
POLICY IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TRANSFORMATIONAL SCHOOL PROGRAM IN PALEMBANG CITY

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the implementation of the Transformational School Program in nine schools in Palembang City, utilizing the policy implementation model developed by Van Meter and Van Horn. This model emphasizes six key variables: policy standards and objectives, available resources, characteristics of implementing agencies, inter-organizational communication and enforcement activities, socio-economic and political conditions, and the disposition (attitudes) of the implementers. A qualitative approach was employed through a case study method involving nine schools that have adopted the Transformational School Program. Data collection methods included in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis. The findings indicate that the implementation process is significantly influenced by the preparedness of human resources and the adequacy of infrastructure. Furthermore, effective communication among stakeholders, support from local government, and the commitment of school principals and teachers are critical to the program's success. However, several challenges were identified, such as insufficient training for educators and difficulties in adapting to the Merdeka Curriculum. The study concludes that the effectiveness of the Transformational School Program largely depends on strong coordination among stakeholders and sustained government support. It is recommended to enhance educators' competencies through continuous professional development, optimize resource utilization, and reinforce communication and policy evaluation mechanisms.

Keywords: Policy Implementation, Transformational School Program, Van Meter and Van Horn Model.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education plays a strategic role in enhancing the quality of human resources and strengthening national competitiveness. In response to this, the Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek), has launched a series of policies aimed at improving educational quality. One such initiative is the Transformational School Program, as outlined in the Ministerial Decree Number 371/M/2021. This program is designed to establish exemplary schools that serve as models for enhancing both learning quality and school management. Furthermore, the program seeks to drive holistic improvements in student learning outcomes encompassing both cognitive and non-cognitive domains by focusing on the development of competencies among school principals and teachers (Kemendikbudristek, 2021).

The Transformational School Program is designed to drive educational transformation through an approach based on building the capacity of principals, teachers and the entire education ecosystem. Transformational School Program emphasizes the implementation of a more flexible curriculum, competency-based learning, and the strengthening of a reflective culture in the school environment. Through this program, schools are expected to produce graduates who have global competence, competitiveness and strong character.

However, in its implementation, the Transformational School Program faces various challenges, such as the readiness of human resources, infrastructure, and adaptation to changes in curriculum and learning methods. Differences in social, economic and cultural conditions in each region are also factors that affect the effectiveness of the program's implementation. Previous studies have shown that the success of an education program depends

on the readiness of the school, the support of the local government, and the involvement of parents and the community (Sahlberg, 2011).

Although it has been implemented in various schools in Indonesia, the implementation of Transformational School Program has faced various challenges. For example, in a junior high school in Jember district, principals and teachers had difficulty in adapting a more flexible curriculum and implementing project-based learning, one of the main features of the program. In addition, limited facilities and infrastructure and low parental participation in supporting the changes were also obstacles faced by the school. On the other hand, there are also schools that have successfully implemented Transformational School Program. For example, an elementary school in Malang city showed a significant improvement in student learning outcomes after adopting the differentiated learning model promoted in this program. This success was supported by the visionary leadership of the principal, the commitment of teachers to innovate, and the full support of the school community.

Several previous studies have examined the effectiveness and challenges in implementing the Transformational Schools Program. For example, a research conducted by Sari & Nugroho (2022) found that the implementation of the program faced major obstacles in terms of the readiness of human resources and school infrastructure. The results showed that the success of the program relies heavily on the commitment of principals and teachers in adapting the new learning methods offered. Meanwhile, research by Rahman (2023) revealed that the mentoring and training provided in the Transformational School Program had a positive impact on improving teachers' competencies. However, there are still gaps in the utilization of technology as a learning tool, especially in areas with limited internet access. In addition, according to research by Putri et al. (2023), support from stakeholders such as the education office and parents plays a role in the successful implementation of this program. The study highlighted that schools that receive full support from the community tend to be more successful in implementing innovative learning strategies.

Given the phenomena described above, an in-depth analysis of the implementation of the Transformational School Program is essential to identify the factors that support or hinder its success, and to formulate relevant policy recommendations for improving future implementation. To achieve this, a comprehensive evaluation model is needed to understand the dynamics influencing the program's outcomes. One widely used model for analyzing policy implementation is the Van Meter and Van Horn model (1975), which highlights six key variables that determine the effectiveness of policy implementation. First, policy standards and objectives must be clearly defined and well understood by implementers. In the context of the Transformational School Program, these include goals such as improving learning quality, transforming school management, and strengthening the capacity of principals and teachers. Second, resources such as adequate funding, qualified educators, sufficient infrastructure, and access to technology are critical for supporting the implementation process. Third, inter-organizational communication and implementing activities require effective coordination among the Ministry of Education, regional education departments, school leaders, teachers, and the community. Without clear and continuous communication, implementation may face significant challenges. Fourth, the characteristics of implementing agencies, including organizational structure, leadership, and work culture, play a pivotal role; the leadership of principals and the professional disposition of teachers are particularly influential. Fifth, social, economic, and political conditions can either facilitate or constrain program success; regions with stable political environments and strong economic support are more likely to implement the program effectively than those facing instability or limited resources. Lastly, the disposition of implementers, referring to the attitudes, motivation, and commitment of principals and teachers, significantly affects implementation outcomes. When implementers possess a positive attitude and fully understand the program's goals, they are more likely to carry out the policy successfully. Thus, evaluating the Transformational School Program through this model offers a comprehensive understanding of the factors that shape its implementation and outcomes.

Through this model, this study aims to analyze the extent to which the implementation of the Transformational School Program has been in accordance with the standards set, as well as to identify the factors that hinder or support its success. Thus, the results of this study are expected to provide useful recommendations for policy makers in optimizing the implementation of the Transformational Schools Program at various levels of education.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Transformational School Program in Indonesia

Transformational School Program is an initiative of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology Republic of Indonesia to improve the quality of education through school transformation (Kemendikbudristek, 2021). This program aims to: 1) Improve student learning outcomes holistically, 2) Develop quality-oriented principal leadership, 3) Promote student-centered learning and 4) Create a collaborative school ecosystem. The program is based on various education policies and regulations, namely: 1) Law Number 20/2003 on the national education system, 2) Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Permendikbudristek) Number 22/2020 concerning the strategic plan of the Ministry 3) Decree of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology Number 371/M/2021 concerning the Transformational School Program and 4) Merdeka Belajar Program as the main philosophy in learning.

Transformational School Program has several interventions which are a series of efforts made to optimize the implementation of the program in selected schools (Kemendikbudristek, 2021). The intervention components are : 1) Consultative and asymmetric mentoring, 2) Capacity building for principals and teachers, 3) Learning with

new paradigm, 4) School digitalization, 5) Program funding from the government and 6) Collaboration with regional governments.

2.1 Relevant Theoretical Constructs

Some of the educational theories that support the research of the Transformational School Program include : constructivism theory (Piaget & Vygotsky, 1975 in Ndona & Gultom, 2024) which emphasizes experiential learning and social interaction. The Transformational School program prioritizes the role of the teacher as a facilitator who helps students reach their full potential through appropriate guidance. This theory then supports the student-centered learning initiated in the Transformational School Program. Vygotsky's constructivism teaches that students must actively construct their own knowledge. Transformational School Program implements a flexible and competency-based curriculum where students are encouraged to think critically and creatively and this is very relevant to the theory proposed by Piaget & Vygostky.

Furthermore, the Transformational School Program is built on the theory of organizational change (Lewin, 1951 in Gestalt, 2021). This theory explains the stages of school change in the implementation of the Transformational School Program that teaches awareness among stakeholders (principals, teachers, students and parents) about the need for change in the education system. Teachers and principals are encouraged to adopt new learning practices that are more effective, data-driven and collaborative.

2.2 Van Meter and Van Horn's Policy Implementation Model in Transformational School Program

Van Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) developed a policy implementation model that highlights six main variables that influence the success of policy implementation:

1) Policy Standards and Objectives

This relates to the clarity of policy objectives set by the government. In the context of the Mobilizing Schools Program, clear standards related to school transformation, improving teacher competence, and student learning outcomes are needed.

2) Resources

This relates to the availability of financial resources, human and technical resources. The implementation of the Transformational School Program requires support from the central government, local government and school in the form of funds, training and mentoring.

3) Characteristics of the Implementing Agencies

This relates to the structure, culture, and capabilities of the organization in implementing the policy.

4) Inter-Organizational Communication and Enforcement Activities

This relates to the coordination among the central government, local government, school in implementing the policy into good practice. A good communication mechanism between the ministry, regional education department, principals, and teachers is essential in Transformational School Program.

5) Social, Economic, and Political Conditions

This relates to external factors such as local stakeholders, community support, other related policies, as well as political and economic conditions are very influential on the successful implementation of the Transformational School Program policy.

6) Implementers' Attitudes and Responses/The Disposition of Implementer

This relates to the implementers' understanding and commitment to the Transformational School Program policy. Principals and teachers as the main implementers must have strong motivation and understanding of the Transformational School Program.

In the context of the Transformational School Program, this model helps identify constraints and opportunities in policy implementation, such as:

1) Implementation barriers such as lack of resources, resistance from implementers, and ineffective communication between the government and schools.

2) Supporting factors such as training, supervision, and policy support from the central and regional government. Research using the Van Meter and Van Horn model in analyzing the Transformational School Program can provide insight about the effectiveness of implementation and provide better policy recommendations.

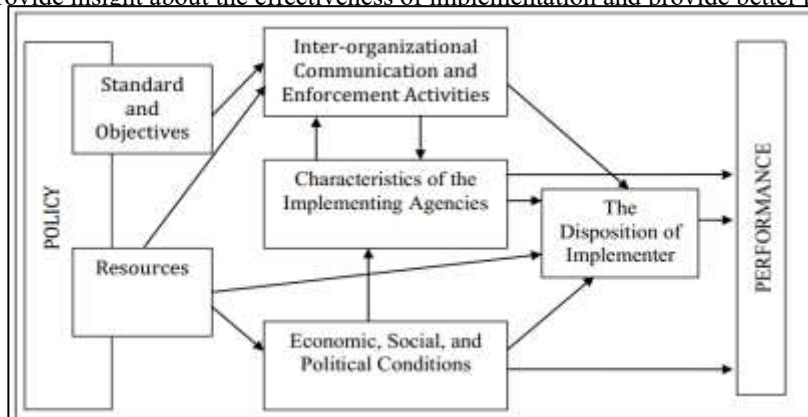


Figure 1: Van Meter and Van Horn's Model of Implementation (Rizki, 2013)

3. METHODOLOGY

This research used a qualitative approach with a case study method to analyze the policy implementation of the Transformational School Program in nine transformational schools in Palembang city. The research subjects/informants consisted of principals/vice principals, teachers, students, as well as other related parties who play a role in the implementation of the program such as the head of the regional education department and the head of the high school division at the regional education department of South Sumatera province. The table below shows the names of the transformational schools as the research subjects.

Table 1: Research Informant

Institution and School	Position of Research Informant	Total Number
Regional Education Department, South Sumatera Province	The head of education department	1
Regional Education Department, South Sumatera Province	Division head of high school	1
SMA Asyiyah 1 Palembang	Principal/vice principal, teachers	3
SMA Azzahra Palembang	Principal/vice principal, teachers	3
SMA LTI IGM Palembang	Principal/vice principal, teachers	3
SMA Maitreyawira Palembang	Principal/vice principal, teachers	3
SMA Negeri 10 Palembang	Principal/vice principal, teachers	3
SMA Negeri 12 Palembang	Principal/vice principal, teachers	3
SMA Negeri 17 Palembang	Principal/vice principal, teachers	3
SMA Negeri 18 Palembang	Principal/vice principal, teachers	3
SMA Negeri Sumatera Selatan	Principal/vice principal, teachers	3
Parents		5
Total Informan	34	

Source : Regional Education Department, South Sumatera Province

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, direct observation, and document analysis related to policy and program implementation. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences and challenges faced in implementing this program. Observations were conducted in the school environment to see firsthand how the policy was implemented in learning practices.

The data obtained were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques with the steps of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Source triangulation was used to increase data validity by comparing the results of interviews, observations and documents.

This study aims to understand the extent to which the Transformational School Program has been implemented in accordance with the policies set by the government and to identify the factors that support and hinder its implementation.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1) Policy Standards and Objectives

The results show that there are variations in the understanding of standards at the school level. Some schools have a good understanding of the policy standards while others still experience confusion regarding the interpretation of regulations. Schools with strong leadership and resources support tended to be more successful in achieving the policy objectives, while schools with limited budget and human resources experienced difficulties in implementing the program. In general, the objectives of the Transformational School Program have been well understood by the schools involved. However, in its implementation, there was a gap between the central policy and the specific needs at the school level, especially in terms of curriculum and learning methods. Schools in South Sumatra province have diverse backgrounds in terms of location, facilities, human resources and learning culture. Central policies sometimes cannot fully accommodate the specific needs of schools with different characteristics. Then, the different levels of readiness of teachers and educators. Teachers as the main implementers of policies often have different levels of understanding and skills in implementing the new curriculum and learning methods. The lack of intensive and continuous training can lead to less than optimal implementation, so that the expected policy does not go according to plan. One of the school principals pointed out that the lack of flexibility in policy implementation is also one of the inhibiting factors of the Transformational School Program because some education policies are top-down, where decisions are made at the central level without much consideration of the specific needs of schools, so there is no opportunity for schools to adjust policies according to their conditions, for example, schools in remote areas may have difficulty implementing technology-based learning methods due to limited infrastructure.

2) Resources

The results show that the implementation of the Transformational School Program faces challenges in terms of resource availability, especially in terms of educators and infrastructure. Some schools experience limited

supporting facilities, such as laboratories and learning technology devices. Not all schools have educators who are trained in the use of learning technology or laboratory management. Some educators are still reluctant to change from old methods to new curriculum-based methods and the update of technology-based learning tools is still uneven. This is due to the fact that not all teachers and principals have sufficient competencies to support the school improvement program. Another problem that arises is the lack of participation of parents and the community. Parents do not fully understand the concept of learning applied in the Transformational School Program, so they are less supportive of changes in their children's learning methods. Then, the synergy between schools and communities is still weak in supporting more innovative learning activities. The impact is that the implementation of the Transformational School Program is less than optimal and teachers have difficulty in implementing innovative learning methods due to the lack of resource support. Students do not get the maximum benefit from the program due to limited supporting facilities.

3) Characteristics of Implementer Agent

The results show that teachers and principals as implementer have a high commitment in running the Transformational School Program. However, variations in educational backgrounds and experiences result in different levels of readiness to implement the policy optimally. The Transformational School Program brings changes in the education system, and not all implementer agents in schools are ready or willing to adapt to these changes. Another issue perceived by school principals is the weak monitoring and evaluation from the regional education department. If there is no good monitoring and evaluation system from the regional education department, it is difficult to identify obstacles and provide appropriate solutions to improve the effectiveness of program implementation.

4) Inter-organizational Communication and Enforcement Activities

The results show that coordination among the central government, regional education department and schools is quite good but there are still obstacles in delivering information related to the latest policies. Socialization and training for teachers are often delayed, which affects the effectiveness of program implementation. The barriers mentioned are caused by several factors, including the lack of coordination between stakeholders. There is no effective communication forum among schools, the regional education department, regional government and other partners. Differences in understanding of the program's objectives and implementation strategies were also another factor. As stated by several school principals who were informal in this study, there are bureaucratic obstacles that are quite hindering. The long and hierarchical communication flow of the bureaucrats in the regions means that information is slow to be conveyed as well as regulations that hinder the flexibility of communication and decision-making.

5) Socio-Economic and Political Conditions

Interviews with research informants showed that the different socio-economic and political conditions in different regions affect the successful implementation of the Transformational School Program. Socially, schools in urban areas tend to be more adaptable than schools in remote areas that have limited access to technology and other resources. Not to mention the issue of resistance from school principals, teachers and education personnel who still do not understand the concept of the Transformational School Program, resulting in resistance to change. They still find it difficult to accept learning with a new paradigm. Then economically, there is an inequality of education facilities in each school. Not all schools have the same facilities such as the provision of free internet access, computers, and laboratories that support digital learning. And finally, the political situation of each region is very influential on the success of the Transformational School Program. Regional government do not understand the concept and flow of the Transformational School Program, they are still half-heartedly accepting the good response of the Transformational School Program and the most often experienced by principals and teachers is the lack of coordination among institutions is not optimal, for example coordination among the provincial government, regional education department and schools.

6) Implementers' Attitudes and Responses/The Disposition of Implementer

The results show that in general, teachers and principals have a positive attitude towards the Transformational School Program. However, there were concerns regarding the additional workload and adaptation to the evolving curriculum changes. Teachers are concerned about additional training and workshops, the preparation of new teaching tools, and increased administrative and academic responsibilities. In addition to their teaching duties, teachers must also handle various administrative tasks, such as report preparation, program documentation and periodic evaluations. This has the potential to increase their workload, which can reduce their time to focus on the learning process. This adds to their work outside of their already busy teaching hours. Furthermore, teacher interviews suggested that the curriculum in the Transformational School Program is dynamic and constantly evolving. Teachers have to constantly update their understanding of curriculum changes, adjust their teaching methods and develop appropriate teaching tools, which requires extra time and effort. Despite these challenges, many teachers remain positive as the program aims to improve the quality of learning. However, they hope for a better strategy in managing their workload and more concrete support so that the program can run effectively without overburdening them.

5. CONCLUSION

The Transformational School Program has had a positive impact on the transformation of education in high schools in Palembang city. The implementation of Transformational School Program has contributed to creating

a more innovative and enjoyable learning environment. Teachers have become more adaptive to students' needs, and the use of technology in learning has increased. In addition, students showed improvement in terms of learning independence and critical thinking skills.

However, for optimal implementation, improvements are needed in the aspects of coordination and communication, provision of resources, attitudes and responses of implementers and policy flexibility. Some of the obstacles faced in implementing this program include limited competent human resources, school infrastructure readiness, and resistance to change from some parties. In addition, there needs to be a closer synergy among schools, regional government and the community to support the sustainability of this program.

Thus, it is expected that this program can run more effectively and sustainably in improving the quality of education in Palembang city in particular. Overall, the Transformational School Program has great potential in improving the quality of education in Palembang city, but its success is highly dependent on the commitment of all parties in overcoming the existing challenges.

6. SUGGESTION/RECOMMENDATION

In order to improve the effectiveness of the implementation of the Transformational School Program, further research is needed on the factors that support and hinder the success of this program in various regions. Comparative studies among regions can provide insights into the best strategies that have been implemented as well as the obstacles faced by schools in implementing this program. In addition, research on the long-term impact on improving the quality of learning and teacher competence is also important to evaluate the overall effectiveness of this policy. With an in-depth study, it is hoped that the government can make more targeted policy adjustments to improve the sustainability and usability of the Transformational School Program in the future.

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