

# BENCHMARKING

JURNAL MANAJEMEN PENDIDIKAN ISLAM

## THE ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCE OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN CREATING ENTREPRENEURIAL INNOVATION AT PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN CLUSTER II, NORTH ACEH REGENCY

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### Abstract

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This research aims to examine the entrepreneurial competencies of school principals in collaboration with the business world to create entrepreneurial innovations in public elementary schools, identify the entrepreneurial competencies of school principals in fostering student creativity to generate entrepreneurial innovations in public elementary schools, and analyze the entrepreneurial competencies of school principals in enhancing and realizing an entrepreneurial culture to create entrepreneurial innovations in the public elementary schools of Cluster II in North Aceh District. The focus of the study includes three elementary schools in North Aceh District, namely SDN 11 Lhoksukon, SDN 5 Lhoksukon, and SDN 1 Lhoksukon. The method used is descriptive qualitative with observation, interviews, and documentation techniques. The results show that school principals play a strategic role as drivers of innovation and creators of an entrepreneurial ecosystem. Through the school cooperative program, project-based activities to strengthen Pancasila student profiles (P5), mini markets, and collaboration with local SMEs and higher education institutions, the principal has successfully instilled entrepreneurial values such as independence, creativity, responsibility, and collaboration in students. The implementation of entrepreneurship education is integrated into thematic learning and daily student activities. Despite limited facilities, the three schools have demonstrated that an approach based on local potential and innovative leadership can foster an entrepreneurial culture from an early age. This finding reinforces that the entrepreneurial competence of school principals is key to creating contextual and sustainable educational innovations.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurial Competence, School Principals, Collaboration, Entrepreneurial Culture.

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### INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the strategic sectors in developing superior and competitive human resources in the era of globalization. Along with the rapid advancement of technology and the dynamics of socio-economic life, the world of education is facing new challenges—namely, how to prepare students to be not only academically competent but also equipped with life skills such as creativity, independence, critical thinking, and entrepreneurial spirit.

Trilling and Fadel (2009) emphasize that 21st-century education prioritizes the mastery of four key competencies: critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and

creativity. In this context, entrepreneurship becomes an essential part of the educational process to foster individuals who are adaptive, solution-oriented, and innovative.

Schools, as formal educational institutions, have a major responsibility in instilling entrepreneurial values from an early age. According to Suryana (2013), entrepreneurship education is a process of cultivating the spirit, enthusiasm, and skills of entrepreneurship through well-planned and sustainable learning and training activities.

Entrepreneurship education is not merely aimed at producing entrepreneurs; more importantly, it seeks to develop students' character to become resilient, creative, and responsible individuals. Therefore, the implementation of entrepreneurship education should begin at the elementary level, where character formation is taking place intensively.

The role of the school principal in supporting and implementing entrepreneurship education is crucial to the success of such programs. Principals serve not only as administrative managers but also as innovative (transformational) leaders who are capable of creating change and fostering an entrepreneurial culture in schools.

Bass and Avolio (1994) define transformational leaders as those who can inspire and motivate members of an organization to perform beyond expectations by creating a vision, setting an example, and building constructive relationships.

Furthermore, the competencies of school principals have been outlined in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia No. 13 of 2007, which stipulates five key competencies that a school principal must possess: personal, managerial, supervisory, social, and entrepreneurial.

Entrepreneurial competence includes the ability to create innovations for school development, work hard, possess strong motivation, be persistent, and manage productive activities as learning resources. With these competencies, principals are expected to build a learning ecosystem that is creative, contextual, and oriented toward solving real-world problems.

However, in practice, many principals have yet to fully implement entrepreneurial competencies. Zaelani (2008), in his research, found that principals who apply entrepreneurial principles such as innovation and creativity are proven to enhance the quality of their schools both academically and non-academically. Conversely, a lack of understanding of the strategic role of entrepreneurial competencies causes some principals to remain stuck in administrative routines, without initiating innovative programs that support the holistic development of students.

Preliminary observations conducted at SDN 1, SDN 5, and SDN 11 Lhoksukon show that the success of entrepreneurship program implementation is highly influenced by the entrepreneurial competence of the principal. At these schools, principals with an entrepreneurial vision have successfully fostered collaboration among teachers, students, and local MSME actors.

Several innovative programs developed include school cooperatives, mini markets, project-based learning activities, business skills training, and the development of local products such as healthy snacks and handicrafts. These programs not only nurture independent and responsible students but also make the school a dynamic learning environment relevant to today's needs.

According to Mulyasa (2011), school principals with entrepreneurial competence demonstrate creative and innovative attitudes in leading their schools effectively, efficiently, and accountably. They not only act as administrators but also as change agents capable of managing school resources, building external partnerships, and creating meaningful learning experiences for students.

Other challenges faced in implementing entrepreneurship education include limited facilities, lack of training for principals, and suboptimal support from local

government policies. This is consistent with the OECD (2019) report stating that the implementation of entrepreneurship-based education in developing countries still faces barriers in terms of human resources, funding, and infrastructure.

Therefore, the systematic improvement of principals' competencies is an urgent need to foster sustainable educational innovation.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that school principals' entrepreneurial competence plays a critical role in creating innovation within the elementary school environment.

This study aims to explore how elementary school principals in Cluster II of North Aceh Regency develop their entrepreneurial competence to create creative programs that directly impact learning processes and student character development.

This study is expected to contribute to the development of educational leadership theory as well as serve as a practical reference for school principals, policymakers, and other stakeholders in strengthening the culture of entrepreneurship in elementary schools.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative research approach with a descriptive method. According to Bogdan and Taylor (1998), qualitative research is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior. They assert that this approach targets environments and individuals holistically. Therefore, it does not allow individuals or groups to be separated into variables or hypotheses but must be considered as a whole. The research was conducted at three locations: SD Negeri 1 Lhoksukon, SD Negeri 5 Lhoksukon, and SD Negeri 11 Lhoksukon, all located in North Aceh Regency.

## **RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Research Results**

**This research was conducted at three elementary schools that are part of Cluster II in Lhoksukon Subdistrict, North Aceh Regency, namely SDN 1 Lhoksukon, SDN 5 Lhoksukon, and SDN 11 Lhoksukon.**

The study aims to describe the performance of school principals in fostering entrepreneurial innovation, as well as the challenges they face in its implementation. Data were obtained through interviews with the principals as the primary informants.

Based on the interview with the principal of SDN 11 Lhoksukon, it was revealed that the existing entrepreneurship programs in elementary schools are still ceremonial in nature and lack continuity. Activities such as bazaars or buying and selling events are only held on certain occasions without reflection or in-depth learning that could instill entrepreneurial values such as responsibility, creativity, and independence. Moreover, these activities are not integrated into a systematic learning process.

The principal of SDN 11 Lhoksukon also stated that one of the main challenges in creating entrepreneurial innovation is the limited competence of school principals in the field of entrepreneurship. The lack of background knowledge and training on entrepreneurship education has resulted in weak planning and management of innovative and contextual programs. In addition, teachers are not yet accustomed to integrating entrepreneurial values into the learning process. This is due to the lack of teacher training

or understanding of project-based learning methods appropriate to the characteristics of elementary students.

All three principals interviewed acknowledged that collaboration with external parties such as entrepreneurs, MSMEs, or higher education institutions is still very limited. Yet, such partnerships are essential to provide students with real-world experiences, enrich teachers' perspectives, and strengthen the implementation of entrepreneurship programs in schools. The absence of external partners has caused entrepreneurship programs to lack practical dimensions, making them ineffective in fostering student engagement and motivation.

The lack of facilities is also a major obstacle in implementing entrepreneurship in elementary schools. Many schools do not have practice rooms, basic production tools, or entrepreneurship corners as learning media for students. The limited School Operational Assistance (BOS) funds, which must be allocated to various needs, make it difficult to develop school business units. Even efforts to establish student cooperatives or entrepreneurship canteens often face budgetary constraints.

The research findings also indicate that there is no structured learning strategy for entrepreneurship development at the elementary school level. Existing programs remain incidental and are not yet fully integrated into the learning curriculum. Principals and teachers are still seeking appropriate ways to embed entrepreneurial values into thematic subjects. The lack of clear guidelines has led to inconsistent development directions and limited the potential for optimal growth.

Despite the challenges, all three principals expressed their commitment to continue innovating and learning. They acknowledged the importance of strengthening student character through entrepreneurship education and stated their willingness to participate in training and open collaboration with various stakeholders. This reflects a collective awareness that transforming the culture of entrepreneurship in elementary schools requires the support of all school elements and cross-sectoral synergy.

## **Discussion**

### **SD Negeri 11 Lhoksukon**

#### **Establishing Collaboration Between Elementary Schools and the Business Sector as an Entrepreneurial Innovation**

The implementation of entrepreneurship education at SDN 11 Lhoksukon has been effectively carried out through a school cooperative that has been running for approximately four years. The cooperative serves as a contextual learning medium that instills entrepreneurial values and character traits such as responsibility, honesty, hard work, and independence in students. The rotation system of tasks allows students to learn business management, trade ethics, and social skills such as communication and teamwork.

In addition to internal activities, the school also collaborates with local business actors through training sessions and field visits, providing students with hands-on experience and strengthening their entrepreneurial spirit. Initiatives such as "Student Cooperative Day" are clear evidence of integrated entrepreneurship implementation. Key success factors include the principal's competence, active involvement of teachers, and engagement of the local business community. This program not only develops economic skills but also shapes the students' entrepreneurial character from an early age.

## **Fostering Student Creativity to Generate Entrepreneurial Innovation**

SDN 11 Lhoksukon in North Aceh showcases good practices in character and entrepreneurship education through the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5), with activities based on local potential, such as making starfruit syrup and candy, and Virgin Coconut Oil (VCO). Students are involved in every step—from selecting ingredients and production to packaging—as a form of contextual and practical learning.

The use of local materials not only nurtures students' entrepreneurial spirit and creativity but also instills Pancasila values such as mutual cooperation, independence, honesty, and environmental awareness. These activities also strengthen higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) through product evaluation and innovation in flavor and packaging.

Under visionary leadership, the entire school community is involved in fostering an innovative culture. The students' products are planned to be showcased to the public as a form of early social entrepreneurship. This model demonstrates that local-based education can effectively build character, skills, and entrepreneurial spirit in elementary students.

## **Strengthening and Realizing an Entrepreneurial Culture**

In facing the challenges of globalization and the complexities of the 21st century, education must instill life skills, adaptive attitudes, and an entrepreneurial mindset from an early age. SDN 11 Lhoksukon is a real example of these values being implemented through the integration of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5).

Under visionary leadership, students are directly involved in the production, packaging, marketing, and evaluation of products like starfruit syrup, candy, and VCO. These activities build confidence, creativity, and character values such as cooperation, honesty, and independence.

Additionally, collaboration with parents and local business actors through exhibitions and bazaars enhances contextual learning. This model proves that an entrepreneurial culture can be built holistically and sustainably, creating a generation not only ready to work but also capable of creating jobs from an early age.

## **SD Negeri 5 Lhoksukon**

### **Establishing Collaboration Between Elementary Schools and the Business Sector as an Entrepreneurial Innovation**

The principal of SDN 5 Lhoksukon demonstrates strong entrepreneurial competence by forging strategic collaborations with local business actors. This initiative is realized through the management of the school cooperative as a medium for implementing entrepreneurship education. The principal acts as:

1. An initiator of external partnerships,
2. A policymaker within the school to support full community participation, and
3. A driver of transformation toward an entrepreneurship-based school.

Findings at SDN 5 Lhoksukon align with this view, as the school has successfully positioned its cooperative as a hub for contextual and practical student entrepreneurship activities. The school cooperative serves not only as a place to buy and sell stationery and healthy snacks but also as a direct practice site where students engage in sales, transaction

recording, inventory management, and profit evaluation—real examples of experiential learning in entrepreneurship education.

### **Encouraging Student Creativity to Foster Entrepreneurial Innovation**

SDN 5 Lhoksukon successfully integrates entrepreneurship education into various contextual and enjoyable learning activities for students. These include organic vegetable gardening, recycling projects, and the development of traditional dance as a form of culture-based entrepreneurship. Through these activities, students learn about production processes, distribution, and basic financial management.

The principal actively designs and promotes entrepreneurship programs, also engaging parents and the community to support learning that builds student character and skills. Teachers serve as facilitators in project-based learning activities such as mini markets and crafts, providing space for students to be creative and learn in practical ways.

One standout innovation is the establishment of a school dance studio as a form of cultural entrepreneurship, which not only preserves local art but also offers economic opportunities for students. These efforts help develop independent, creative, responsible students who can collaborate—while also strengthening ties between the school, families, and the wider community in building an early entrepreneurial culture.

### **Strengthening and Realizing an Entrepreneurial Culture to Foster Innovation**

At SDN 5 Lhoksukon, the entrepreneurial spirit has become a key part of the learning process. The school instills values such as creativity, independence, and resilience through thematic approaches and project-based activities. The entrepreneurial culture is not merely a slogan—it is a tangible practice embedded in daily school life.

Activities include the "Mini Market" program, small business projects, and involving students in planning school events. Students are encouraged to take risks, make decisions, and be accountable for their work. These activities involve collaboration among teachers, students, and parents, creating a learning ecosystem that supports sustained entrepreneurial character development.

Through consistent and collaborative implementation, SDN 5 Lhoksukon has succeeded in building a vibrant entrepreneurial culture, helping students grow not only academically but also in independence, creativity, and resilience in facing challenges.

## **SD Negeri 1 Lhoksukon**

### **Establishing Collaboration Between Elementary Schools and the Business Sector as an Entrepreneurial Innovation**

To instill an entrepreneurial spirit from an early age, the principal took the initiative to collaborate with local MSMEs. Through simple training programs at school, students learn about business management, marketing, and food packaging.

The school canteen is utilized as a hands-on entrepreneurship lab, where students receive direct guidance from teachers and canteen managers. Teachers also integrate entrepreneurship activities into thematic lessons, such as calculating profit in Math, creating product advertisements in Bahasa Indonesia, and healthy living campaigns in Science. This enriches students' learning through real-life experiences.

The canteen manager has responded positively to student involvement and feels motivated to improve services, aided by training with MSME partners. Students also show

high enthusiasm in their roles, from production to customer interaction. Despite limited facilities, the school has optimized existing potential and built collaborations that support entrepreneurship learning. This proves that an entrepreneurial mindset can be effectively cultivated in elementary schools through creative and contextual approaches.

### **Encouraging Student Creativity to Foster Entrepreneurial Innovation**

SDN 1 Lhoksukon demonstrates strong commitment to fostering entrepreneurship by developing student creativity. The principal encourages simple entrepreneurial activities such as crafting, healthy snacks production, and attractive packaging design.

The school canteen serves as a business practice space, with plans to expand collaboration with local MSMEs and higher education institutions like Malikussaleh University.

Teachers actively integrate entrepreneurship concepts into thematic learning—like calculating profit in Math, designing brochures in Bahasa Indonesia, and developing packaging in Arts. The canteen manager, Ms. Nuraini, involves students in packaging, product naming, and customer service, providing real entrepreneurial experience.

Students also show great enthusiasm for these activities. They learn about trade, money management, and the importance of cooperation. Support from the principal, teachers, canteen staff, and students creates a contextual, creative learning environment that supports early entrepreneurial skill development.

### **Strengthening and Realizing an Entrepreneurial Culture to Foster Innovation**

SDN 1 Lhoksukon is highly committed to equipping students with life skills through entrepreneurial activities. The principal, Ms. Lindawati, S.Pd., plays a central role by using the school canteen as a business practice lab. Students are directly involved in producing and selling items such as banana chips, puddings, and crafts. They learn to design packaging, set prices, promote, and sell products to peers.

The program aims to build students' independence, creativity, and responsibility. Teachers support this through integrating entrepreneurship into thematic learning—like calculating profit in Math and making product ads in Bahasa Indonesia—making the learning atmosphere more active, contextual, and enjoyable.

The involvement of the canteen manager further strengthens the program. Students gain hands-on experience in customer service and transaction management. The school is also exploring partnerships with local MSMEs and universities to broaden insights and improve program quality.

With support from all stakeholders, SDN 1 Lhoksukon has succeeded in creating an entrepreneurial ecosystem that encourages students to think creatively, collaborate, and take initiative. These simple steps have laid a strong foundation for instilling entrepreneurial values from an early age.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study aims to describe and analyze how the entrepreneurial competence of school principals is implemented in shaping an entrepreneurial culture and creating entrepreneurial innovation in elementary schools, particularly at SD Negeri 11 Lhoksukon, SD Negeri 5 Lhoksukon, and SD Negeri 1 Lhoksukon in North Aceh Regency.

Based on observations, interviews, and documentation conducted during the study, several key conclusions were drawn:

1. The entrepreneurial competence of school principals serves as a primary driver in establishing an entrepreneurial ecosystem within the school environment. Principals act not only as administrative managers but also as innovative leaders who initiate entrepreneurship-based programs that engage the entire school community, including teachers, students, and local business partners.
2. Entrepreneurship programs have been successfully integrated into learning and school activities, such as school cooperatives, mini markets, local product creation projects, organic vegetable gardening, handicrafts from recycled materials, and arts programs rooted in local culture. These activities are not only economically oriented but also serve as contextual, enjoyable, and meaningful learning media for students.
3. Collaboration between schools and the local business sector has made a positive contribution to the development of student entrepreneurship. Through partnerships with local MSMEs and parents, schools are able to provide entrepreneurship training, access to raw materials, mentoring, and product marketing. This synergy enriches students' learning experiences and strengthens the school's relationship with the surrounding community.
4. Strong and inspiring school leadership fosters active participation from all teachers and staff. Principals encourage teachers to integrate entrepreneurial values into every subject area, both thematically and through extracurricular activities. Teachers play roles not only as educators but also as creative facilitators and mentors for students' entrepreneurial character development. Students show high enthusiasm and engagement in every entrepreneurial activity. They learn various aspects of entrepreneurship, including business planning, production, packaging, promotion, sales, and profit management. Through this process, students develop independence, creativity, responsibility, and a clearer future orientation.
5. Despite limited facilities and infrastructure, elementary schools are still able to cultivate an entrepreneurial culture effectively through a locally based, participatory, and gradual approach. This demonstrates that entrepreneurship education does not have to start with large-scale projects but can begin with simple activities that carry high educational value.

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