improving their educational qualifications. Collaborative efforts among teachers contribute to their overall well-being, which consists of both material welfare (financial benefits) and non-material welfare derived from their profession as educators.

Adequate welfare is expected to encourage teachers to improve the quality of the teaching and learning process. Furthermore, their professional capabilities can be enhanced if they are provided with proper facilities, which, in turn, motivates them to further develop their professionalism (*Teacher and Lecturer Law, 2009*). Teachers are regarded as professional educators whose primary responsibilities include educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating students within formal, primary, and secondary education settings.

Various studies have highlighted the significant role of teachers in education, with some suggesting that teachers have a greater influence on student success than any other educational actors (Harris, A. & Muijs, D., 2005). Teachers interact directly with students during the learning process more than other stakeholders

or educational policymakers. However, Goe argues that identifying the specific characteristics of teachers that contribute to student success is not an easy task (Leslie, 2008).

Moreover, Heck emphasizes that the characteristics often used as indicators of teacher quality include teacher certification, level of education, experience, pedagogical knowledge, subject matter expertise, and professional development (Heck, Ronald, 2007: 299). (Gufon, (2024)). Various programs and policies that directly impact society and the education system have been designed to enhance the appeal of the teaching profession. These initiatives aim to improve financial stability and promote overall welfare among educators, particularly in madrasah.

Implications for Improving Academic and Non-Academic Achievement

The development of science and technology has brought changes to nearly all aspects of human life. Various challenges can only be addressed through mastery and advancement in science and technology. While these advancements benefit human life in many ways, they also introduce an increasingly competitive global era. To remain competitive on a global scale, our nation must continuously develop and enhance the quality of its human resources. Improving human resource quality is an inevitable necessity that must be carried out systematically, purposefully, intensively, effectively, and efficiently as part of national development. Otherwise, our nation may struggle to compete in today's era of globalization. Education plays a crucial role in developing high-quality human resources.

In terms of quantity, Indonesia's educational progress has been significant. However, in terms of quality, its development remains uneven. This is evident in the number of madrasah that have yet to prioritize quality. The quality of a madrasah is reflected in the quality of its graduates. A madrasah that focuses on quality education will produce high-caliber graduates through a well-structured and effective educational process.

A quality education process is supported by high-quality educational components. In the era of globalization, a shift in the educational paradigm is necessary. To achieve this, improving the quality of learning plays a significant role in creating competitive madrasahs. Adopting learning quality concepts and their practical applications for enhancement and competitiveness must be aligned with orientation, paradigm shifts, and effective implementation strategies.

Generally, competitiveness in education refers to the teaching and learning process as well as learning outcomes. In this context, madrasah must demonstrate their educational quality while also addressing the interconnected needs of stakeholders, both in terms of technical aspects and policy mechanism.

Madrasah serve as the foundation and hope for national intellectual advancement, further strengthened by religious knowledge acquisition. This ensures that all learning processes and expected achievements can be realized. Meanwhile, Muhibbin Syah, as cited

by Rohmalina Wahab, references several psychology experts' definitions of academic and non-academic learning. Barlow defines learning as *a process of progressive behavior adaptation*, while Hintzman states that *learning is a change in an organism due to experience which can affect the organism's behavior*. This means that academic and non-academic learning involves changes within an organism (both humans and animals) resulting from experiences that influence behavior.

Witting, as cited in Muhibbin Syah (2013: 87), defines learning as: *"any relatively permanent change in an organism's behavioral repertoire that occurs as a result of experience."* Learning is a relatively permanent change that occurs in all types or the entirety of an organism's behavior as a result of experience.

Based on this statement, academic and non-academic learning are complex and multi-faceted processes that not only involve changes in individual behavior as a result of experience but also need to be viewed from various perspectives. Witting's definition indicates that both academic and non-academic learning encompass relatively permanent behavioral changes and emphasize the impact of experience.

CONCLUSION

The implications of learning quality in enhancing the competitiveness of MI Yusuf Abdussatar Kediri, Lombok Barat are evident in the increased public interest, the realization of teacher welfare, and improvements in both academic and non-academic aspects within the internal and external areas of the madrasah. The implications of learning quality in strengthening school competitiveness are based on research findings and program discussions that elaborate on the theory proposed by Michael E. Porter, concerning actions or follow-up programs that contribute to continuous improvement and the sustainability of the institution in a contemporary context.

RECOMENDATIONS

Based on the research findings, educators should continuously develop themselves by participating in training and seminars to enhance their knowledge and skills in education and teaching method. Additionally, the implementation of diverse learning methods, such as collaborative learning, project-based learning, and group discussions, should be optimized to meet students' needs more effectively. Educators are also encouraged to foster students' creativity by providing opportunities for self-expression through art projects, research, or engaging presentations. These steps are expected to create a more meaningful and inspiring learning experience.

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