

Strategies in Building Effective Partnerships with Parents to Improve the Quality of The Educational Process

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the principal's strategies for establishing effective partnerships with parents to enhance the quality of the educational process. The study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design. The research participants consisted of the principal, vice principal, head of administration, school committee members, and parents, who were selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis, and were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which includes data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data trustworthiness was ensured through source triangulation. The findings indicate that the principal's strategy for building partnerships with parents is implemented through four stages of strategic management: planning by involving parents in the development of school programs, the vision and mission, and budget planning. Organization through the formation of school committees and parent associations. Implementation through participatory leadership through intensive meetings and communication. Monitoring and evaluation through direct supervision and the use of digital communication media. The implementation of these strategies strengthened communication, increased parental participation, and fostered more collaborative partnerships in supporting improvements in the quality of the educational process. This study contributes an implementation model of partnership strategies based on management functions that can serve as a reference for school principals in developing sustainable collaboration between schools and families.

Keywords: Principal, School–Parent Partnership, Strategic Management, Parental Involvement, Quality Of The Educational Process

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INTRODUCTION

Improving the quality of the educational process is a shared responsibility involving various stakeholders, particularly schools and families. From an educational management perspective, the success of educational provision is determined not only by the effectiveness of internal school management but also by the quality of partnerships established with students' parents. A meta-analysis conducted by Muzakki and Nurdin (2022), concluded that there is a significant positive correlation between parental involvement and student academic achievement. Parents are strategic partners who play an important role in supporting students' academic, social, emotional, and character development (Arif et al., 2023; Diana et al., 2021). Therefore, school principals, as educational leaders, are required to establish collaborative relationships that are not merely administrative in nature, but also participatory, sustainable, and oriented toward improving the quality of the educational process. Hidayat et al. (2022) emphasize that improving educational

quality requires a partnership involving school principals as transformative educational leaders, constructive teacher roles, and parental involvement. Furthermore, Liu and Yin (2020) found that collegial school leadership—which emphasizes mutual trust and a sense of togetherness—has a significant positive relationship with family engagement in schools.

The changing paradigm of education in the twenty-first century further underscores the importance of collaboration between schools and families as a foundation for creating a quality educational ecosystem. Various educational policies have also positioned family engagement as an integral component of educational provision (Malczewski, 2023; Pasquinelli, 2012; Zein et al., 2020). Nevertheless, the implementation of school-parent partnerships in practice continues to face various challenges. A study at SDN 3 Batu Mekar Lingsar, West Lombok, found that collaboration among school principals, teachers, and parents had not yet been well established, indicating the need for partnership training to enhance understanding of the importance of such collaboration (Altassan, 2023; Bergmark, 2023). Other studies have identified major barriers, including parents' limited time due to work commitments, insufficient technical understanding, and communication gaps between schools and families (Bierbaum & Sunderman, 2021; Leithwood, 2021; Silva et al., 2017), in a case study at SDN 2 Sendangmulyo, also found that low parental participation and limited resources were major obstacles to improving educational quality. These conditions have resulted in suboptimal parental support for the learning process and students' overall development.

Previous studies have examined school-parent partnerships from various perspectives. Some studies have demonstrated that parental involvement contributes positively to academic achievement, student motivation, and a conducive school climate. A meta-analysis by Travis et al. (2020) found that family contextual factors have a moderate relationship with students' academic achievement. Other studies have focused more extensively on forms of parental involvement, patterns of school-family communication, and factors influencing parental participation in children's education. McLeod and Boyes (2021) identified communication effectiveness, parental involvement in school programs, and school principals' strategies for addressing barriers as key themes in developing effective partnerships. Meanwhile, research on school leadership has generally focused on school improvement, transformational leadership, school culture, and change management. Nevertheless, relatively few studies have specifically integrated the perspective of strategic school leadership with the development of effective partnerships with parents as a managerial strategy for improving the quality of the educational process.

A research gap can be identified, indicating that studies on school-parent partnerships have largely focused on the level of parental participation or forms of family involvement, whereas research positioning school principals as key actors in comprehensively designing, implementing, and evaluating partnership strategies remains limited. In addition, previous studies have generally not provided an in-depth explanation of how school principals' strategies are developed through the stages of planning, implementation, communication strengthening, parental empowerment, and partnership evaluation as an integrated management process for improving the quality of education. However, the study was limited to a specific madrasah context and did not produce a conceptual model that could be generalized.

Building on this research gap, this study offers novelty through a comprehensive analysis of school principals' strategies for developing effective partnerships with students' parents from the perspective of strategic educational management. This study not only identifies the forms of partnerships implemented in schools but also explains the processes of strategy formulation and implementation, the supporting and inhibiting factors, and provides a conceptual overview of partnership strategies that can serve as a reference for school principals in strengthening school-

family collaboration to improve the quality of the educational process. School principals need to adopt participatory approaches that actively involve parents in various educational programs while establishing effective and transparent communication channels with parents. School-parent partnerships can be realized through programmed activities such as introducing the school's vision and mission, parenting programs, out-of-class learning activities involving parents, and joint planning and evaluation of school budgets.

This study aims to analyze school principals' strategies for developing effective partnerships with students' parents and to explain how these strategies are implemented to improve the quality of the educational process. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of educational management scholarship, particularly regarding school leadership in establishing school-family partnerships, while also providing practical recommendations for educational institutions in developing sustainable collaboration that has a meaningful impact on improving the quality of the educational process. Partnerships among school principals, teachers, and parents constitute a continuous synergy that can accelerate school success, as demonstrated by educational practices in developed countries such as Finland.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design. A qualitative approach was selected because the study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of school principals' strategies for developing effective partnerships with students' parents. A case study design was employed to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of school-parent partnerships within its natural setting, enabling the researchers to explore the processes, interactions, and dynamics involved in depth. Case studies are appropriate when research focuses on contemporary phenomena within real-life contexts.

The research participants were selected using purposive sampling, whereby informants were chosen based on their knowledge, experience, and direct involvement in implementing school-parent partnerships. Table 1, the participants consisted of the school principal as the primary informant, vice principals, teachers, school committee members, and students' parents. The number of participants was determined progressively in accordance with the principle of data saturation, whereby data collection was discontinued when the information obtained began to show recurring patterns and no significant new information emerged.

Tabel 1. Research Participant

No	Code	Position
1.	TS	School Principal
2.	RHT	Vice Principal for Curriculum
3.	YL	Head of Administration
4.	AL	School Committee Member
5.	YN	Parent/Guardian

Research data were collected through three main techniques: in-depth interviews, observation, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain information regarding the school principal's strategies for designing, implementing, and evaluating partnerships with parents. Observation was employed to directly examine the implementation of partnership programs. Meanwhile, document analysis was conducted on documents relevant to the research topic. Data analysis was carried out interactively based on the model, which consists of four stages: data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that the principal of SMK Amaliah 1 Ciawi implemented a partnership strategy with students' parents through four stages of strategic management: planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling. These four stages were implemented in an integrated and continuous manner to establish effective collaborative relationships between the school and families. This finding is consistent with the strategic management approach in education proposed by Bush and Glover (2023), which emphasizes the importance of school leadership in managing the entire management cycle to achieve organizational goals. A more detailed illustration of these findings is presented in the following figure.

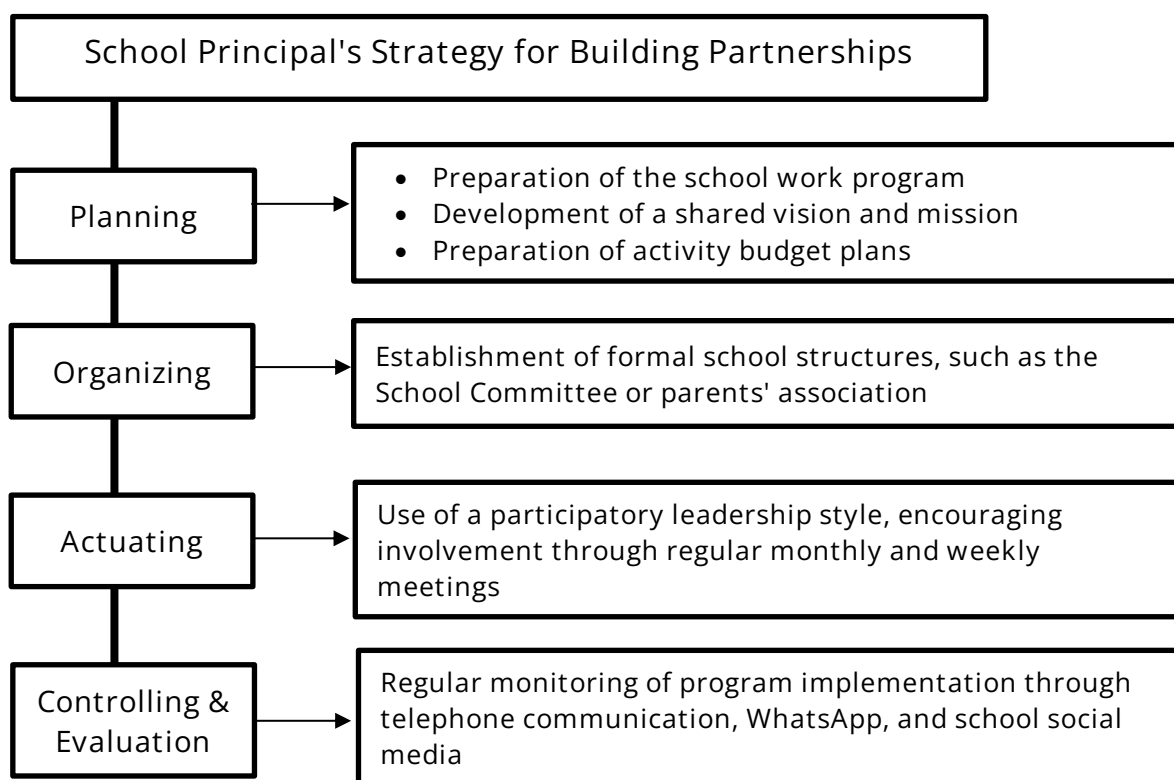


Figure 1. Finding Research

Planning Stage

At the planning stage, the principal initiated the partnership strategy by developing the school work program, jointly formulating the school's vision and mission, and preparing activity budget plans involving various school management components, including structural officials. This process also involved students' parents through an initial meeting forum organized by the school. In this forum, the principal presented various ideas and plans for program implementation to the parents while providing opportunities for them to offer input and suggestions. Such involvement indicates that partnership planning was not conducted solely by the principal but was developed through a participatory process involving parents as important stakeholders in school development.

Collegial school leadership—emphasizing mutual trust and shared involvement in decision-making—is positively correlated with family engagement in schools. School principals should actively involve parents in various educational programs from the planning stage (Arsul et al., 2021; Surawan et al., 2022). Therefore, involving parents in the initial formulation of school programs can strengthen a sense of shared ownership and responsibility for the implementation of educational programs.

Organizing Stage

The next stage is organizing, which involves establishing formal partnership structures such as the school committee and the parents' association. At this stage, parents are invited to the school to engage in discussions and provide suggestions regarding the various programs that have been planned. Discussions and deliberations between the school and parents result in joint decisions to support the functioning of the school committee or parents' association. The establishment of such formal structures is important because it provides parents with a platform for structured and sustained participation in school activities.

School-parent partnerships were realized through programmed activities involving the school committee and parents' association. The establishment of clear partnership structures constitutes part of a continuous synergy among school principals, teachers, and parents that can accelerate school success (Damkuvienne et al., 2023; Rohmah et al., 2023). Formally structured school-parent-community partnerships are critical factors in improving student learning outcomes. Thus, the organizing stage serves not only to establish partnership structures but also to provide a clear mechanism for sustaining collaboration between the school and parents.

Actuating Stage

The principal implemented the strategy through the actuating stage. At this stage, the principal adopted a participatory leadership style by encouraging parental involvement through regularly scheduled meetings, including meetings at the beginning of each semester, monthly meetings, and, when possible, weekly meetings. These meetings served as a means of actualizing and implementing the principal's strategy so that the plans developed could be achieved optimally. Through these activities, parents were not merely recipients of information but were given opportunities to participate directly in discussions and the implementation of school programs.

Parental involvement in various forums is a concrete manifestation of the principal's strategy to improve educational quality. The principal's strategy to increase parental participation is based on a collaborative approach, realized through regular meetings and direct parental involvement in school activities (Alzoraiki et al., 2023; Misbah et al., 2020). The principal's role as a communicator and mediator strengthens collaboration with parents through intensive two-way communication. Thus, the implementation stage demonstrates how the partnership strategy is translated from planning into concrete collaborative actions involving parents.

Controlling and Evaluation Stage

The final stage undertaken by the principal was controlling and evaluation. Supervision was conducted through two approaches: direct and indirect supervision. Direct supervision involved periodic monitoring of the implementation of planned programs. Meanwhile, indirect supervision was conducted through telephone communication, coordination via WhatsApp messages, and the use of the school's social media platforms facilitated by the IT team. The school's communication platforms included Instagram (@SMK Amaliah), Facebook (FB SMK), and the school's YouTube channel. These communication media provided opportunities for parents and the principal to jointly monitor and evaluate the programs that had been planned and implemented.

The use of social media as a means of monitoring and evaluating partnerships demonstrates the principal's innovation in addressing communication barriers that frequently hinder school-family partnerships (Lee et al., 2022; Shoaib et al., 2023). School principals need to establish effective and transparent communication channels with parents (Jauhari & Thelma, 2023; Riyanti et al., 2023; Utama & Akbar, 2023). The use of digital communication technologies also represents a

strategy for addressing parents' limited availability due to work commitments, which has previously been identified as a major barrier to parental participation. Through the school's social media platforms, parents can remain involved in monitoring and evaluating school programs even when they are unable to be physically present at school.

The partnership strategy implemented by the principal through four stages of strategic management—planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling and evaluation—has been implemented in an integrated manner, with parents actively involved at each stage. As stated by one of the respondents, the partnership strategy was carried out through the stages of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling and evaluation. This finding strengthens the argument that school principals play a central role as key actors in comprehensively designing, implementing, and evaluating partnership strategies (Epifanić et al., 2021; Hakim, 2022). The implementation of this strategy at SMK Amaliah 1 Ciawi further demonstrates that effective school–family partnerships are not established instantaneously, but rather through a planned and organized management process that is properly implemented, continuously monitored, and systematically evaluated.

CONCLUSION

The school principal's strategy for developing effective partnerships with students' parents was implemented through four stages of strategic management: planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling and evaluation. The implementation of this strategy enhanced communication, strengthened parental participation, and fostered sustainable collaboration in supporting improvements in the quality of the educational process. The findings confirm that the success of school–parent partnerships is strongly influenced by the principal's ability to manage partnerships systematically, participatively, and continuously. The resulting strategic model can serve as a reference for school principals in developing school–family partnerships to improve the quality of the educational process.

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