

EVALUATION OF THE PRINCIPAL'S LEADERSHIP PROGRAM IN IMPROVING PARENTS' PARTICIPATION IN CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

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Abstract.

This study aims to evaluate the principal's leadership program in improving parents' participation in children's education at SDN Inpres Biak, Luwuk Utara sub-district, Banggai district. The main issue raised was the low level of parental involvement in the children's education process, which is thought to be related to the effectiveness of the leadership program implemented by the principal. The research approach used a descriptive evaluative method with the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) model. Data were collected through observations, interviews and questionnaires involving principals, teachers, parents and students. The results showed that the principal's leadership program has positively contributed to increasing parental participation through activities such as regular meetings, parenting training, and cooperation between the school and the community. However, there are still challenges in the consistency of program implementation and the low participation of some parents due to socio-economic factors. This study recommends strengthening communication between the school and parents and improving the capacity of school principals in managing leadership programs based on community participation.



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A. INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the main pillars of national development that functions to produce qualified and competent future generations. In an effort to improve the quality of education, the involvement of various parties, including parents, is an important factor that often determines the success of the teaching and learning process. Parental involvement has been empirically proven to improve academic achievement, build positive character and

promote students' emotional well-being (Epstein et al., 2019). However, in practice, the level of parental participation in children's education in various regions in Indonesia is still relatively low, especially in remote areas such as Banggai District, Central Sulawesi.

At SDN Inpres Biak in Luwuk Utara sub-district, low parental participation in children's education is an issue that requires serious attention. Based on school reports, most parents have not actively supported educational

activities, either through supervision of learning at home or participation in school programs. This is influenced by various factors, such as parents' lack of understanding of the importance of their role in children's education, busy work schedules and limited access to information related to school programs. This condition is exacerbated by the low effectiveness of programs designed by schools in encouraging parental involvement, which in turn has an impact on students' learning outcomes. Low levels of engagement and the challenges posed by the lack of parental participation are significant barriers to developing a more effective and sustainable program (Saragi et al., 2023).

The urgency of this research lies in the pressing need to understand the leadership role of school principals in creating an environment that supports active parental participation. Principals, as educational leaders at the school unit level, have a strategic role in managing, motivating and initiating collaborative programs between schools and communities. Studies have shown that effective leadership can create synergistic relationships between schools and parents, resulting in a positive impact on students' academic performance (Leithwood et al., 2020). However, at SDN Inpres Biak, the effectiveness of the principal's leadership in increasing parental participation remains a question that needs to be answered through an in-depth study.

The rationale for this study is based on the need to evaluate and improve the leadership programs that have been implemented in

schools. School principals must ensure that the evaluation process of education programs is carried out regularly and thoroughly to provide relevant and accurate data to support strategic decision-making to improve the quality of education in the school (Al-Fatih et al., 2023).

In the modern educational context, leadership approaches are no longer limited to internal school management but also involve developing external relationships with other stakeholders, including parents. The transformative leadership model, which emphasizes vision, collaboration and community empowerment, is one of the relevant approaches to be applied. Thus, this study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the principal's leadership program at SDN Inpres Biak in increasing parental participation, using a comprehensive evaluative approach.

The purpose of this study is to provide an in-depth understanding of the various aspects that influence the success of the principal leadership program. It also aims to identify the inhibiting and supporting factors in the implementation of the program, so as to provide strategic recommendations to improve parental participation in a sustainable manner. Using the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) evaluation model, this research will provide a holistic picture of how principals' leadership can be optimized to support parental involvement in children's education. This research also contributes to the development of literature related to educational leadership in remote areas, which is still minimally explored in the Indonesian context. Educators need to

adjust to these new habits to create an innovative, meaningful and efficient learning atmosphere, while ensuring comfort for learners (Safiq Maulido et al., 2023).

Based on previous literature studies, parental involvement in children's education has been shown to not only improve student learning outcomes but also strengthen the emotional connection between parents and children (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2018). In the context of education in Indonesia, parental participation is often influenced by the role of school principals in educating parents about the importance of their involvement. A study by (Maulida, E., Suharto & Rahmawati, 2021) revealed that principals who are able to implement a participatory approach can increase parental involvement by 40% through structured programs. However, further research is needed to understand how this approach is implemented in a school setting with high socio-economic challenges, such as at SDN Inpres Biak.

With this background and urgency, this research is expected to serve as a reference for education practitioners in designing effective leadership programs based on community needs. It also contributes to addressing the challenges of education in remote areas by prioritizing collaboration between schools and parents as a key strategy to improve the quality of education.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a descriptive evaluative approach with the CIPP (Context, Input,

Process, Product) evaluation model developed by (Sugiono, 2016). This model was chosen because it is able to provide a holistic picture of the effectiveness of the principal's leadership program in increasing parental participation in children's education. This research was conducted at SDN Inpres Biak, North Luwuk sub-district, Banggai district, over a six-month period in the 2023/2024 academic year.

The study population included principals, teachers, parents and students in grades IV to VI. The sample was determined using purposive sampling techniques for principals and teachers, and random sampling for parents, with a total of 50 respondents. Data were collected through three main methods: in-depth interviews with school principals, parent participation questionnaires for students and parents, and observations of school program implementation. The research instruments were validated by education experts to ensure accuracy and relevance.

Data analysis was conducted using quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data from the questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive statistics, such as percentages and averages, to measure the level of parental participation. Qualitative data from interviews and observations were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques to identify patterns and themes related to principal leadership effectiveness (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data validity was strengthened through triangulation of data sources and techniques.

The selection of the CIPP model allows this study to thoroughly evaluate aspects of

context (the need for parental participation), input (the program and the principal's policy), process (program implementation), and outcome (the level of parental participation) (Fitzpatrick et al., 2011). With this approach, it is expected that the research results can provide strategic recommendations that are applicable to improving parental involvement in education in remote areas.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This study reveals various findings regarding the effectiveness of the principal's leadership in increasing parental participation at SDN Inpres Biak, Luwuk Utara Sub-district. The results are presented based on the CIPP evaluation dimensions (Context, Input, Process, Product) which provide a holistic picture of the implemented program.

Context: Parent Participation Needs

The context analysis shows that the majority of parents at SDN Inpres Biak have a low level of awareness of the importance of their role in their children's education. Based on the results of a questionnaire given to 50 parents, 72% of respondents admitted that they are rarely involved in school activities due to work and lack of understanding. Most respondents also stated that they need clearer guidance on how to contribute to their children's education.

Table 1. Parents' level of awareness of their children's education

Aspects	Percentage (%)
Very aware	10
Aware	18
Less Conscious	45
Unconscious	27

These results suggest the need for leadership program interventions that emphasize education and awareness to parents.

Input: Principal's Policies and Programs

The results of in-depth interviews with principals and teachers show that the policies implemented focus more on administrative approaches, such as inviting parents to school meetings and involving them in community service programs. However, there are no specific programs designed to improve parents' understanding of their role in their children's education. Teachers also stated that the principal has not fully utilized the potential of technology in reaching out to parents.

In terms of resources, schools face limited budgets to organize training or seminars for parents. This is a major obstacle in implementing more innovative programs.

Process: Program Implementation

Observations of the program implementation show that despite the principal's efforts to invite parents' participation through regular meetings and community service activities, the attendance rate is still low. In the last three meetings, only 40% of parents consistently attended.

Activities that involve parents, such as community service, are also more physical in nature and emphasize less on the educational aspect. Parents interviewed stated that they felt they did not benefit directly from the activities. Most suggested that the school should organize activities that are more relevant to children's education, such as parenting workshops or learning consultations.

Product: Parent Participation Level

The results show that while there is a slight increase in parents' participation in some school activities, their level of involvement in supporting learning at home is still low. For example, only 35% of parents actively monitored their children's homework. In addition, participation in school meetings increased by 10% after the intensive communication program was implemented, but this figure is still far from the school's target.

Table 2: Changes in Parent Participation Level Before and After the Program

Activities	Before Program (%)	After Program (%)
Attendance at meetings	30	40
Supporting learning at home	25	35
Participation in community service	50	55

The data shows that although there has been progress, the improvement has not been significant. This indicates that the principal's leadership program needs to be improved, especially in the aspects of program innovation and strengthening communication with parents.

Analysis of Findings

This study identified several inhibiting and supporting factors for the success of the principal's leadership program, as summarized in the following table:

Table 3. Supporting and inhibiting factors of the program

Supporting Factors	Inhibiting Factors
Teacher support for the program	School budget limitations
The enthusiasm of some parents	Parents' low understanding of education
Principal's willingness to innovate	Lack of utilization of communication technology

These results indicate the need for a more integrated approach, such as the use of digital technology to reach parents who cannot physically attend school activities.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that the principal leadership program at SDN Inpres Biak has the potential to increase parental participation but there are still many challenges that need to be addressed. Strategic recommendations include strengthening communication, developing technology-based programs and more inclusive community engagement.

Discussion

Context dimension: Parent Participation Needs

Parents' low level of awareness of the importance of participation in their children's education is a common problem in remote areas, including at SDN Inpres Biak. This finding is in line with research by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2018), which highlights

that parental involvement is often influenced by educational factors and their understanding of their important role in the learning process. One of the roles of parents can increase students' learning activeness (Anas et al., 2023). This lack of awareness can also be attributed to the lack of educational programs that lead parents to active involvement.

In the context of SDN Inpres Biak, the principal needs to understand the socio-economic and cultural background of the local community that influences parents' mindset towards education. Another study by (Maulida, E., Suharto & Rahmawati, 2021) confirms that relevant and contextualized education can change community perceptions about the importance of their participation in their children's education. Therefore, it is important for school principals to design more specific programs to educate parents.

Input Dimension: Principal's Policies and Programs

Principal leadership is one of the key factors in creating a participatory culture in the school environment. The findings of this study show that despite efforts to involve parents through activities such as meetings and community service, the policy has not been fully effective in increasing parental participation. This can be understood through the transformative leadership theory approach, which emphasizes the importance of principals to be agents of change who are able to empower all stakeholders (Hallinger, 2020).

One of the main shortcomings in the principal's program at SDN Inpres Biak is the

lack of innovation in reaching parents who have limited time or access. For example, research by Leithwood et al. (2020) shows that principals who utilize information technology, such as digital platforms or communication apps, are able to significantly increase parental engagement. Children's education is a shared responsibility that involves harmonious collaboration between schools as learning institutions and parents as the first educators in the family (Sappaile et al., 2023). However, at SDN Inpres Biak, this approach has not been optimally implemented.

Process dimension: Program Implementation

The implementation of the principal's leadership program at SDN Inpres Biak revealed challenges in building a synergistic relationship between the school and parents. The low attendance rate of parents in school meetings reflects a lack of motivation and interest, which is often caused by a lack of effective communication between the school and parents. Research by (Epstein et al., 2019) emphasizes that a positive relationship between schools and parents requires structured and continuous communication.

In addition, the implementation of programs that focus more on physical aspects, such as community service, shows that these activities are not fully relevant to the needs of parents. The study by (Ahadiati et al., 2024) suggests that activities directly related to children's education, such as parenting training or discussions on learning strategies, are more effective in increasing parental participation.

Product dimension: Parent Participation Level

Although the study noted a slight increase in parents' participation after the implementation of the program, their level of involvement in supporting learning at home remained low. This reflects that the success of the leadership program depends not only on the implementation of the activities, but also on their relevance and impact on parents. Research by (Rahmawati & Masyithoh, 2024) highlights that parents tend to be more engaged if they see direct benefits of their participation to their child's learning outcomes.

In this context, school principals need to conduct continuous evaluation of the effectiveness of the program. (Wisman et al., 2021) recommend using a data-driven approach to identify weaknesses and potential improvements in the program. At SDN Inpres Biak, this approach can be used to measure the impact of activities such as meetings, training and community service on improving student learning outcomes.

Recommendations for Program Strengthening

Based on the research findings and discussion above, several recommendations can be made to improve the effectiveness of principals' leadership in increasing parents' participation. First, principals need to develop more inclusive and needs-based programs by involving parents in the planning process. This participatory approach has been proven effective in a study by (Affuso et al., 2023),

where schools that involved parents in program design managed to increase their engagement.

Second, the use of digital technology, such as communication apps or social media, can be a solution to reach parents who are difficult to physically attend. Research by (Malindo et al., 2020) showed that schools that used technology for regular communication with parents.

Third, training programs for principals and teachers on community-based leadership need to be improved. (Juli Sastra Sitanggang et al., 2023) emphasizes that principals who have transformative leadership skills are more capable of creating harmonious relationships between schools, parents and communities.

Principal leadership has a very important role in increasing parental participation in children's education. However, its effectiveness depends on the principal's ability to design programs that are relevant, innovative and based on community needs. By integrating modern leadership theories and best practices from previous research, it is hoped that schools can create a more inclusive environment and support collaboration between schools and parents.

D. CONCLUSION

This study has evaluated the effectiveness of the principal's leadership in improving parental participation at SDN Inpres Biak through the CIPP evaluation approach. The results show that despite significant efforts from the principal in involving parents, their participation is still relatively low, both in

school activities and in supporting learning at home. The low level of parental awareness and the lack of relevant educational programs are the main challenges that require further attention. This study suggests the need to strengthen communication between schools and parents, develop needs-based programs and train principals in transformative leadership. These results are expected to encourage the improvement of education quality through better synergy between schools, parents and communities.

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