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Quality Improvement Strategies in An Integrated Islamic School: A Case Study at SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung

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ABSTRACT :

The standard of education in both schools and madrasas requires attention and enhancement. This represents a challenge that Islamic educational institutions should tackle with an optimistic perspective. This research utilizes a case study approach that offers a thorough and comprehensive analysis of a specific situation, concentrating on the principal's role in advancing educational quality at SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung. The sources of information are both primary and secondary, utilizing a qualitative framework. The findings revealed that: (1) The principal's strategy for enhancing educational quality at SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung involves forming a team dedicated to education quality development and implementing a work plan categorized into short-term, medium-term, and long-term plans. (2) The principal's execution of initiatives aimed at enhancing educational quality includes the use of data-driven planning based on the Semester Work Plan (RKS) report, the Annual Work Plan (RKT), and the School Budget Activity Plan (ARKAS), along with market differentiation tactics such as Unique Selling Points, Blue Ocean strategies, and the Pareto Principle. (3) The method of evaluation employed by the principal for improving educational quality at SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung establishes distinct and quantifiable performance metrics, as well as oversight of educational quality for all-encompassing educational growth.

Keywords: *Quality improvement, principal leadership, strategic educational management,*

INTRODUCTION

Education is a deliberate and well-planned process designed to create a learning environment and learning methods that enable students to develop their abilities actively. The goal of education is to foster good morals, high motivation, self-control, and the development of emotional intelligence, as well as essential skills, both personally and socially (Tubagus, 2021) . The primary components of a school are students, teachers, and other educational staff, the curriculum, and educational facilities. The low quality of education in Indonesia has long been a topic of discussion. However, the issue of education quality remains unresolved. Quality education is the desire and need of all parties involved in the education sector. Naturally, everyone would prefer to study at an institution that maintains high-quality standards.

The quality of education in schools and madrasahs must be addressed and improved to achieve higher standards. This is a challenge that Islamic educational institutions must face with a positive attitude. Educational quality involves various elements, including input, process, output, and outcomes. Education is considered quality if the students' conditions meet the minimum national standards in education (Rafsanjani et al., 2024) . The educational process can be considered quality if it creates an active, creative, innovative, and enjoyable learning environment. Education is considered good quality if it provides services that meet customer needs, resulting in customer satisfaction (Izzulka & Laksono, 2022)

School principals need to be able to think critically about their actions as principals to support the school organization in adapting to the external environment. In such circumstances, principals are expected to be responsible for creating efficiency, improving quality, meeting customer satisfaction, and quickly capitalizing on opportunities to compete and survive in the external world. Therefore, a principal's strategy is essential. The principal is a leader in an educational institution who requires a solid foundation in leadership and management. Therefore, every principal needs to understand the factors that determine the success of their leadership. This includes understanding the important role of the principal, the ideal leadership model, the vision for the future in leadership, teachers' expectations of the principal, and the ethics that must be upheld in the principal's leadership.

Strategy is a thought process that stems from analyzing an object with a specific goal in mind. The strategies implemented by the principal are important policies aimed at improving and enhancing the quality of education (Hayudiyani et al., 2020). By implementing effective strategies, schools can achieve their educational goals more efficiently and develop targeted approaches for their institutions. Effective leadership by the principal is one of the important elements in educational management in schools. A principal's strategy, therefore, requires a principal to have sufficient knowledge, abilities, and skills.

The study conducted by Gita Ristralia, Sri Fitra Oktrivia, Dewi Kurnia Fitra, Sarah Pilbahri, Devia Ainin Nugrah, and Demina titled "The Principal's Strategy in Improving the Quality of Education at the UPTD of Elementary School 01 Bukik Limbuku (Ristralia et al., 2024). These researchers revealed that the steps taken by the principal to improve the quality of education at the UPTD of Elementary School 01 Bukik Limbuku included several steps. First, providing a forum for channeling students' interests and talents and second, forming a work team. Third, conducting supervision. Fourth, building and maintaining communication among all parties within the school environment.

The study conducted by Damanhuri, Hilman Mi'roji, Samudra Eka Cipta, Ahmad Paridi, and Bariyah Astuti titled "The Principal's Strategy in Improving the Quality of Education at Almadinah Integrated Islamic Junior High School, Karawang (Mi et al., 2025). The researches revealed that the principal's steps to improve the quality of education at Al Madinah Integrated Islamic Junior High School, Karawang, included installing CCTV in various rooms as a strategic step to improve supervision and security around the school. Furthermore, PowerPoint-based learning was implemented. Teacher coordination meetings are held, specifically for the vice principal once a week, homeroom teachers once a week, and all staff once a week. In addition, memorization of the tahpidz (literal text) is implemented for all teachers and students, and the principal conducts supervision activities twice a year.

Further Dika Puturahman, Abdurrohman, and Taufik Mustofa, in "The Principal's Strategy in Improving the Quality of Islamic Education (A Case Study at Darul Huda Pedes Karawang Islamic Junior High School) (Puturahman, 2023). The researchers concluded that the principal's strategies to

improve the quality of education at Darul Huda Pedes Karawang Islamic Junior High School include enhancing teacher professionalism, improving the quality of educational facilities and infrastructure, and improving the learning process and student achievement.

The results of this research demonstrate the principle of SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung's Islamic Junior High School (SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung) in improving the quality of education through Islamic personal development, Dhuha prayer activities, collective Quran recitation, and WAFI standardization training for teachers.

SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung is part of a network of integrated Islamic schools under the auspices of the Pelita Umat Foundation and is located on Jl. Pahlawan I, Gg. Kamboja, Kedung Taman, Kedungwaru, Kedungwaru District, Tulungagung Regency, East Java Province. The principal of SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung indicated that the school excels in its flagship programs, which focus on religious activities, including Dhuha prayer, collective recitation of the Quran, Quran memorization, tahfidz, and Islamic development. However, despite its strengths in flagship religious programs, SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung also faces weaknesses in providing student-centered attention. This is due to the lack of facilities and infrastructure in schools, which are essential for supporting quality education, as well as a lack of adequate human resources.

Improving the quality of education has become a major concern for Islamic schools in Indonesia, including Integrated Islamic Schools. The principal plays a crucial role in designing, implementing, and evaluating various programs to ensure educational excellence that aligns with both national standards and Islamic values. However, many schools still face challenges in integrating management practices with religious principles. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the principal's planning, implementation, and evaluation strategies in improving the quality of education at SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung.

This research fills this gap by examining the principal's strategic planning, implementation, and evaluation at SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung, a school operating under the Pelita Umat Foundation. SMPIT Nurul Fikri presents a significant case because, despite its strong religious flagship programs—such as tahfidz, dhuha prayer, Islamic personality development, and ADLX-based learning—the school faces constraints in infrastructure, limited human resources, and challenges in integrating modern educational management with Islamic values. These characteristics distinguish SMPIT Nurul Fikri from previous cases and make it a relevant context for analyzing leadership strategies grounded in continuous improvement within SIT.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore the principal's strategies in improving educational quality at SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung. The case study method was selected to enable an in-depth understanding of contextual, social, and managerial dynamics (Sugiyono, 2020). Participants were selected purposively based on their strategic involvement in school management, consisting of: the school principal, the vice principal for curriculum, several

teachers involved in quality improvement teams, and administrative staff responsible for educational reporting (RKS, RKT, ARKAS).

Observations were conducted for six weeks, consisting of regular visits during: morning routines (dhuha prayer, Qur'an recitation), teaching-learning processes in selected classes, teacher coordination meetings, extracurricular activities (sports, arts, literacy, tahfidz). Field notes were recorded systematically using an observation protocol covering indicators of leadership practice, instructional culture, and implementation of strategic programs. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the principal and vice principal, each lasting 45–60 minutes. Additional informal interviews were conducted with teachers to enrich triangulation of findings. Interview questions focused on planning processes, strategic decision-making, implementation mechanisms, and evaluation procedures. Documents examined included: the school's strategic plan, RKS and RKT, educational report cards, teacher development programs, flagship-program documentation, student performance data. Triangulation was conducted through: triangulation of sources (principal, teachers, documents), triangulation of techniques (observation, interview, documentation), member checking to confirm accuracy of interpretations. Data were analyzed using Miles, Huberman, & Saldana's model: data condensation, data display, conclusion drawing and verification. This systematic approach ensured rigorous interpretation of qualitative data.

Result

A The Principal's Planning in Improving The Quality of Education at SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung

Planning is the process of formulating and establishing the stages or steps an organization will take to achieve its desired goals. According to Fred David, planning is the initial step in strategic management, encompassing the development of a vision and mission, identifying internal and external opportunities and threats facing the organization, such as determining internal and external strengths and weaknesses, establishing long-term goals, developing alternative strategies, and selecting strategies to achieve the stated goals.

SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung's vision is to produce graduates who are pious, have noble character, are intelligent, and independent. Based on the vision, the school is expected to produce graduates who possess strong faith and practice Islamic teachings effectively, embodying the values of piety, such as devotion to worship, humility, and modesty. While having a noble character means that graduates are expected to possess noble character traits, such as honesty, sincerity, politeness, and courtesy. The next school expectation is that graduates have intelligent and independent traits. Each graduate must possess intelligent traits

in both academic and non-academic values . Being independent means that each graduate is expected to manage and address all tasks and problems individually and responsibly, without relying too heavily on others (Fred r. David, 2017) .

Based on the data findings, the principal implemented a strategic plan to improve educational quality, first by formulating the vision and mission of SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung. The vision of SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung is to produce graduates who are pious, have noble character, are intelligent, and independent while the mission of SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung is: to provide a quality school based on Islamic preaching, to cultivate noble moral behavior in various aspects of life, to provide enjoyable learning based on Active Deep Learning Experience (ADLX) with an integrated approach, and to develop students' talents and interests through extracurricular activities.

Vision and mission play a crucial role in strategic planning to improve educational quality. The vision offers guidance for the future, while the mission outlines concrete steps to achieve it. Both serve as the foundation for designing strategies to improve educational quality. The vision serves as a long-term goal for an organization or institution, and this vision needs to be formulated clearly and measurably. By making the vision the primary foundation for strategic planning, organizations can more easily achieve their desired long-term goals. A mission serves as an operational guideline that explains how an organization or institution will achieve its vision and objectives. By considering the mission as the primary foundation, strategic planning can help run its operations effectively and efficiently.

SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung's vision is to produce graduates who are pious, have noble character, are intelligent, and independent. Based on the vision statement above, the school is expected to produce graduates who possess strong faith and effectively practice Islamic teachings, embodying the values of piety, such as devotion to worship, humility, and modesty. Meanwhile, possessing a noble character means that graduates are expected to exhibit noble character traits, such as honesty, sincerity, politeness, and courtesy. The school's next expectation is that graduates will be intelligent and independent. Each graduate must possess intelligence in both academic and non-academic values. Independence means that each graduate is expected to be able to manage and carry out all tasks and problems individually and responsibly, without easily depending on others.

Visi	Misi	Renstra	KPI	Program
Devout	To establish a quality educational institution based on Islamic da'wah (Nanu Du'at Qobla Kulli Syai')	To develop a well-rounded Muslim figure	To develop a perfect Muslim figure Teachers 100% Students 60%	Muslim Personality Development Program Teacher Development Program Student Development Program

Noble-minded	To instill good moral behavior in various aspects	To develop a Muslim character and a noble environment	To develop a Muslim character and a noble environment Teachers 100% Students 60%	Activity Programs that Develop Islamic Religious Education
Intelligent	To create a joyful learning atmosphere	To develop active, creative, and problem-solving mindsets	To develop active, creative, and problem-solving mindsets Teachers 100% Students 60%	School Literacy Program
Independent	To develop students' potential and talents through extracurricular activities	skills that align with their talents and interests (Life Skills and Hard Skills)	To develop non-academic skills and abilities that align with their talents and interests Teachers 100% Students 60%	Extracurricular Program

Table 1 Vision and Mission

Based on the vision presented above, which has been translated into a mission statement, SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung has several missions, including: establishing a quality school based on Islamic preaching, fostering noble moral behavior in various aspects of life, providing enjoyable learning based on Active Deep Learning Experience (ADLX) with an integrated approach, and developing students' potential and talents through extracurricular activities. The first mission is to establish a quality school based on Islamic preaching, meaning the school not only imparts knowledge and skills but also instills Islamic values in shaping the Islamic character of its students.

B. The Principal's Implementation in Improving the Quality of Education at SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung

Implementation is the process of translating plans into concrete actions to achieve goals effectively and efficiently. According to Fred R. David, in Intan Suci Rahmawati, strategy implementation is the actions formulated during strategic planning activities. Several indicators of strategy implementation include motivating employees, setting priorities, allocating resources, and developing an organizational culture that enables the effective implementation of the strategy (Intan et al., 2025)

The principal plays a strategic role in improving the quality of education in schools. As an educational leader, the principal is responsible for designing, implementing, and evaluating various policies and flagship programs that support the improvement of educational quality. Based on data findings regarding the implementation of flagship programs at SMPIT Nurul Fikri, the principal

implements flagship programs to improve educational quality through various methods, including:

- 1.) Implementing data-driven planning based on educational report card reports, identifying, reflecting, and improving data from educational report card reports. During the identification stage, the school's task is to collect data on the condition of the school's educational unit. During the reflection stage, the principal's task is to determine priority service improvements across all educational units. During the improvement stage, the principal plans, implements, and periodically evaluates educational service improvement efforts (see attached data).
- 2.) Recommends priorities for inclusion in the semester and annual work plans or the school budget activity plan application.
- 3.) Creates market differentiation by seeking competitive advantages.

The principal implements various methods to create market differentiation by seeking school competitive advantages, including the Blue Ocean Strategy, Unique Selling Points, and the Pareto Principle. This strategy, called the Blue Ocean Strategy, emphasizes the ERRC principle (Eliminate, Reduce, Raise, and Create) (Kim, 2005)

1. the Eliminate stage, the school analyzes its condition and the education market, including conducting a SWOT analysis, identifying educational trends not yet widely adopted by other schools, and understanding the needs of prospective students that are not being met at other schools. This involves eliminating curriculum programs that are irrelevant to current student needs, reducing instructional hours and shifting to more targeted activities.
2. the Reduce stage, the focus is reduced to less significant academic programs, allowing resources to be focused on programs that have proven effective. In this case, the principal determines the school's unique value by developing distinctive and innovative educational programs, developing local advantages such as providing unique entrepreneurial skills, and adopting engaging learning methods.
3. the Raise stage, the school enhances branding and promotion through social media, an engaging website, and publications. It hosts educational events and seminars to attract public interest and utilizes testimonials from alums and high-achieving students to strengthen public trust. In this blue ocean, demand is created rather than fought over, and profitable growth opportunities exist.
4. In the Create stage, the school develops new and innovative academic programs aligned with market demands by enhancing the quality of human resources through innovative training for teachers and educators, fostering the development of digital competencies, and cultivating a school culture that supports innovation and creativity in teaching.

The research results show that the principal of SMPIT Nurul Fikri implemented this Blue Ocean Strategy to improve educational quality. The following steps were implemented at SMPIT Nurul Fikri: 1. Analyzing school conditions and the education market. Analyzing the condition of schools and education markets by conducting Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis, the effectiveness of this tool lies in the ability of decision makers to maximize strengths and take advantage of opportunities, while reducing

weaknesses in the organization and reducing the impact of threats faced 2.) Determining the unique value of the school by building different and innovative educational programs, developing local advantages such as providing unique entrepreneurial skills and adopting interesting learning methods. 3 Improving the quality of human resources by providing innovative training for teachers and education personnel, encouraging the development of digital competencies and creating a school culture that supports innovation and creativity in teaching and learning. 4 Improving school branding and promotion through social media, websites and interesting publications, holding educational events or seminars to attract public interest, conducting testimonials from alums and outstanding students in order to strengthen public trust. 5 Conducting regular monitoring and innovation of the results of the programs implemented to ensure their success. By implementing this Blue Ocean strategy, SMPIT Nurul Fikri school can create attractive advantages that other educational institutions do not have. This can make the school more attractive to new students, parents, and the community, and can also contribute positively to improving the overall quality of education.

Unique Selling Point (USP) strategy is a distinct advantage that sets a product or service apart from its competitors in the market. A unique selling point in improving educational quality involves identifying and discovering unique advantages or approaches that differentiate the school we manage from others. This unique selling point is the primary attraction for students, parents, and educators in choosing the school. The characteristic of a unique selling point strategy is that the product offered is different from competitors' products, making it more special in the minds of consumers.

Based on the research results, the principal of SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung employs a Unique Selling Point strategy to enhance the quality of education. The unique selling points carried out by the principal are carried out in several ways as follows: 1.) Conducting excellence mapping: identifying at least three unique advantages that exist in the school, ensuring that these advantages are not easily imitated by competitors or rivals, focusing on aspects that are genuinely needed by the target market., 2.) Collecting supporting data: documenting concrete student achievements, preparing specific testimonials from parents, alums success track records, certifications and accreditations held. 3.) Communicating effectively: using storytelling in every promotional material, including visual evidence to support each claim, creating educational content that highlights the advantages possessed, and utilizing multi-channel marketing to strengthen the message

As a form of implementation of the Unique Selling Point, SMPIT Nurul Fikri has several activity programs that are unique or school advantages. Based on the results of observations, the types of activities at SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung include: 1. Sports (Futsal, Swimming), 2. Arts (Rebana, Nasyid, Islamic Dance, Painting), 3. Education (Olympiad, Scouts, Youth Red Crescent, Literacy), 4. Religious (Islamic Personal Development, Tahfidz Quarantine, Reading and Writing the Qur'an, Dhuha Prayer activities in congregation and Al Ma'surat Reading). Sports activities, arts activities, educational activities (except for the Olympics and scouting), religious activities

(except for reading and writing the Qur'an), and Dhuha prayers in congregation and Al-Ma'sum are observed every Saturday morning. Scouting is held on Saturday mornings, and the Dhuha prayer is held at 7:00 a.m. every day except Sundays, followed by the recitation of Al-Ma'surat. This echoes Michael E Porter point in his book, Competitive Advantage, which explains that competitive advantage, including USPs, can be achieved through differentiation (product or service differentiation) that creates unique value for customers (Porter,1985)

Finally, the educational quality improvement system implemented by the principal of SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung is the Pareto System. The Pareto System is a method for optimizing resources and increasing the effectiveness of Islamic-based educational management. The Pareto Principle, also known as the 80/20 Principle, can be applied to various situations. For example, eighty percent of customer problems often originate from twenty percent of products or services. The majority of schedule delays, or eighty percent, are caused by twenty percent of the factors that cause delays. Twenty percent of products or services generate eighty percent of total profits. The essence of the Pareto Principle is to maximize the utilization of the best resources within an organization to create optimal value (Amri & Nurjaya, 2022) . The purpose of the Pareto Principle is to allocate time, energy, and resources more effectively to achieve maximum results in developing a superior generation of Islamic students. The Pareto Principle, also known as the 80/20 principle, states that 80% of the results of Islamic education come from the primary 20% of factors.

This principle has a basis Based on the data findings, the principal uses the Pareto system in improving the quality of education at SMPIT Nurul Fikri in various ways as follows: 1. Identifying goals and priorities. SMPIT Nurul Fikri is an Islamic-based school under the auspices of the Pelita Umat foundation, so efforts are needed to improve the quality of education that can improve student achievement and improve the quality of teachers who remain based on Islamic values, for example, improving the quality of students by implementing Islamic Personal Development (BPI) 2.) Analyse 20% of impactful activities. Analyse activities carried out by the school, such as teaching and learning activities, extracurricular activities, and school administration activities. Furthermore, eliminating 20% of the impacted activities is expected to achieve the school's goals. 3. Focus on the 20% of activities that have the most impact and allocate more resources to these activities, and reduce unnecessary or unimpacted activities in achieving school goals. 4. Improve the quality of teachers and human resources by providing training and improving their quality, such as training provided by the education office or by the Integrated Islamic School Network (JSIT) 5.) Conduct monitoring and evaluation by monitoring the activities carried out by the school to ensure that the focus is on the 20% of impacted activities and producing results achieved by the school to ensure that they are in accordance with school goals.

In the implementation of improving the quality of education in schools, the role of the principal is vital because the principal must have a clear vision and mission and strategy in improving the quality of education and a clear strategy in improving the quality of education and must have the ability to manage human resources and other resources. Good quality education

will have a significant impact on the quality of human resources produced by SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung, one of the Islamic education institutions in Tulungagung, which is committed to improving the quality of education and fostering a vision of pious, noble

intelligent, and independent individuals. In an effort to improve the quality of education, SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung has implemented various activity programs, including curriculum development, teacher competency development, and the development of facilities and infrastructure.

Based on the results of the study, the principal in ensuring the implementation of improving the quality of education can run according to plan by: 1.) Conducting checks on education or quality reports, feedback from external parties and monitoring supervision and conducting continuous evaluations. Feedback from external parties can be facilitated by building a structured feedback system, which involves creating a systematic mechanism to provide and follow up on feedback effectively within an organization, institution, or group. 2.) Analyze data in depth using analytical tools for social media, 3.) Curriculum development at SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung utilizes an independent curriculum, a learning approach that is relevant and flexible to meet student needs. 4.) Develop the competencies of teachers and education personnel by implementing and involving teachers and education personnel in various training and workshops, both at the local and national levels. In developing teacher competencies, in addition to providing facilities for teachers to develop their potential, it also motivates teachers to commit to carrying out their duties. It functions professionally, offering services such as Active Deep Learning Experience (ADLX) training, Wafa standardization training for teachers, curriculum implementation training, Emotional Spiritual Quotient (ESQ) training, and more

C. Principal Evaluation in Improving Educational Quality at SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung

The final stage in implementing a principal's strategy to improve educational quality at a school is evaluation. Evaluation is a systematic process for assessing or measuring the extent to which a study, program, or policy achieves its stated objectives. Evaluation is conducted by collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data to determine the effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of an action or decision.

The research findings suggest that the principal's evaluation efforts to enhance educational quality at SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung should play a strategic role in improving educational quality. Therefore, the principal must have the ability to evaluate the implemented educational quality improvement strategy. This includes establishing clear and measurable performance indicators and clear objectives. Relevant data must be collected periodically to measure performance indicators, analyze data and evaluate results, comparing them with established quality standards. Performance evaluation results must be reported periodically to all stakeholders, and appropriate corrective action plans must be formulated, being flexible enough to adapt to changes in the educational environment. These plans should involve all parties and provide constructive feedback to ensure a comprehensive approach

Discussion

The discussion is organized into three core components—planning, implementation, and evaluation—and is interpreted using relevant theories of educational leadership, strategic management, and school quality improvement.

A. Planning: Strategic Alignment and Institutional Direction

The findings indicate that the planning process undertaken by the principal reflects a comprehensive and systematic approach aligned with principles of strategic management. According to Fred R. David, planning is the initial phase of strategic management and includes the formulation of vision and mission, the identification of internal and external factors, the establishment of long-term goals, the development of strategic alternatives, and the selection of strategies for goal attainment (David 2017). The principal of SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung applies these elements effectively.

The school's vision—to produce graduates who are pious, noble in character, intelligent, and independent—is articulated clearly and operationalized through mission statements that emphasize Islamic values, moral development, the Active Deep Learning Experience (ADLX), and talent development. These mission statements serve as practical guides and reflect the notion that vision must be translated into concrete actions to ensure institutional coherence and direction.

Furthermore, the planning phase integrates analytical tools such as SWOT analysis, enabling the school to assess internal strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and threats. Such diagnosis aligns with contemporary educational management theories that emphasize data-driven planning and contextual responsiveness (Annisa, 2023). The principal also structures planning into short-, medium-, and long-term programs through collaborative decision-making, underscoring the collective nature of strategic planning in school settings. Notably, the principal employs advanced strategic frameworks not commonly used in traditional school leadership, such as the Blue Ocean Strategy, the Unique Selling Proposition (USP), and the Pareto Principle. These frameworks are typically applied in corporate strategy but here are adapted for educational improvement, demonstrating innovation in Islamic school management. The adoption of these frameworks suggests an entrepreneurial orientation, enabling the school to position itself competitively in the educational sector while remaining grounded in Islamic values. This, the planning process at SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung demonstrates coherence, innovation, and alignment with both managerial theory and the school's philosophical foundations.

B. Implementation: Translating Strategic Planning into Practice

Implementation reflects the principal's ability to operationalize strategic plans through concrete actions. David argues that strategic implementation involves motivating personnel, allocating resources, setting priorities, and cultivating an organizational culture conducive to strategic success (David 2017). The findings show that the principal performs these roles with precision and strategic awareness.

1. Data-Driven Implementation

The use of “rapor pendidikan” (education report cards) as a basis for identifying

issues, reflecting on institutional performance, and determining priority areas exemplifies an evidence-based approach. Such practices align with modern educational leadership paradigms that emphasize data-based decision making to strengthen school quality.

2. Implementation of the Blue Ocean Strategy

The principal employs the Blue Ocean Strategy, which Kim and Mauborgne (2005) define as the creation of uncontested market space rather than competition within existing boundaries. This strategy is implemented through the ERRC framework: Eliminate outdated or irrelevant curricular components. Reduce programs that show minimal effectiveness. Raise institutional standards, branding efforts, and stakeholder engagement. Create innovative academic and non-academic programs aligned with student needs. This reflects a strategic repositioning of the school and a deliberate attempt to differentiate its offerings in the educational landscape.

3. Implementation of the Unique Selling Proposition (USP)

The USP framework, grounded in Porter's theory of differentiation (Porter 1985), is applied by identifying institutional strengths, documenting achievements, utilizing testimonials, and highlighting unique programs such as Islamic Personal Development (BPI), Olympiads, and religious extracurricular activities. These differentiate SMPIT Nurul Fikri from other institutions and help build a credible and attractive institutional reputation.

4. Application of the Pareto Principle

The Pareto Principle, often referred to as the 80/20 rule, suggests that 80 percent of results stem from 20 percent of key inputs. In this context, the principal prioritizes high-impact programs—particularly those related to teacher development and Islamic character building—while minimizing low-yield activities. This aligns with management theories emphasizing resource optimization for maximal institutional benefit (Amri & Nurjaya, 2022). Through these diverse implementation strategies, SMPIT Nurul Fikri demonstrates a hybrid leadership model that blends pedagogical responsibility with innovative management techniques.

C. Evaluation: Ensuring Sustainable Quality Improvement

Evaluation represents the final stage of the principal's strategic efforts and is essential for determining the effectiveness of implemented programs. Evaluation, as a systematic process of data collection and analysis, ensures that institutional objectives are met and that corrective measures can be taken when necessary.

The findings reveal that the principal conducts evaluation through multiple mechanisms: Regular monitoring of educational quality reports and supervision activities. Structured feedback systems involving internal and external stakeholders. Data analysis, including performance indicators and digital analytics. Continuous professional development, including ADLX training, WAFA standardization, Emotional Spiritual Quotient (ESQ) development, and curriculum

implementation workshops.

These processes align with the principles of continuous improvement, wherein evaluation is not an endpoint but a cycle that informs planning and decision making. The emphasis on teacher development also reflects scholarly consensus that teacher competency is the most significant determinant of student learning outcomes. By adopting a comprehensive and cyclical evaluation process, SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung positions itself as a learning organization—one that is adaptive, reflective, and committed to long-term quality enhancement.

Conclusion

The principal's planning to improve the quality of education at SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung is a systematic and well-planned process. The process of developing the school's vision and mission involves several important steps. These steps include forming a team to develop the quality of education. The principal's implementation of improving the quality of education at SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung demonstrates a systematic and well-planned approach. Using planning based on data from educational report cards, this step is followed by the development of priority recommendations integrated into the Semester Work Plan (RKS) and Annual Work Plan (RKT), as well as the application of the School Budget Activity Plan (ARKAS). The principal implements a market differentiation strategy by leveraging the institution's strengths through three implementation methods: Unique Selling Point, Blue Ocean, and the Pareto Principle. An evaluation of the principal's role in improving the quality of education at SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung reveals that, first, the principal consistently establishes clear and measurable performance indicators and specific objectives. Second, monitoring the quality of education at SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung is essential for the overall development of education, which is integrated throughout the process. However, in carrying out evaluation and improving the quality of education, SMPIT Nurul Fikri Tulungagung faces several challenges. These challenges include inefficient administration, an unbalanced division of tasks and authority, sub-optimal human resource quality, minimal use of technology in school management, low parental and community participation, and a lack of constructive facilities and infrastructure

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