



STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING TEACHER WORK ETHIC AT ISLAMIC JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL AL-ULUM TERPADU MEDAN

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Article Info

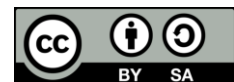
Keywords:

Improvement, Strategy, Teacher Work Ethic

ABSTRACT

Teachers' work ethic plays a vital role in enhancing standards of education, especially in creating a meaningful learning process and contributing to the formation of students' character. This research seeks to explore the leadership approach in encouraging the improvement of teachers' work ethic at SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan. The research employed a qualitative descriptive method via interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings show that the strategies implemented include routine training, providing appreciation, fostering discipline, a participatory approach in decision-making, and creating an Islamic and comfortable work environment. The success of this strategy is supported by the availability of adequate facilities, synergy between teachers, and full support from the principal. The obstacles that arise include work saturation, low motivation of some teachers, and limited facilities. The strategy has been proven to be able to increase teacher enthusiasm, discipline, and professionalism. The study concluded that participatory leadership and a supportive work environment are important factors in the success of improving work ethic. The researcher recommends periodic evaluation, strengthening technology-based training, and expanding similar research in other schools to broaden the understanding and application of strategies to improve work ethic as a whole.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The main basis for creating high-quality human resources is education, and in Indonesia, educators play an important role in helping the next generation develop moral character and academic intelligence. In essence, education is a deliberately planned process that helps students achieve maturity by encouraging personal growth and personality development. Improving someone's quality of life is its main goal. In the education system, educators have a significant impact on the progress of students. Therefore, at every level of education, having qualified and experienced professors in their specializations is very important. Because teachers play an important role in initiatives to improve educational standards, it is crucial that their skills and competencies are continuously developed so they can perform their jobs as well as possible [1].

According to the National Education System Law No. 20/2003 Article 1 Paragraph 1, it states that education is a planned process to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential to possess religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and skills

necessary for themselves, society, nation, and state [2]. The government is expected to provide education well based on good spirit and work ethic through the implementation of the National Education System. However, in reality, building a work ethic in the educational environment turns out to be more difficult than imagined [3].

Because the success of an organization is largely based on the work ethic of its employees, work ethic is an important factor in determining the quality of performance. In terms of task completion, a strong work ethic is demonstrated by a positive attitude, discipline, perseverance, hard work, honesty, simplicity, kindness, loyalty, creativity, innovation, and the capacity to work successfully and efficiently. A teacher with a strong work ethic must be able to perform their duties to the best of their ability and truly contribute to the progress of the school. The principal must carry out their leadership role as best as possible to achieve this. Teachers with a work ethic are committed to fulfilling their responsibilities fully and with enthusiasm.

The enhancement of the professionalism spirit among teachers at SMP Islam Al Ulum Terpadu is very important to maintain the quality of education. As a school that combines religious and academic values, teachers with a strong work ethic are needed. The work ethic of teachers plays a significant role in achieving educational goals. A strong work ethic reflects commitment and responsibility in teaching. This also has a positive impact on student motivation and achievement. Therefore, strategies are needed to improve teachers' work standards. This step is important for the advancement and quality of sustainable education.

Efforts to improve the quality of education demand the presence of educators who can perform their duties to the fullest and professionally. Therefore, it is important to develop human resources with appropriate skills and qualifications, in line with the challenges of the external environment in an increasingly competitive globalization era. The demand for innovative, creative, and adaptable labor is also increasing [4].

SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan, like other educational institutions, faces challenges in maintaining and improving the work ethic of its teachers. In practice, teachers often face heavy workloads, which can affect their performance and have a negative impact on the quality of teaching and student development. To address this challenge, an appropriate approach is needed to encourage the improvement of teachers' work ethic. The implementation of effective and well-planned strategies will help teachers work with greater dedication and responsibility, thereby enabling the educational goals at SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan to be achieved to the fullest extent.

The importance of initiatives to improve teacher performance has also been emphasized by several previous studies. One of them, conducted by Abdul Mun'im et al., examined how three aspects of work ethics—quality planning, quality improvement, and quality control—can enhance the work morale of teachers at MTS NU Banat Kudus [5]. In line with those findings, Reni Marta Yuniar et al. stated that the performance improvement of educators is greatly determined by the leadership style of the school principal, as good leadership can inspire teachers to perform their best and enhance teaching standards [6]. However, Refi Syahputra and Baginda emphasized that the key to strengthening work morale is the approach of educational leaders in understanding the conditions where teachers and other staff work. It is impossible for instructors to perform their duties as effectively as possible if the working conditions are not managed well.⁷

Improving the work ethic of teachers is a very important aspect for the sustainability of progress and the achievement of goals at SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan in providing quality Islamic learning services. The focus of this study is to thoroughly explore the methods used by school leaders to encourage teachers' work ethic and to identify the elements that facilitate and hinder its implementation. This study also assesses how well these strategies work to motivate teachers in performing their jobs.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

Based on field data, this study uses a descriptive qualitative strategy to understand social phenomena in detail. Located at Jl. Tuasan No. 35, Sidorejo Hilir Village, Medan Tembung District, Medan City, North Sumatra 20222, SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan serves as the research location. The principal and educators who contribute to the efforts to improve teachers' work ethic become the subjects of the research.

Interviews with the principal and teachers, direct field observations, and the review of related documents are some of the data collection methods used in this research. Three steps are used in the data analysis process: summarizing data to eliminate irrelevant information, organizing data in a structured manner for easy understanding, and drawing conclusions and verifying them [8]. To ensure the validity of the data, the

triangulation method is used, which involves comparing information from various sources and different times. Improving data validity is useful to ensure that the study findings are truly conducted accurately and can be accounted for [9]

The truth of the data in this research is tested using confirmation techniques from various information sources obtained from different informants. Verification is conducted by utilizing additional data beyond the primary data as a comparative tool, in order to ensure the accuracy and truthfulness of the information that has been collected.

3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Strategies Implemented by the School to Improve Teacher Work Ethos at SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan

At SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan, the students' work ethic plays a crucial role in fostering their academic success and character development. Teachers with a high work ethic will prepare materials, teach enthusiastically, and provide the best guidance. Students who grow up in an environment with a strong work culture will become accustomed to being disciplined, responsible, and persistent.

Basically, work ethic is a manifestation of high moral principles. According to KBBI, "work ethic" is defined as the spirit or distinctive character of a group, derived from the word "ethics" [10]. In the journal by Yunni Rusmawati D.J., Sinamo states that work ethic involves positive actions in the workplace, based on cooperation, belief, and commitment to the work paradigm. Meanwhile, Mathis and Jackson explain that work ethic encompasses a person's entire personality, how they express, perceive, and give meaning to things, which drives actions to achieve optimal results [11].

Thus, work ethic can be understood as a series of behaviors in the workplace that reflect driving values, goals to be achieved, and encompass basic character, mindset, ethical guidelines, moral norms, and behavioral rules. This concept involves various important aspects, such as reliability, initiative, commitment, and a professional attitude in carrying out tasks.

It is important to implement methods that can enhance the work ethic of teachers to strengthen the educational environment at SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan. In addition to improving the quality of teaching, this action will help students develop stronger character and strengthen the bonds among all stakeholders in the educational process. In the end, these efforts will help the school achieve its vision and goals by creating a generation of extraordinary and honorable individuals.

The principal is one of the individuals who can help implement the school's programs in a way that aligns with the planned vision, mission, and systematic, sustainable direction of the institution's achievements. The positive traits possessed and applied by each person in their work activities are referred to as work ethic [12].

Leaders who can create a supportive work environment will be more effective in addressing workplace issues. Job satisfaction becomes an important factor that drives overall employee performance improvement. Every employee expects their workplace to meet their living needs, which serves as motivation to deliver their best performance. When job satisfaction is achieved, it positively impacts employee performance and encourages them to continuously improve the quality of their work. In the end, this will contribute to an improvement in the quality of work results [13].

In the book by Yusuf Hadijaya titled "Formulating Strategies for Effective Educators" Mulyasa emphasizes that the plan needs to outline the quality of target stages, the form of activities, as well as the implementers involved in carrying them out, the time and location of the activities, and the funding requirements. This can help schools and madrasahs better explain their goals to improve educational standards by enhancing the professionalism of school principals and gaining moral and financial support from the government and parents. By examining the various problems and obstacles present, it is necessary to consistently and systematically improve the professionalism of madrasa heads [14].

Based on an interview with the Principal of SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan, the strategy to improve teachers' work ethic includes regular training for teachers and educational staff as well as the development of teachers' competencies. The school values young teachers who are proficient in technology and continues to pay attention to senior teachers with experience. Collaboration between junior and senior teachers is highly emphasized. In addition, the school awards outstanding teachers with prizes, emphasizing the importance of giving appreciation alongside sanctions to motivate teachers. This strategy is a sustainable strategic step to achieve

excellent education in accordance with the school's vision and mission. This also supports the achievement of the school's long-term goals in producing a generation that is competent and of good character.

The school organizes training in collaboration with the education office, which has a positive impact on the work ethic and competence of the teachers. The school also invites motivators to encourage the comprehensive self-development of teachers. The training materials, tailored to needs, include curriculum understanding and enhanced cooperation among teachers. Interactive training with educational games successfully boosted the enthusiasm and strengthened the cohesion among educators. Teachers also actively participate in training from the education office, with the hope that the results can be maximally applied in teaching. This program plays an important role in improving the quality of teaching and building a positive work culture in the school. In addition, this training also supports the achievement of long-term goals in improving the quality of education at SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan.

The main role of the principal is to enhance the work ethic of teachers through structured and systematic planning. Thorough planning ensures that the steps taken have clear objectives, effectively utilize resources, and achieve optimal results. These principles allow for the formation of a solid foundation for the development of a consistent work ethic with a holistic approach, which will benefit the school. To ensure that achievements proceed as smoothly as possible, the principal must set goals that align with field demands [15]

The principal of SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan always coordinates with the vice principal in decision-making. Decisions are not made unilaterally, but rather through monthly meetings that involve the entire staff. In the meeting, the principal presented the program and targets and requested input from the teachers. The principal values the perspectives of experienced senior teachers. The approach taken is participatory, not authoritarian. Decisions are made together after reaching an understanding among the teachers. This supports the success of the program to improve teachers' work ethic and the quality of education at the school.

The principal of SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan is responsible for maintaining the discipline and motivation of teachers to enhance their work ethic. Discipline is important because teachers serve as role models for students. The principal supervises the teachers' discipline through coordination with the Vice Principal for Curriculum. The majority of teachers are disciplined, but some are not consistent. The presence of teachers is regulated by the foundation with an applicable sanction system. Supervision and enforcement of rules are expected to enhance teachers' motivation and work ethic. This discipline is expected to create a productive work environment and have a positive impact on the school's progress.

The role of leaders is very important in providing guidance and solutions to address various problems faced by the community. In line with that, the work ethic emphasizes that each individual with expertise in their respective fields contributes substantially to addressing and resolving social challenges [16].

In implementing the work ethic improvement strategy at SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan, the main challenge comes from differing opinions among the teachers. To address this, the principal took a personal approach by directly dialoguing with the relevant teachers to understand the issues and seek solutions. Solid teamwork is essential to achieve success and progress together.

A strong work ethic among teachers has a significant impact on student learning outcomes and the development of a supportive learning environment. Disciplined, responsible, and enthusiastic teachers will help students develop their character. In addition to improving student learning outcomes, a strong work ethic boosts public trust and enhances the school's reputation. Over time, this will solidify the position of SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan as a leading Islamic educational institution that produces generations of educated and honorable individuals.

Supporting and Hindering Factors in Improving Teacher Work Ethos at SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan

The improvement of teachers' work ethic at SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan depends on the school's ability to manage various supporting factors, such as the work environment, facilities, and the provision of appreciation. If obstacles are not addressed properly, educational goals are difficult to achieve. Therefore, collaboration among all elements of the school is very important to build a solid and sustainable work ethic.

The work environment consists of physical and non-physical (psychological) aspects that need to be balanced by the organization. This balance is important to maintain productivity and cooperation between employees and management. Neglecting one aspect can reduce work efficiency and cause waste of time and energy. Work ethic can also be improved through the instillation of religious values. Religion as a guiding

principle shapes responsibility and dedication in work. A high work ethic is reflected in professionalism and work spirit. Therefore, a supportive work environment and religious values are key in building a strong work ethic [17].

Based on an interview with the Principal of SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan, a clean, comfortable, and Islamic school environment greatly supports the improvement of teachers' work ethic. The harmonious relationship among teachers and the support from the leadership also encourage enthusiasm and discipline. Islamic culture strengthens professionalism and sincerity in work, positively impacting the quality of education and student character. As a full-day school, facilities such as air conditioning, fans, and projectors in every classroom create a comfortable learning atmosphere. A good environment and facilities encourage teachers to teach more effectively, thereby improving the quality of learning.

The principal creates a positive atmosphere at the school by being kind to the teachers and building a comfortable and respectful work environment. Appreciation is prioritized over punishment to maintain motivation. The principal also supports teachers' creativity by giving them the freedom to develop their competencies, such as organizing competitions or student training. The main focus is to support the continuous professional development of teachers.

Human resources at all levels contribute to the success of the organization. If all teachers work according to the required standards and have a proper understanding of the concepts of work environment, work ethic, and work motivation, then their work will have superior and reliable quality. Because one of the most important factors in evaluating whether a job is successful or not is the performance of the teacher [18].

According to findings from a conversation with the Head of SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan, the development of teachers' work spirit is shaped by various aspects, including a decent salary, as it can encourage educators to improve the quality of their work. In addition, supporting facilities, such as comfortable desks, chairs, projectors, air conditioning, and suitable places of worship, are very important for creating comfort for teachers. A conducive work environment, where there is mutual respect and no emotional pressure, also greatly influences the morale and performance of teachers. The principal is expected to create a balance between discipline and appreciation to support the smooth running of the educational institution's programs and a conducive, efficient work environment that supports teachers' achievements.

Factors that hinder the work ethic of teachers at SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan include a lack of development enthusiasm among some teachers, influenced by mindsets or habits that have been formed since the beginning of their teaching careers. Some teachers are satisfied with the current situation and are reluctant to keep up with the times. In addition, the boredom after years of teaching also becomes a challenge, causing them to lose the enthusiasm to attend training or seek more innovative teaching methods. Nevertheless, this principal has implemented self-development exercises and training programs to enhance teachers' motivation and performance. Another inhibiting factor is the limited facilities and infrastructure that do not fully meet the standards, although the existing facilities are quite adequate. However, with strong leadership support, the right approach, and a positive work environment, these issues can be overcome, encouraging teachers to work with greater enthusiasm and responsibility.

A strong work ethic requires someone to understand the relationship between work and their entire life perspective. This life perspective helps someone understand the meaning and purpose of life. In other words, if someone's job does not mean anything to them and is not explicitly or implicitly related to a larger life goal, they will find it difficult to work with full dedication [19].

To address the obstacles to the work ethic of educators at SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu, the school is implementing a direct approach with teachers, encouraging them to continuously improve their competencies, especially in the use of learning technology. The principal emphasized the importance of skill development to keep up with the times and the needs of the students. In addition, improvements to facilities and infrastructure continue to be made, albeit not yet perfect, by utilizing the available budget. Effective communication between leaders and teachers is very important for solving problems. With open and respectful communication, it is hoped that a comfortable work environment will be created, supporting the improvement of work ethic.

The Effectiveness of Strategies Implemented to Improve Teacher Work Ethos at SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan

The work attitude of teachers is an important element in improving the quality of education. A good work ethic demonstrates the dedication and responsibility of teachers. Therefore, the effectiveness of the work ethic improvement strategy at SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan needs to be measured systematically, utilizing indicators that reflect positive changes in the attitudes, actions, and performance of teachers.

From the findings of interviews conducted by the researchers with the principal of SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu, the evaluation of the effectiveness of the teacher work ethic improvement strategy was carried out in a gradual and structured manner. The evaluation process is based on the results of the implemented strategy, which is then reported and coordinated with the principal and the curriculum deputy to ensure its alignment with the established targets. The success of the strategy is measured through the achievement of the program that has been previously designed. As an illustration, in the one-year one-juz tahfiz program, if the target is not fully achieved by all students, it becomes a basis for evaluating the performance of the respective teacher.

Based on the evaluation, deficiencies were found in the implementation of teaching by the teachers, both in terms of methods, approaches, and the ability to manage the class and deliver the tahfiz material. For improvement, it is necessary to consider steps such as bringing in external tahfiz instructors. The evaluation also includes an assessment of the teachers' involvement in self-development. Teachers who are less active will receive supervision to ensure that the learning aligns with the curriculum. With this indicator, the school can evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy to improve teachers' work ethic and make adjustments if necessary.

According to the research by Reska Agusnawati et al., strategy evaluation is crucial for continuous performance monitoring and for aiding the decision-making process to achieve long-term goals. To ensure that the approach remains relevant and effective in responding to dynamics, strategy evaluation includes tasks such as examining underlying assumptions, comparing anticipated and actual results, and implementing corrective actions [20].

Based on an interview with one of the teachers at the SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan institution, the steps taken to improve work ethic have proven effective in enhancing the knowledge and competence of the teachers. Facing the development of the times, education must adapt to the digital era, which requires teachers to leave behind old teaching methods and switch to modern approaches. The principal plays a crucial role in formulating policies that meet the demands of the times, such as digital technology-based training to enhance teachers' capacities. Traditional one-way teaching methods are considered ineffective, especially at the junior high school level, which requires a more interactive and creative approach. By using digital technology, learning becomes more collaborative and flexible, in line with the characteristics of the current generation. Overall, the strategy to enhance work ethic in line with technological advancements has successfully improved the quality of learning, making the transformation of education into the digital era a necessity to create a relevant and competitive education system.

The changes that occur are evident both in the classroom and outside of it. This is due to the implementation of strategies that have been adapted to the times. Therefore, its implementation is not merely limited to the learning mechanisms within the classroom, but is also reflected in the overall atmosphere and environment of the school. These changes have already been implemented and are yielding tangible results. It is hoped that these changes will continue to develop positively to create an increasingly conducive, modern learning atmosphere that aligns with the current needs of students.

The role of institutional leaders as directors in delegating responsibilities and authority to staff is very important to ensure the efficiency and success of school operations. This delegation is a strategic step that allows the principal to optimize the potential of the workforce and achieve the predetermined educational goals [21].

Teachers provide feedback to improve the quality of learning by developing teaching methods acquired from training. In addition, they are also actively seeking additional information through literature, professional discussions, and the latest technology. This approach creates more engaging and relevant learning, especially in the digital era. This continuous development not only enriches teaching methods but also enhances student motivation, creating a dynamic and adaptive learning climate that meets the challenges of contemporary education.

Training programs are a form of short-term education conducted using an organized and methodical process to acquire specific skills or talents. Human resource development is crucial for achieving the best results, and this training is an important component of education and training (diklat) [22].

So far, SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan has implemented various plans to improve teacher competency. In addition, the education department also regularly holds similar activities aimed at teachers from various fields of study in rotation. The programs organized by the school include all teachers, because learning at school does not only focus on one subject, but involves various fields of study. Meanwhile, activities organized by the Education Office are usually tailored to each teacher's field. Thus, the development of competencies is implemented evenly within the school environment.

The implementation of training and collaboration among teachers at SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan is essential in supporting the school's tasks. The strategies implemented encourage open communication, both in formal forums such as MGMP and informal interactions within the school environment. Teachers motivate each other and share information, which helps in the development of collective knowledge. This approach involves all teachers, both young and experienced, creating a mutually supportive environment. Young teachers become a source of inspiration, while senior teachers are encouraged to continue developing themselves. This collaborative approach strengthens the spirit of cooperation and enhances the quality of the teaching and learning process.

At SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan, commitment to participation and duty has been a work culture from the beginning. Workload is assigned based on agreements among teachers, and additional workload is not considered ineffective as long as there is commitment and responsibility from the teachers. Before the tasks are assigned, discussions are held to ensure the teachers' readiness. Nevertheless, challenges arise due to the uneven individual awareness in improving work ethic. Not all teachers have the same awareness of the importance of professionalism and self-development. Therefore, a comprehensive commitment from all parties in education is necessary. A sustainable approach is also important so that the strategy for improving work ethic can be applied consistently. Thus, this strategy not only becomes a formal program but is also internalized in the attitudes and behaviors of educators, which ultimately enhances the quality of learning.

4. CONCLUSION

The strategy to improve teachers' work ethic at SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan is implemented through regular training focused on competency development. The school appreciates the synergy between young teachers who are proficient in technology and senior teachers who have experience. Awards are also given to outstanding teachers as a form of motivation. In addition, the school collaborates with the Education Office to conduct training as needed, such as curriculum strengthening and improving cooperation among teachers, which involves motivators and positively impacts the teachers' work ethic.

Supporting factors for the work ethic of teachers at SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan include fair salaries, adequate facilities, and a comfortable and conducive work environment. The principal plays a role in maintaining a balance between discipline and appreciation to create a productive work atmosphere. Meanwhile, the obstacles faced include the low development spirit among some teachers, boredom due to long working periods, and limited facilities. To address these issues, the school organizes training, self-development programs, and fosters a positive and collaborative work culture to encourage teachers' enthusiasm and responsibility.

The strategy to improve the work ethic of teachers at SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan has been effective through the implementation of regular training, collaboration among teachers, supervision, and the support of the principal in adjusting policies to the times, especially in the digitalization of education. Evaluation is conducted in stages and structured, with success benchmarks based on program achievements, such as tahfiz targets. Teachers are also actively developing teaching methods from training and other sources, creating more interactive and relevant learning. Commitment, open communication, and task distribution based on agreements also strengthen the work ethic. This strategy is not only administrative but has also formed a consistent work culture that has a tangible impact on the improvement of education quality.

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