

BENCHMARKING

JURNAL MANAJEMEN PENDIDIKAN ISLAM

THE PRINCIPAL'S STRATEGY IN INCREASING PARENTAL PARTICIPATION AT SIMATANG UTARA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, TOLITOLI REGENCY

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Abstract

Students' educational achievement is greatly supported by parental participation. However, there are still a number of barriers that hinder parental participation in school activities, including busy work schedules, poor communication and a lack of awareness regarding the importance of involvement in their children's education. The purpose of this study was to describe the approaches taken by the principal to increase parental involvement at Simatang Utara Public Elementary School in Tolitoli Regency. This study employed a descriptive design and a qualitative methodology. The principal, instructors, and students' parents made up the research subjects. Observation, interviews and documentation were used to gather data, which were then analysed using methods for data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drafting. The findings demonstrated that the principal's approach to boosting parental involvement involves working with the school committee, socialising the value of parents' roles in their children's education, increasing effective communication between the school and parents and involving parents in a variety of school activities. This approach is supported by the principal's dedication, teacher support, and parental understanding of the value of education. Parental busyness, time constraints, and some parents' low involvement in school activities are the impeding obstacles. According to the study's findings, the principal's approach was crucial for boosting parental involvement in order to successfully support the accomplishment of educational objectives.

Keywords: Principal's strategy, parental participation, students, elementary school.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is essential for developing highquality human resources. (Sudarwati & Naim, 2022). Family involvement, particularly that of parents, in fostering their children's growth will impacts educational success alongside the learning process at school (Kantova, 2024). Since parents are their children's first and primary teachers, their involvement in

education is crucial to helping students succeed academically. Students' academic, social, and character development can be supported, and a conducive learning environment can be created through a strong partnership between schools and parents. According to research, students' academic achievement and wellbeing are strongly correlated with parental involvement (Haryanto, 2024).

Attending school meetings, interacting with teachers, helping children study at home, participating in school events, and supporting educational initiatives are just a few ways parents can demonstrate their involvement in their children's education. To foster a positive relationship between families and schools, this involvement is crucial. According to research (Grüter et al., 2025), parents' enthusiasm for engaging in their children's education can be enhanced by an open school environment, effective communication, and strong collaboration between teachers and parents.

Nevertheless, there are still a number of barriers to parental involvement in education. Parental participation in various school activities is often hindered by parents' busy work schedules, a lack of awareness regarding the value of involvement in their children's education, limited access to information, and specific regional circumstances. These difficulties are exacerbated in remote and island locations by a lack of communication and transportation options, which can affect the level of engagement between parents and schools. Because of these circumstances, many educational programs do not receive the best possible support from parents (Hardianto, 2025).

As educational leaders responsible for overseeing school resources and forming alliances with other stakeholders, including parents, school principals play a crucial role in addressing these issues. To foster positive relationships between schools and families, school principals must possess excellent managerial, communication, and leadership skills (Smith et al., 2021). Strengthening two-way communication, implementing parenting programs, involving parents in school decision-making, empowering school committees, and creating school-family collaboration programs are some of the tactics used by school principals to increase parental involvement. Effective leadership can improve student achievement and enhance school quality (Alinsunurin, 2020).

Student achievement is positively influenced by high levels of parental involvement, as supported by previous research (Tellegen et al., 2024), parental involvement in education improves the quality of school-family interactions and is strongly associated with students' academic success. Therefore, every educational institution must prioritize efforts to increase parental participation, especially at the elementary school level.

In Tolitoli Regency, Simatang Utara Public Elementary School is located in a rural community where most residents work as farmers and fishermen. Parental involvement in educational activities may be affected by the community's demanding economic activities and challenging topography. Initial observations revealed that some parents remain under-engaged in school meetings, are limited in their ability to support their children's education at home, and are not yet fully involved in various school programs. This situation makes it difficult for the principal to foster greater collaboration between parents and the school.

The principal of Simatang Utara Public Elementary School has promoted parental involvement through regular meetings, communication with parents and the school committee, and other collaborative initiatives. Further research is needed to identify the tactics used, the supporting factors and barriers encountered and their impact on increasing parental participation. According to research (Paccaud et al., 2021), parents are more likely to be satisfied and engaged in school activities if they receive regular, up-to-date information about their children's progress.

Numerous studies have examined school family relationships and parental involvement but few have explicitly examined the techniques used by principals to increase parental involvement in elementary schools in the island regions of Tolitoli Regency. Because it focuses on the context of elementary schools in island regions with social and geographic characteristics that differ from those of urban areas, this study offers a distinct perspective by addressing this gap. Its findings are expected to contribute to educational management and provide practical guidance for school principals in strengthening meaningful collaboration with parents.

This situation motivated the researchers to examine the principal's strategies for increasing parental involvement at Simatang Utara Public Elementary School in Tolitoli. Therefore, the research in this paper aims to address three key issues: 1) What strategy does school principals use to increase parent participation at Simatang Utara Public Elementary School in Tolitoli Regency? 2) What is the impact of these strategies on parental involvement in activities at Simatang Utara Public Elementary School in Tolitoli Regency?

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative and descriptive methodology. The purpose of qualitative research is to gain a depth understanding of a phenomenon based on field conditions (Ultavia et al., 2023). A qualitative approach was used to gain a deep understanding of the principal's strategies in increasing parent participation at Simatang Utara Public Elementary School. This study was conducted at Simatang Utara Public Elementary School, located in Simatang Utara Subdistrict.

The research subjects consisted of the principal as the primary informant, as well as teachers, the school committees and parents of students as supporting informants. The selection of research subjects was conducted using a purposive sampling approach, taking into account their involvement in the implementation of school programs and the cooperative relationship between the school and the parents of students.

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were obtained directly from the principal, teachers, the school committee and parents through interviews and observations. Secondary data were obtained from school documents, such as the school profile, vision and mission, school work programs, data on parent attendance at school activities, committee meetings, activity documentation and various literature relevant to the study.

Data collection techniques in this study included observation, interviews and documentation. Observation was used to observe the implementation of the principal's strategies to increase parent participation at Simatang Utara Public Elementary School. Interviews were conducted with the principal, teachers, the school committee and parents to obtain a depth interview to get information regarding the various strategies implemented, as well as the factors that support and hinder parent participation. Documentation was used to obtain supporting data in the form of documents, photos of activities, work programs, meeting invitation letters, and archives related to parental involvement in school activities.

The data analysis technique in this study employed a qualitative data analysis model consisting of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data reduction was performed by selecting and grouping data relevant to the research focus. The data were then presented in the form of descriptive narratives to ensure ease of understanding. The final stage involved drawing conclusions and verifying them to obtain a comprehensive picture of the principal's strategies for increasing parental participation at Simatang Utara Public Elementary School.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Research Finding

This study was conducted at Simatang Utara Public Elementary School in Tolitoli Regency. Data were collected through observation, documentation and interviews with the principal, teachers, the school committee, and parents of students. The focus of this study was the principal's strategies in increasing parental participation at Simatang Utara Public Elementary School in Tolitoli Regency.

Simatang Utara Public Elementary School, located in Tolitoli Regency, Central Sulawesi, serves 30 students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. To support students' academic achievement and character development, the school promotes strong collaboration with parents.

The schools' vision is dedicated to cultivating an environment of excellence, innovation, and lifelong learning, ensuring students are thoroughly prepared to navigate a changing world. Central to this mission is the intentional development of strong, noble character. By seamlessly integrating daily religious practices and embedding faith-based teachings into everyday school interactions, the institution provides a holistic education that nurtures both intellectual growth and spiritual maturity.

Research results indicate that the principal's strategy for enhancing parental participation of students at SD Negeri Simatang Utara, Tolitoli Regency, was implemented through several indicators:

1. Communication with parents. The principal established effective communication through school meetings, WhatsApp groups, and direct communication. This strategy made it easier for parents to obtain information regarding students' progress as well as various school programs.
2. Parental involvement in school activities. The principal provided opportunities for parents to participate in various activities, such as committee meetings, report card distribution, community service (gotong royong/kerja bakti), commemorations of national holidays, and other activities that support the educational process.
3. Collaboration with the school committee. The principal established coordination with the school committee as a partner in conveying information, accommodating parents' aspirations, and supporting the implementation of school programs.

Discussion

The principal of Simatang Utara Public Elementary School in Tolitoli has created a number of programs and activities that actively involved parents in the educational process as part of a strategy to increase parental participation based on research findings. The principal encouraged cooperation between the school and families by serving as an educational administrator, leader and inspirer. Research findings indicated that parental involvement in supporting their children's education both at home and at school can be enhanced when there is effective communication between the school and parents through frequent meetings and the provision of information about students' progress.

In addition, the principal implemented initiatives to strengthen the relationship between the school and parents by involving parents in various school programs, school committee activities and reciprocal collaboration. These tactics give parents the opportunity to participate in the design, implementation, and evaluation of school-related activities. Increased parental responsibility for their children's education and a strong relationship between families and the school are two benefits of this involvement.

The findings also indicated that encouraging and educating parents about the importance of the family's role in their children's education is a successful strategy. School principals actively encourage parents to be involved in their children's education at home, monitor their academic and extracurricular progress, and meet their educational needs. With this support, students develop greater self-discipline, self-confidence, and enthusiasm for learning.

Despite these achievements, the study identified several barriers to increasing parental involvement. Parents' busy work schedules, varying educational backgrounds, and limited time for school related activities are among these challenges. Nevertheless, school principals strive to overcome these challenges by utilizing digital communication tools, increasing communication flexibility, and fostering closer relationships with parents.

This study demonstrated that a principal's ability to foster effective communication, design long term partnerships and inspire active at home engagement significantly boosts parental participation. Ultimately, by prioritizing cooperation, open dialogue, and parental empowerment, the principal's approach serves as a critical driver for elevating teaching standards at Simatang Utara Elementary School in Tolitoli.

The research findings indicated that the strategies implemented by the principal have a positive impact on parental involvement in school activities. This impact was evident in increased parental attendance at school meetings, participation in educational activities, support for school programs and greater parental attention to their children's learning progress.

Parental involvement was influenced by their perception of the importance of their role in their children's education and the opportunities provided by the school for participation. In this study, the principal provided various opportunities for parents to engage in school activities, thereby fostering a sense of responsibility and concern for their children's education.

Another impact identified was improved communication between parents and teachers. Intensive communication between the school and families helps create a shared understanding of the goals of children's education. When parents and teachers maintain good communication, various issues faced by students can be promptly identified, and solutions can be sought collaboratively.

The research findings also revealed a notable increase in parental support for school programs, reinforcing the theory of community participation in education. According to this framework, communities that are actively involved in decision making develop a deeper commitment to the success of ongoing initiatives. Within this school environment, that commitment manifests tangibly through parents contributing their labor, sharing innovative ideas, and offering direct support for school activities.

Furthermore, increased parental involvement directly supports holistic student development, which is heavily shaped by the ongoing interaction between the home and school environments. When families and educators actively collaborate, they create a unified support system that enhances a child's academic, social, and emotional growth. When the home and school environments work harmoniously, student development is optimized. In this study, teachers noted that supported students demonstrate higher learning motivation, stronger discipline, and a more positive attitude toward school.

The results of this study showed parental involvement in education benefits students, parents and the school. For students, parental involvement can improve academic achievement and foster positive behavior. For parents, such involvement enhances their understanding of their children's development. Meanwhile, for the school, parental involvement can strengthen support for the implementation of educational programs.

Thus, the principal's strategies to increase parental participation at Simatang Utara Elementary School in Toli-Toli have been shown to have a significant impact on parental involvement in school activities. These findings reinforced various educational theories that emphasize that partnership between schools and families is a key factor in achieving quality education and student success.

CONCLUSION

The following conclusions can be drawn from the study on the principal's tactics to increase parental involvement at Simatang Utara Public Elementary School in Toli-Toli Regency:

1. Holding regular meetings with parents, establishing efficient communication channels through WhatsApp groups, invitation letters, by engaging parents through face-to-face meetings, committee work, community service, and report card days, celebrations of religious and national holidays, and student graduation ceremonies are some of the strategies the principal employs to increase parental participation. By strengthening the bond between the school and parents, these tactics are expected to build a solid partnership that will improve students' education.

2. While parents' busy schedules present a challenge for school participation, the principal successfully maintained engagement by adjusting event timing and utilizing WhatsApp groups for progress updates. This flexible approach effectively sustained parental involvement in school activities.

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