



EMPOWERMENT OF EQUALITY PROGRAM TUTORS IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND STUDENT COMPETENCIES (CASE STUDY IN SPNF SKB KOTA KEDIRI)

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Abstract

Empowerment is an effort to improve their abilities and potential, so that they can be empowered and independent. This research aims to identify the role of empowerment of equality education tutors in improving the quality of education and student competence in the Kediri City SKB. Using qualitative research methods with case study designs, this research focuses on the efforts made by SKB Kediri City in empowering tutors through various programs such as workshops, mock studies, and discussion forums (ASTINA). Data collection techniques with observation, interviews and documentation studies. The resource persons from this study were the Coordinator of the Equality Program SKB, the Head of School Administration, the Student Affairs section and the Tutor. The researcher also conducted a documentation study on the social media of the Kediri City SKB. The data analysis used is triangulation where data from various sources is compared. The results of the study show that the Kediri City SKB has succeeded in improving the competence of tutors through various training and development programs. In addition, this institution also implements internal and external quality assurance, as well as adopts flexible and inclusive learning approaches such as online learning, counseling, and the use of the Merdeka curriculum to improve student competence.

Keywords: Empowerment; quality of education; Non-Formal Education

1. Introduction

Education is the main pillar in building quality and competitive human resources. Educational institutions are categorized into three types, namely formal, informal, and informal. Non-formal education has a wider social scope than formal education, but it is currently starting to become the focus of the government's attention in terms of institutional management (Ahmad et al., 2022). Non-formal educational institutions are a type of education that is organized outside the formal education system and acts as a substitute or complement to formal education. Types of non-formal educational institutions include equality education, personality development, early childhood education (PAUD), skills and job training, and other programs that support formal education (Latifa & Pribadi, 2021). Education in Non-Formal Education Units (SPNF) organized by the regency/city local government which is the government's educational legal entity. SPNF is tasked with creating pilot programs in the field of non-formal education and developing teaching materials based on local content. This development is adjusted to the policies of the district/city education office and the local potential of each region (Darmawan et al., 2024).

The purpose of the Equality Program is to provide broad learning opportunities for people who drop out of school, so that they can improve their knowledge and skills to achieve an equivalent level of education in elementary, junior high, or high school, as well as continue

to higher education. This program is intended for those who are disadvantaged, have never gone to school, dropped out of school, or who want to improve their knowledge, including those who need special education services (Filiana & Rachmat, 2022). In the context of equality education, the role of teachers is the main key in creating an effective and quality learning process. Equality education teachers or so-called tutors not only serve as teachers, but also as facilitators, motivators, and agents of change that encourage the improvement of students' competencies. Therefore, the empowerment of equality education tutors is a strategic step to improve the quality of education and optimize the potential of students in facing global challenges. Through this effort, it is hoped that an education system that is inclusive, adaptive, and oriented towards holistic competency development will be created.

Quality schools are characterized by the existence of quality school resources, including professional human resources. Educators, as professionals, have an important role in planning and implementing the learning process, assessing learning outcomes, and providing guidance and training to students. Empowerment in the context of education, is an effective and efficient approach to optimize the performance of principals (as managers), teachers, and other staff. Empowering educators in schools aims to utilize their potential effectively and efficiently to achieve optimal outcomes, while creating a fun and conducive environment for the learning process. Therefore, tutors need to be empowered to the maximum in order to realize the desired goals and expectations in the world of education. (Manaf et al., 2016).

The right strategy in empowering educators will be a strong foundation to ensure that every student gets a quality education, so that they are ready to face challenges when they finish their education. Educator empowerment is not only limited to formal aspects, such as training, but also includes informal aspects, such as providing motivation and support in the school environment. This empowerment process has a significant impact on the quality of education in schools. Through empowerment, educators can gain new knowledge and skills, which allow them to overcome various problems that arise in the teaching and learning process in schools (Sumarni & Soleha, 2024).

Education is essential for every individual in the world, with the aim of improving the nation's intelligence and the quality of human resources, which ultimately affects the progress of life and the welfare of society. However, Indonesia still faces various education problems, one of which is the large number of cases of school dropouts. As a result, some people are unable to complete their education. At the same time, Suhendro (Nurhanipah & Khairunnisa, 2023) explained that the demands of the world of work and other requirements that require a certain level of education cause anxiety for people who lack adequate access or educational ability.

The quality of education according to Hadith and Nurhayati (Siahaan et al., 2023) is influenced by various factors, such as curriculum, education policies, educational facilities and infrastructure, the application of information and communication technology in the field of education, especially in teaching and learning activities. In addition, the use of innovative and modern educational measures, strategies, and approaches, supported by an effective evaluation system, adequate budget, professional management, and competent human resources (HR), are key factors in improving the quality of education. In addition, educators who are skilled, have adequate competence, experience, and professionalism also play an important role. An education system can be considered effective if all its supporting elements

function optimally. This includes teaching materials, learning approaches, school infrastructure, administrative support, and an environment that encourages students to thrive. The quality of education is also measured based on the achievements produced in a certain period. These results are not limited to academic achievements such as test scores, but also include non-academic achievements such as excellence in sports, the arts, or mastery of practical skills such as technology, engineering, or specific service skills. Thus, the success of education is holistic, reflecting the development of students as a whole. (Riyuzen, 2018).

Some previous research results propose that improving the quality of human resources, including principals, tutors, and staff, can be done through strengthening training programs held by the government for all educators and education personnel (Pangestu et al., 2021). Assurance and quality control of education is very important to improve the quality of education, both in the formal, non-formal, and informal sectors. The assumption that the quality of education only focuses on formal education is a misconception. Therefore, education managers outside the formal scope need to understand various efforts to improve the quality of education, including fulfilling accreditation supporting documents and taking other necessary steps (Saepudin et al., 2023). The interest in learning of students in equality programs tends to be low, because many prioritize careers over education. As a result, the rate of absenteeism in the classroom is high, which has an impact on the less effective learning process. Therefore, the role of tutors is very important to maximize the learning process and increase student engagement (Harahap et al., 2023).

Non-formal education plays an important role in overcoming the limitations of formal education through various non-formal efforts. Kediri City has a Learning Activity Studio, namely the Kediri City SKB which is managed by the Kediri City Education Office. UPT SPNF SKB Kediri City is one of the educational institutions that specializes in serving non-formal education. One of the services or programs contained in the SKB is the equality program of packages A, B, C. The problem that arises is the variety of competencies and backgrounds of students so that there are differences in receiving learning, in addition to the lack of human resources causing . The quality of education and the competence of students depends on the effectiveness of the institution in managing human resources (HR). The development of human resources (HR) needs to be aligned with the characteristics and potentials possessed by the surrounding environment. To create quality and competent human resources, it is necessary to empower the right educators in their programs. This aims to improve the quality of education as a whole. Therefore, this study aims to identify the empowerment of equality program tutors in improving the quality of education and student competence.

2. Method

Case study designs are used in this qualitative research. Syampadzi (Assyakurrohim et al., 2022) explained that the purpose of the case study is to research in depth the background, current conditions, and interactions that occur between the environment, individuals, groups, institutions, and society. The design was chosen to identify the empowerment of tutors in improving the quality of education and student competence at UPT SPNF SKB Kediri City in February-March 2025. This study uses observation, interview, and documentation study techniques as data collection methods. The resource persons from this study were the Coordinator of the Equality Program SKB, the Head of School Administration, the Student Affairs section and the Tutor.

Interviews conducted by researchers with educators and education staff were conducted to find out the programs that had been implemented. The researcher also observed learning activities and documentation studies through social media followed by recording activities. Recording is the process of recording events using field records to record every detail and variation and look for interesting phenomena (Hasanah, 2017). The data obtained was then analyzed using triangulation techniques to identify tutor empowerment to improve the quality and competence of students. Denzin (Helpiastuti et al., 2025) explained that Triangulation is a validation method that is carried out by comparing data from various sources or using various data collection techniques, such as interviews, observations, and document analysis, to ensure the accuracy and reliability of information. The purpose of triangulation is to increase the validity and reliability of research results.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Result

The results of the study show that the Keidiri City SKB empowerment program is effective in improving tutor professionalism. This activity helps to improve the quality of learning and supports the implementation of the curriculum well. Tutors involved in forums such as ASTINA and the learning community also strengthen cooperation and creativity. The role of tutors as facilitators in pedagogical, psychological and cognitive aspects is essential in creating effective learning. The empowerment of tutors also affects the quality of education in the Kediri City SKB because it can provide the quality of learning according to the needs of students. In addition, internal and external parties also always carry out quality assurance to get good feedback from the community and meet the needs of education customers

Thus, the empowerment of tutors plays a very important role in improving the quality of education and the competence of students. Qualified educators, have competence, and good professionalism can help create an effective and efficient learning process. This not only encourages the improvement of students' academic competence, but also develops social, emotional, and critical skills needed to face challenges in the global era. Thus, the role of competent and professional tutors is the main key in realizing quality and sustainable education.

3.2 Discussion

3.2.1 Empowerment of SKB Tutors in Kediri City

Empowerment is one of the important components in the human resource development process, especially through an employee involvement approach. This is done by giving greater authority and adequate responsibility to each individual, so that they have the space to complete their tasks independently and participate in the decision-making process. Thus, empowerment not only increases employee capacity, but also encourages a deeper sense of belonging and involvement in the organization (Ulfatin & Teguh, 2016).

SKB Kediri City has organized many empowerment programs for tutors, such as workshops, and mock studies. Teacher empowerment plays an important role in encouraging student creativity in the learning environment. In this case, the active involvement of teachers

in various professional development activities, such as seminars and workshops, shows that cooperation between teachers and the exchange of ideas on a regular basis can significantly increase students' creativity (Sari & Iqbal, 2022). The term "workshop" is taken from English and means workshop, which describes an activity where a number of people gather to discuss and find solutions to a certain problem (Karsiyem, 2023). Several workshop programs organized by SKB Kediri City such as PTK quality improvement workshops, workshops on improving competencies and learning methods, digital marketing and the creation of google classrooms as well as lesson plans and teaching modules. These programs have proven to be effective in improving the skills of tutors in learning and improving the quality of education. SKB Kediri City also organizes a mock study program to see the system, and the performance of other institutions to improve the quality of education. This is in line with research (BS et al., 2023) that the mock study conducted focuses more on the readiness of teachers as educators. Through this activity, teachers obtain provisions to prepare learning administration in order to support the implementation of the curriculum.

As learning facilitators, teachers play a key role in guiding learners through effective pedagogical approaches. The teacher's ability to present the material clearly and systematically is a determining factor for the success of the teaching and learning process. This facilitative role requires teachers to not only master academic content, but also the skills to convey knowledge in a way that is easy to understand and engaging for students. In addition, teachers also need to facilitate the psychological aspects of students, both inside and outside the classroom, especially in handling problems or creating calm during the learning process related to students' psychological conditions (Santoso et al., 2021). This is in line with the way tutors approach students on how to behave and have good ethics. Finally, teachers must also be able to facilitate the cognitive aspect of students, namely helping students to think and reason easily during the learning process.

The main function of education is to cultivate potential and shape human personality. On the other hand, teachers play a central role in the process of implementing education. In order to improve the quality of education, it is necessary to continue to improve the professionalism of teachers. One of the development methods applied in Indonesia is through teacher working group meetings (Wiyono & Triwiyanto, 2018). From the results of the interview, it is known that there is an ASTINA forum (National Equality Education Tutor Association) that discusses the latest techniques in learning and government policies related to education. This forum is a forum for tutors to discuss, exchange ideas, and improve their competence in facing the ever-evolving educational challenges. A learning community can be defined as a group of individuals who have common goals and interests to increase knowledge, develop knowledge, and improve attitudes and behaviors through a collaborative and mutually supportive learning process (Sekar & Kamarubiani 2021). The Equality Education program at SKB Kediri City has a learning community between tutors where discussions are related to student problems, tutor professionalism in teaching and appropriate approaches and for students.

3.2.2 Tutor Empowerment to Improve the Quality of Education

Quality in non-formal education is an important aspect to pay attention to, this serves to manage the quality of educational institutions and increase competitiveness (Putri & Supriyanto, 2023). Quality assurance activities in each educational institution aim to monitor,

evaluate, and review the quality of existing education. The quality assurance system acts as a foundation in building the confidence of stakeholders, be it parents, institutions, or the wider community. The trick is to verify that all components of education, including resources, learning implementation, and final results are in accordance with the agreed quality criteria (Ula & Zainabiyi, 2024). Quality assurance at the Kediri City Decree is internal and external. Internal quality assurance is carried out by the Principal and tutors. The implementation of Integrated Quality Management (MMT) that focuses on continuous improvement should be carried out at every stage of activities and take place consistently. Improvements can be implemented through an internal quality management cycle, starting from setting standards to evaluation that has been pursued by the School (Sarvitri et al., 2020).

The Principal of SKB Kediri City plays a role in ensuring internal quality by evaluating tutors regarding professionalism in teaching and supervising related to curriculum implementation, if there are deviations, the principal will give directions. This is in line with research (Sarvitri et al., 2020) which explains that the involvement of the highest leadership in schools, in this case the principal, is clearly visible. This can be seen from the active role of the principal in various meetings, where he consistently gives directions to teachers and other education personnel to continue to make improvements to support the success of students. In addition, the principal also provides motivation and support to the tutors to always provide the best service. Meanwhile, tutors play a role in providing feedback to peers formed in the internal learning community. Cheung & Tsui (Noly et al., 2022) explain that. The purpose of external quality assurance is to provide assistance, compile recommendations, and provide suggestions to achieve excellence, relevance, and diversity. In addition, this effort also aims to ensure smooth procedures, accountability, and integrity in external quality assurance institutions. The implementers of the process (assessors) must have adequate competence. External quality assurance of the Kediri City SKB is carried out by the Education Office, Assessors, and the Financial Supervisory Agency.

The program is the first element that must exist for the creation of an activity. Based on the results of the research (Akmaluddin & Mutiawati, 2018) an effective principal program is one of the key factors in improving the quality of graduates and the success of education in schools. Graduate quality improvement programs require a holistic approach that includes improving the quality of teaching through teacher training, principal leadership development, the implementation of transparent management, and collaboration with internal and external parties. In addition, the importance of delegating tasks responsibly also encourages the creation of an effective education system. By integrating these various elements ranging from human resource development, good governance, to the partnership network of educational institutions, it can continuously improve the competence of graduates according to the demands of the times. Thus, school principals can create an educational environment that supports quality improvement in a sustainable manner. The program on equality education at SKB Kediri City in improving the quality of human resources in addition to workshops and imitation studies held for tutors, students at SKB Kediri City are also equipped with skills such as sewing, Make Up Artist, Computer, Barbershop and Culinary or cooking. From some of these skills, students can choose one skill that they are interested in and want to learn more deeply, so that when they graduate from Equality Education, they can become graduates who have skills that can be useful for them in daily life or even useful to improve their welfare according to the skills acquired.

Teachers' participation in conferences opens up opportunities to increase their insight and competence. This activity is a means for educators to get motivation, update the latest information, and build professional networks with peers. Thus, teachers can master new skills, find solutions to various problems that arise, and increase their capacity to support the quality of education. Thus, conferences are an important forum for teacher professional development (Sumarni & Soleha, 2024). The success of teacher empowerment in SKB Kediri City in improving the quality of education has an impact on the way tutors handle students. Tutors get to know more deeply about the characteristics of students. Furthermore, in the implementation of learning with limited human resources at the Kediri City SKB, tutors can still overcome this. In addition, tutors also experience an increase in skills, where every time they complete the workshop they will get a certificate. The new knowledge gained from the workshop will be applied in learning.

One of the indicators of the success of the implementation of Integrated Quality Management (MMT) is the quality of learning. The school strives to improve the quality of learning by preparing a curriculum that meets standards, adequate facilities and infrastructure to support the success of learning activities, as well as competent teachers and education personnel. The learning process is also designed to support the achievement of learning objectives. However, MMT demands more than just meeting these standards, because MMT focuses on customer satisfaction, namely students, not just meeting the target of principals, teachers, committees, or parents. Therefore, the expected quality of learning is more personal and can vary according to the needs of each student. To achieve this, hard work and collaboration from all parties, both teachers and students are needed (Sarvitri et al., 2020). Therefore, student feedback to tutors is also very important in the learning process, with this the tutors will know what kind of techniques or ways of learning are well received and attract students' interest. This is in accordance with the vision of the Kediri City Decree, which is to create quality and excellent schools in service.

3.2.3 Tutor Empowerment to Improve Learners' Competencies

The teacher's understanding of the students' background, including family conditions, economic status, interests, and other aspects, also influences the process of preparing learning system planning. The diversity of backgrounds and characteristics of students requires educators to design learning processes that are individual and adaptive. Teachers need to develop learning strategies that consider the unique aspects of each student, including their learning style, level of understanding, interests, and sociocultural background. This personalization approach allows for the creation of a more relevant and effective learning experience for all students in heterogeneous classrooms (Noor et al., 2022). The background of students in non-formal education is very diverse and affects the acceptance of learning. Economic factors, such as the need to work or long school distances, often hinder their concentration and attendance. Family problems, such as parental conflict or lack of support, can affect a student's psychological state, while juvenile delinquency such as bullying reduces confidence and motivation to learn. In addition, differences in religious beliefs and health problems are also challenges that need to be overcome to create an effective learning process.

Educators at the Kediri City Learning Activity Studio (SKB) To overcome this challenge, apply a flexible and inclusive approach. They provide various forms of support, such as online learning, counseling services, outing classes, and visiting programs, designed to help students

feel more supported. In addition, tutors at SKB Kediri City are also equipped with special training to take an in-depth approach to students. In learning activities, SKB Kediri City uses the Merdeka curriculum. The Independent Curriculum is a flexible curriculum framework, designed to improve the quality of learning by providing freedom and meaningful value to students and teachers. This flexible curriculum is an approach in curriculum development that allows the learning process to be carried out in a more creative, interesting, and able way to adapt to various situations and conditions (Tunas & Pangkey 2024). The independent curriculum is in line with the needs of students at SKB Kediri City because the learning model can be used in various situations and conditions such as online learning needs for students who cannot attend class. Online learning is an effective solution that is able to overcome various space and time limitations in education, while answering the special challenges of equality education such as the diversity of students' backgrounds, differences in levels of understanding, high mobility, and varied learning needs. The flexibility of the online learning system allows adjustments to the unique characteristics of equality education students, so that the learning process can continue to run optimally despite the various challenges that exist (Widodo et al., 2022).

One form of training held is to present expert resource persons in the field of psychology to provide advice and strategies in dealing with and approaching students who experience problems. Furthermore, the outing class organized by SKB Kediri City included visits to the industrial and business world, such as the large company Pocari Sweat, a garment factory in Tulungagung, and a visit to museums. Based on the results of the research (Aditama et al., 2020) this activity is designed to provide a direct learning experience outside the classroom environment, improving the quality of learning and the quality of education as well as the image of the school. Meanwhile, the visiting program involves a tutor visit to the student's home. This program is carried out to take a humanist approach and provide special support to students who are less motivated in the learning process.

Teachers who apply innovation in learning play an important role in creating a dynamic, engaging, and creative learning atmosphere. This approach encourages students to actively participate in the learning process, so that teaching and learning activities become more effective and meaningful. With an innovatively designed learning environment, learners can gain a more immersive and well-rounded learning experience. On the other hand, teachers' efforts in innovating not only benefit students, but also become a vehicle for teachers themselves to continue to develop and perfect their professional competencies. Thus, learning innovation creates a dual benefit – improving the quality of learning while honing the skills of educators (Hapsari & Fatimah., 2021). Some of the teaching innovations carried out by tutors are to increase students' active involvement with the reward & punishment system, providing material visually with powerpoint, conducting direct question and answer interactions to find out students' trust. Dewi (Nurlaila et al., 2023) explained that the reward & punishment system is one of the planning strategies that can be used by educators to increase students' motivation in learning. This concept is a form of positive reinforcement derived from behavioristic learning theory. This is done by tutors to stimulate students to think critically and will get points as an activeness value. The use of visual media such as images, videos, and animations in learning has been proven to be effective in increasing students' understanding and interest in learning. This media is able to present visually complex material that is easier to understand, while creating a more interesting and interactive learning experience. Visual learning strategies not only help the delivery of abstract concepts become concrete, but also strengthen

students' memory and active involvement in the learning process (Amanda, 2024). This is in line with the results of observations and research documentation studies, where the visual presentation of material with powerpoint attracts students to be active and pay more attention to the material.

School accountability is the obligation to provide accountability for a mandate or responsibility given to related parties, especially to the party who gives the mandate (Fiandi, 2023). SKB Kediri City facilitates students to develop their skills, including sewing, Make Up Artist, Computer, Barbershop and Culinary or cooking. This program is useful for the career development of learners after they graduate. The existence of a humanist approach between students and tutors makes it easier for schools to conduct Tracer Studies. Tracer study is a study conducted to trace the footprint of graduates from an educational institution. This study has an important role because it functions as a tool for evaluating the performance of the institution which can be used to improve the quality of education (Susilawati et al., 2019).

4. Conclusion

SKB Kota Kediri has made various efforts to empower tutors through programs such as workshops, mock studies, and discussion forums (ASTINA) to improve the pedagogical, psychological, and creative competence of tutors in supporting learning. This program includes improving the quality of PTK, curriculum development, as well as technology and practical skills training. In addition, SKB Kota Kediri implements internal and external quality assurance to ensure the quality of education, while adopting flexible and inclusive approaches such as online learning, counseling, and the use of the Merdeka curriculum to address the diversity of students' backgrounds. Learning innovations, such as reward & punishment systems and visual media, as well as humanist approaches, encourage an interactive learning environment that focuses on individual needs. As a result, tutors are increasingly able to understand the characteristics of students, overcome learning challenges, and improve the overall quality of education, in line with the vision of SKB Kota Kediri to create quality and excellent educational services.

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