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Implementation Of Adaptive Management By The Principal In Facing Curriculum Changes At State Middle School 04 Madang Suku 1 Oku Timur

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Abstract

This study aimed at analyzing the knowledge is implementation of adaptive management by the school principal in responding to curriculum reform at SMP Negeri 04 Madang Suku I, OKU Timur. Employing a qualitative approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings reveal that the principal implemented adaptive management through the stages of planning, implementation, and evaluation. The adaptive strategies included strengthening teacher competence via internal training, establishing curriculum teams, empowering educators, and fostering collaboration with the school committee and local community. The major challenges identified were limited teacher comprehension of the Merdeka Curriculum, inadequate facilities, resistance to change, and excessive administrative workload. To address these barriers, the principal adopted adaptive solutions such as continuous mentoring, persuasive communication, task distribution, and the utilization of simple learning media. This study concludes that adaptive leadership by the principal plays a pivotal role in ensuring the effective and contextually relevant implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum.

Keywords. Adaptive Management, School Leadership, Curriculum Reform, Merdeka Curriculum

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INTRODUCTION

The curriculum is the core of the educational process, as all learning activities in schools are guided by the direction outlined in the curriculum. Change and transition in education are inevitable, as changing times bring new demands on educational systems, teaching methods, and school management methods. In Indonesia, curriculum change is one of the government's efforts to improve the quality of education to reflect advances in science and technology, as well as the evolving needs of society. Education no longer focuses solely on cognitive achievement, but also on strengthening students' character, creativity, and ability to adapt to global dynamics.

As part of its efforts to improve education policy, the government introduced the Independent Curriculum, a continuation of the 2013 Curriculum. This curriculum provides greater flexibility for educational institutions to adapt the learning process to student characteristics and environmental potential. However, the success of the new curriculum implementation is determined not only by the policy document but also by the leadership of the principal in managing the transition period. Principals are required to implement adaptive management, namely the ability to adjust leadership strategies and operational policies to changes in regulations, human resources, and learning systems.

Nasution (2009: 252) explains that curriculum change includes changes in goals as well as the methods or tools used to achieve those goals. Based on this perspective, it can be understood that curriculum change occurs when one or more curriculum components experience differences between the previous and subsequent periods, as part of a planned effort to improve the quality of education.

According to Mulyasa (2013), principals are not only administrators but also transition managers who are required to respond to educational dynamics with a strategic and flexible approach. Heifetz et al. (2009) emphasize that adaptive management is a process that enables leaders to identify systemic shifts, encourage collaboration across the organization, and generate innovative solutions to existing challenges. In the context of the Independent Curriculum, the challenges faced by principals are increasingly complex. This curriculum emphasizes student-centered learning, learning differentiation, and teacher and school autonomy. Principals are required not only to understand the substance of curriculum transition but also to be able to facilitate this transformation through adaptive leadership.

Principals who implement adaptive management are expected to be able to create a school climate that is open to transition, build a collaborative learning culture, and empower teachers and education staff in facing the new curriculum. However, in reality, many principals

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face quite complex challenges in implementing this adaptive management. According to Kusnadi (2023), principals face various obstacles when leading the transition process towards excellent schools, including resistance from teachers, students, staff, and parents, as well as limitations in terms of experience and available resources. This was revealed through observation and interview methods that illustrate the importance of leadership that is responsive to the dynamics of the school environment.

A study by Prasetyo and Rahmawati (2022) emphasized that in the era of disruption, principals are required to develop adaptive leadership that is not only visionary but also consistent with ongoing transitions and capable of building collaboration among school stakeholders to achieve institutional success. Meanwhile, a study by Fadillah and Nuraini (2024) noted that the main challenges in implementing adaptive leadership in the millennial generation include difficulties in aligning the curriculum with the rapidly evolving needs of students, integrating technology into the learning system, and efforts to create a more inclusive school culture that supports teacher professionalism.

However, in practice, not all principals possess adequate adaptive skills. Principals vary in their ability to respond to curriculum shifts, including leadership, communication, decision-making, and resource management. This inability to adapt can hinder optimal curriculum implementation, ultimately impacting the quality of learning. This phenomenon necessitates an in-depth study of how principals implement adaptive management in the face of curriculum shifts. This study is crucial for channeling empirical insights and developing strategic recommendations for improving principal capacity, as the reality on the ground demonstrates that not all principals possess the same capacity and preparedness to navigate curriculum shifts.

SMP Negeri 04 Madang Suku 1 is an educational institution facing significant challenges due to the ongoing curriculum transition. In an effort to improve the quality of education, the principal at this school is expected to be able to implement adaptive management, meaning that they must be alert and flexible in addressing the various dynamics that arise from this transition. The challenges faced include resistance from teachers and staff to the transition, a lack of resources for necessary training, and limited communication between the school and other stakeholders. Therefore, this study aims to explore in more depth how the principal at SMP Negeri 04 Madang Suku 1 can effectively manage this transition, thereby creating a better learning environment that is responsive to student needs. Focusing the study on this school is not only academically relevant but also provides practical contributions to the development of managerial strategies at the educational unit level.

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Thus, the main focus of the problem in this study is the suboptimal implementation of adaptive management by school principals in responding to the dynamics of curriculum transition. This situation highlights the importance of a more in-depth study of how adaptive strategies are implemented, the obstacles encountered, and their impact on curriculum implementation at the school level. The underlying urgency of this study is the suboptimal response of schools in managing the curriculum transition. Several indicators that emerged include low teacher readiness in understanding and implementing the new curriculum, a lack of initiative by school principals in developing contextual adaptation strategies, and minimal cross-stakeholder collaboration to support the transition process.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach. According to Moleong (2019), the object of a qualitative study can be a phenomenon, event, or social activity. In this study, the object is the implementation of adaptive management carried out by the principal in dealing with curriculum transitions. Informants, according to Creswell (2016), are individuals who are considered to have in-depth knowledge and understanding of the study problem. A purposive sampling technique was used to select those deemed most relevant to the problem. The study subjects are data sources whose information is requested according to the study problem. The data source in the study is the subject from whom the data is obtained (Suharsimi Arikunto, 2004).

In this study, data collection techniques were conducted through: Preliminary studies through school observation and documentation, in-depth interviews with the principal and teachers, Participatory observation of management practices and curriculum implementation. Data analysis used the Miles and Huberman model which consists of several activity flows, namely data collection, data analysis process, description and interpretation , presentation of analysis results, and validation and triangulation .

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings How Implementation Management Adaptive Head School

Researchers have obtained an overview from research that has been conducted with various parties related to the Implementation of Adaptive Management by the Principal. The results of the study show that the implementation of adaptive management implemented by the principal of SMP Negeri 04 Madang Suku I OKU Timur demonstrates the ability to adapt to the dynamics of educational policy, particularly in facing the implementation of the Independent

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Curriculum. The principal plays a role not only as an administrative manager, but also as an adaptive leader with the ability to direct, coordinate, and motivate school residents to remain in line with the educational vision despite the demands of transition. The implementation of adaptive management is seen in three main stages: planning, implementation, and evaluation.

1. Planning Stage

At the planning stage, the principal analyzes the school's needs, including teachers, students, and facilities and infrastructure.

2. Implementation Stage

During the implementation phase, the principal prioritizes collaborative work. Teachers are encouraged to actively participate in learning communities, engage in regular discussions, and share experiences in developing teaching materials based on the Independent Curriculum. The principal also strives to create a supportive work environment by fostering a sense of community, so that the curriculum transition is viewed not as a burden but as an opportunity to improve the quality of learning. This strategy reflects an adaptive participatory management model, which prioritizes the involvement of all parties in accepting the transition.

3. Evaluation Stage

During the evaluation phase, the principal conducts regular monitoring and reflection. Evaluation focuses not only on student learning outcomes but also on the curriculum implementation process in the classroom, teachers' skills in integrating the principles of the Independent Curriculum, and any challenges that arise. Evaluations are conducted openly, so teachers feel involved in improvement efforts. In this way, the principal fulfills a dual role: as both an assessor and a facilitator, helping teachers find solutions to existing challenges.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the principal of SMP Negeri 04 Madang Suku I, East OKU, is capable of implementing adaptive management by emphasizing flexibility, sensitivity to change, and collaborative leadership. This demonstrates the principal's leadership plays a central role in guiding the school to adapt to new policies without ignoring realities on the ground. With this adaptive strategy, the transition to the Independent Curriculum can be more focused, inclusive, and aligned with the school's needs.

The principal's adaptive management implementation at SMP Negeri 04 Madang Suku I was carried out with the active involvement of all school elements. The principal strived to translate the curriculum transition into practical practice by developing strategic steps that could be implemented in collaboration with teachers and other educational staff. One prominent implementation strategy was the formation of a curriculum team tasked with assisting in the

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development of teaching modules, learning materials, and assessment planning in accordance with the requirements of the Independent Curriculum. In this way, the principal ensured that the transition did not stop at the policy level but was actually implemented in the classroom.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Implementing Adaptive Management of School Principals in Facing Curriculum Transition

There are several main supporting factors, namely:

1. Visionary Leadership of the Principal, the principal has a clear vision regarding the direction of school development and is able to communicate the objectives of curriculum transition effectively to teachers and education staff.
2. Support from Teachers and Education Personnel: Solid, unified support from teachers and administrative staff provides crucial social capital in implementing new policies. An open attitude toward learning new things facilitates the curriculum transition process.
3. Conducive Work Environment
4. A democratic school climate, where teachers can express opinions and ideas, encourages innovation in learning.

Inhibiting Factors, although there is strong support, several obstacles were also identified, including .

a. Limited Facilities and Infrastructure

Some facilities, particularly those supporting project-based and technology-based learning, remain inadequate. This can hinder the optimization of learning in accordance with the demands of the Independent Curriculum.

b. Variations in Teacher Readiness Levels

Not all teachers have the same level of readiness and skills in implementing the new curriculum.

c. Rapid Policy Transition and Minimal Socialization

Not all teachers have the same level of readiness and skills in implementing the new curriculum.

d. Rapid Policy Transition and Minimal Socialization

The sudden transition without comprehensive technical guidance caused confusion in the field.

e. Budget Limitations and External Communication Barriers

Limited school funds and lack of coordination with external parties hamper curriculum

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strengthening programs.

Challenges Faced by School Principals in Implementing Adaptive Management in Facing Curriculum Transition

The study findings show that in the process of implementing adaptive management, the principal of SMP Negeri 04 Madang Suku I, East OKU, faced several challenges, both internal and external. First, teachers' understanding of the Independent Curriculum was still limited. Some educators experienced difficulties in interpreting principles, concepts, and developing learning materials according to the demands of the new curriculum. This situation required the principal to provide more intensive support through training, workshops, and the activation of learning communities. This is in line with the view of adaptive leadership, which emphasizes the role of leaders in helping organizational members face new challenges that do not have instant solutions. This situation requires the principal to provide intensive support through training, workshops, and the activation of learning communities. This situation requires the principal to provide more intensive support through training, workshops, and the activation of learning communities.

Overall, implementing adaptive management in the face of curriculum transition requires flexible, innovative, patient, and communicative leadership. The principal is required to balance internal and external demands and transform obstacles into opportunities to improve the quality of education at SMP Negeri 04 Madang Suku I, East OKU.

Solutions to Overcome Obstacles in the Implementation of Adaptive Management for Curriculum Transition

The study revealed that the principal of SMP Negeri 04 Madang Suku I, East OKU, implemented several strategic steps to overcome obstacles arising from the implementation of adaptive management for curriculum transition. The solutions focused on improving teacher competency, optimizing facilities, and strengthening support from various parties. First, to address teachers' lack of understanding of the Independent Curriculum, the principal organized internal activities in the form of mentoring, workshops, and teacher learning community meetings. Furthermore, the principal encouraged teachers to participate in training or technical guidance facilitated by the Education Office.

These efforts are intended to provide teachers with a deeper understanding and familiarity with teaching in accordance with the new curriculum. Second, regarding limited school facilities, the principal encourages the use of simple learning media and technology that is easily accessible

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to teachers and students. The principal also actively communicates with the school committee and relevant parties to obtain additional support in providing learning resources. Third, to address some teachers' resistance to the transition, the principal applies a persuasive approach by providing motivation, encouragement, and demonstrating good practices. The principal strives to create a collaborative work environment so that teachers feel more comfortable in the process of adjusting to the Independent Curriculum. Fourth, to address the high administrative burden, the principal distributes tasks more evenly and utilizes simple technology to facilitate administrative work. This ensures that teachers can still allocate sufficient time for planning and implementing learning.

Fifth, to strengthen external support, the principal intensified communication with parents and the community through committee meetings and parent-teacher meetings. The principal also collaborated with various parties to create collaborations that support the successful implementation of the Independent Curriculum. With these steps, the principal demonstrated adaptive capabilities through flexibility, collaboration, and empowerment of the entire school community. The solutions adopted not only reduced obstacles but also opened up opportunities to improve the quality of education at SMP Negeri 04 Madang Suku I, East OKU. The solutions implemented by the principal of SMP Negeri 04 Madang Suku I, East OKU, to overcome obstacles in implementing adaptive management for the curriculum transition

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study and discussion that have been conducted regarding the Implementation of Adaptive Management of the Principal in Facing Curriculum Transition at SMP Negeri 04 Madang Suku I OKU Timur, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The principal's adaptive management implementation was carried out through three main stages: planning, implementation, and evaluation. The principal demonstrated adaptive skills by forming a curriculum team, holding regular coordination meetings, conducting internal training for teachers, and collaborating with the school committee and the surrounding community. These steps demonstrate the principal's ability to adapt his or her managerial strategies to the demands of the Independent Curriculum transition.
2. Obstacles faced by school principals in implementing adaptive management include teachers' limited understanding of the substance of the Independent Curriculum, limited learning facilities and infrastructure, high administrative burdens, and the emergence of resistance or rejection from some teachers regarding the transition to the learning system.

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3. The principal's solution efforts include ongoing mentoring and coaching for teachers, proportional division of tasks based on competency, a persuasive and communicative approach, and the use of simple yet effective learning media. The principal also strives to create a conducive work environment so that everyone in the school can adapt to the transition gradually.

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