

Analysis of the School Committee's Understanding of Duties and Functions at Public Elementary Schools in Pantai Labu District

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Abstract: This study was motivated by the suboptimal role of school committees in elementary education governance, particularly in understanding their duties and functions as advisory, supporting, controlling, and mediating bodies. The urgency of this research lies in the importance of school committee understanding as a foundation for community participation in improving education quality. This study aimed to describe school committees' understanding of their duties and functions in public elementary schools in Pantai Labu District. This research used a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. The informants consisted of principals, school committee chairpersons, committee members, and teachers selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through interviews, observation, and documentation studies, then analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The results show that school committees understand their position as school partners, but they do not yet have a comprehensive understanding of their advisory, supporting, controlling, and mediating functions. Their role remains largely administrative, such as attending meetings, approving programs, and signing school documents. This study concludes that school committee understanding needs to be strengthened through socialization, training, mentoring, work program development, and regular communication forums so that committees can contribute more effectively to improving elementary education quality.

Keywords: School Committee; Duties and Functions; Elementary School; Education Quality; Community Participation.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini dimotivasi oleh peran suboptimal komite sekolah dalam tata kelola pendidikan dasar, khususnya dalam memahami tugas dan fungsinya sebagai badan penasihat, pendukung, pengawas, dan penengah. Urgensi penelitian ini terletak pada pentingnya pemahaman komite sekolah sebagai landasan partisipasi masyarakat dalam meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan pemahaman komite sekolah tentang tugas dan fungsinya di sekolah dasar negeri di Kabupaten Pantai Labu. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode deskriptif. Informan terdiri dari kepala sekolah, ketua komite sekolah, anggota komite, dan guru yang dipilih melalui pengambilan sampel bertujuan. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara, observasi, dan studi dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis melalui reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa komite sekolah memahami posisinya sebagai mitra sekolah, tetapi mereka belum memiliki pemahaman yang komprehensif tentang fungsi penasihat, pendukung, pengawas, dan penengahnya. Peran mereka sebagian besar masih bersifat administratif, seperti menghadiri rapat, menyetujui program, dan menandatangani dokumen sekolah. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa pemahaman komite sekolah perlu diperkuat melalui sosialisasi, pelatihan, pendampingan,

pengembangan program kerja, dan forum komunikasi reguler sehingga komite dapat berkontribusi lebih efektif dalam meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan dasar.

Kata Kunci: Komite Sekolah; Tugas Dan Fungsi; Sekolah Dasar; Kualitas Pendidikan; Partisipasi Masyarakat.

INTRODUCTION

Elementary education plays an important role in developing human resources who are character-based, literate, and able to adapt to social change. The success of elementary education is determined not only by classroom learning activities but also by the quality of school management involving various stakeholders. Recent literature positions the participation of school members, parents, and the community as an important element in strengthening school-based management and improving the quality of education services (N. N. Dewi et al., 2022; Suyitno, 2021). Within this framework, community participation needs to be clearly organized so that it can support the improvement of education service quality.

One forum for community participation in education is the school committee. The school committee is an independent body that accommodates the roles of parents, community members, and figures who care about education. School committees serve to provide consideration, support, supervision, and mediation among schools, parents, and the community (Ni Kadek Mariani et al., 2024; Sukinawan et al., 2025). These four functions make the school committee a strategic partner for schools in strengthening governance and the quality of elementary education.

From the perspective of school-based management, the school committee serves as a strategic partner because schools need social support, ideas, supervision, and healthy communication with the community. School-based management places the participation of school members and the community as an important element in educational decision-making (Mulyasa, 2021). It is also explained that the role of the committee affects the effectiveness of school-based management (Suyitno, 2021). Therefore, school committees' understanding of their duties and functions is an initial asset for transparent and accountable education governance.

Although the existence of school committees has been regulated normatively, its implementation at the school level does not always run optimally. In some cases, initial observations revealed that school committees were still perceived as formal bodies that merely attended meetings, provided approvals, or signed school documents. This situation suggests that the committee's involvement has not yet fully shifted to a substantive role in planning, monitoring, evaluating, and channeling community aspirations. The function of school committees in implementing school-based management still shows variation, especially in the controlling function, which is not as strong as the supporting function (N. S. Dewi & Syukur, 2022). The effectiveness of school committees continues to face challenges, including low community participation, limited resources, and insufficient understanding of committee duties and functions.

These problems were also found in public elementary schools in Pantai Labu District, Deli Serdang Regency. Based on the preliminary study, the involvement of school committees tends to occur in formal activities, such as attending meetings and



approving school documents. School committees have not been fully involved in needs analysis, program development, supervision of activity implementation, and evaluation of school programs. In addition, communication between schools and committees tends to be one-way, so spaces for dialogue, deliberation, and joint reflection have not functioned optimally.

The low level of school committees' understanding of their duties and functions can weaken their contribution to education governance. If school committees do not understand their roles as advisory, supporting, controlling, and mediating bodies, their existence may become merely an administrative complement. In fact, school committees should serve as a bridge between schools and the community, strengthen transparency, encourage parental participation, and support continuous improvement in education quality. Optimizing the role of committees requires program planning, program actualization, accommodation of aspirations, and policy communication (Sandra, 2023). Good communication among schools, teachers, and committees is needed so that committee contributions become more significant in improving school quality (Widyawan et al., 2024).

Studies on school committees have widely highlighted the role of committees in improving education quality, community participation, and school-based management (Firman & Arfin, 2022a; Irawan et al., 2021; Nisaa' & Rahayu, 2024). However, studies that specifically examine school committees' understanding of their duties and functions in the elementary school context still need to be strengthened. Understanding duties and functions is an important foundation before committees can play active and effective roles.

Based on the identified research gaps, this study aims to answer the question of how school committees understand their duties and functions in public elementary schools in Pantai Labu Regency and what obstacles affect the implementation of these duties and functions in elementary education governance. In line with this question, this study aims to describe the school committee's understanding of its duties and functions and identify various obstacles faced in implementing the school committee's role in supporting the implementation of effective and quality elementary education. Therefore, this study aims to describe school committees' understanding of duties and functions in public elementary schools in Pantai Labu District and to identify obstacles that affect the implementation of committee roles in elementary education governance.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. The qualitative approach was chosen because the study aimed to describe in depth school committees' understanding of their duties and functions in the natural context of schools. Creswell and Poth (2024) explain that qualitative research is used to understand meanings, experiences, and social processes based on informants' perspectives. The descriptive method was used to present the research findings systematically in accordance with the data obtained in the field.

The research was conducted at public elementary schools in Pantai Labu District, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra Province. The research focused on school committees' understanding of four main functions, namely the advisory, supporting, controlling, and mediating functions. These four functions were used as



the basis for exploring information about the role of school committees in program planning, activity support, supervision, and communication between schools, parents, and the community.

Research informants were selected using purposive sampling. This technique was used because informants were chosen based on their involvement and knowledge of the implementation of school committee duties and functions. The informants included principals, school committee chairpersons, school committee members, and teachers. Principals were selected because they play a role in school management and cooperation with the committee. Committee chairpersons and members were selected because they directly carry out school committee functions. Teachers were selected because they understand the forms of committee involvement in daily school activities.

The interview guide was developed to explore informants' understanding of the duties and functions of school committees. To support data collection, the researcher used interview guidelines, observation guidelines, and documentation study guidelines. The observation guideline was used to examine the forms of school committee involvement in school activities. Documentation studies were used to examine relevant documents, such as committee appointment letters, meeting minutes, work programs, school planning documents, and other documents showing school committee involvement.

Tabel 1. Instrument Indicator

No.	Research Focus	Indicators	Data Collection Techniques
1	School committee members' understanding of their roles and functions	Understanding of the committee's roles as an advisory, supporting, controlling, and mediating body	Interview, Documentation
2	School committee members' understanding of their roles and functions	Understanding of the committee's functions in school planning, implementation, and evaluation	Interview, Documentation
3	Implementation of school committee roles and functions	Participation in meetings, decision-making processes, and school activities	Interview, Observation, Documentation
4	Implementation of school committee roles and functions	Involvement in fostering communication and collaboration between the school and the community	Interview, Observation, Documentation
5	Challenges in implementing school committee roles and functions	Internal challenges (knowledge, time availability, commitment, and coordination)	Interview
6	Challenges in implementing school committee roles and functions	External challenges (school support, community participation, and resources)	Interview, Observation, Documentation

Data collection techniques consisted of interviews, observation, and documentation studies. Interviews were conducted with principals, school committee chairpersons, committee members, and teachers to obtain information about understanding, experiences, and obstacles in carrying out school committee



functions. Observation was conducted to directly examine communication patterns and forms of committee involvement in school activities. Documentation studies were conducted to strengthen interview and observation data so that the findings were more complete and accountable.

The data were analyzed using the model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2020), which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was carried out by selecting and focusing data relevant to the research objectives. Data display was carried out in the form of descriptive narratives and a summary table of findings. Conclusion drawing was conducted by interpreting the displayed data to answer the research focus. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation and technique triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information from principals, school committee chairpersons, committee members, and teachers. Technique triangulation was conducted by comparing interview, observation, and documentation results as recommended in qualitative research (Creswell, 2023).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results show that school committees' understanding of their duties and functions in public elementary schools in Pantai Labu District has not been fully optimal. School committees generally understand their existence as school partners, but their understanding of strategic functions as advisory, supporting, controlling, and mediating bodies has not been developed in depth. This finding is reflected in committee involvement, which is still largely administrative, such as attending meetings, approving programs, and signing school documents. Committee involvement in planning, supervision, evaluation, and channeling community aspirations still needs to be strengthened.

Table 2. Summary of Findings on School Committees' Understanding

No.	Committee function aspect	Main findings	Meaning of the findings
1	Advisory	The committee was not fully involved in developing school programs and planning documents.	The committee's role remains largely formal and has not yet become a substantive partner in decision-making.
2	Supporting	Committee support appeared when the school needed certain assistance, but it had not been systematically programmed.	The supporting function remains situational and needs to be directed through an annual work program.
3	Controlling	The committee did not yet have sufficient instruments and understanding to monitor programs, budgets, and the quality of school services.	The supervisory function is the aspect that most needs strengthening so that transparency and accountability increase.
4	Mediating	Communication between the school and the committee was not yet routine and still depended heavily on invitations from the school.	Parents' and community aspirations have not been optimally channeled through the school committee.



School Committees' Understanding of the Advisory Function

The advisory function is a school committee duty related to providing input on school policies, programs, and needs. Based on the research findings, school committees' understanding of this function remains limited. Committees have not been fully involved from the beginning in developing school programs, including discussions on activity planning and needs for education quality improvement. In several activities, committees more often attended only to provide approval after programs had been prepared by the school.

This condition shows that the advisory function has not operated substantively. School committees should not only serve as parties who approve documents, but also provide input based on the needs of students, parents, and the community. This finding is in line with Khasanatul and Permana, who state that school committees can play a role in policy and program development when they are involved as collaborative partners (Khasanatul & Permana, 2023). Therefore, schools need to open broader deliberation spaces so that the advisory function does not stop at administrative formality.

School Committees' Understanding of the Supporting Function

The supporting function relates to school committee contributions in assisting the smooth implementation of educational programs. This support may take the form of ideas, energy, social networks, communication with parents, and other nonmaterial assistance according to school needs. The research results show that school committees have attempted to support school activities, but this support has not been organized into a clear and documented work program.

Unstructured committee support causes its role to be more situational. Committees usually act when schools request assistance or when certain activities are held. In fact, school committees can play effective roles as advisory, supporting, controlling, and mediating bodies when their implementation is directed (Firman & Arfin, 2022b). Committees also have an important position in improving education quality through support for school programs (Ramli, 2021). Therefore, the supporting function needs to be strengthened through the development of committee work programs that include forms of support, implementation time, parties involved, and success indicators.

School Committees' Understanding of the Controlling Function

The controlling function is the role of school committees in monitoring transparency, accountability, and the implementation of school programs. Based on the findings, this function has not run optimally. School committees do not yet have sufficient understanding of education quality indicators, the use of school data, and proportional monitoring mechanisms. In addition, no specific instrument is available for committees to monitor the implementation of school programs.

This finding shows that the controlling function is one of the weakest aspects. School committees do not yet fully understand that supervision is not intended to interfere with the authority of principals or teachers, but to ensure that programs run transparently, accountably, and according to students' needs. This is also consistent with findings indicating that the controlling function of school committees tends to be lower than other functions (N. N. Dewi et al., 2022). Therefore, school committees need mentoring on the limits of authority, monitoring mechanisms, and the use of simple data in monitoring school programs.



School Committees' Understanding of the Mediating Function

The mediating function positions the school committee as a link among the school, parents, and the community. The research results show that this function has not run optimally because communication between schools and committees still tends to be one-way. School committees are more often contacted when certain activities occur, rather than being routinely involved in discussions about community needs and aspirations.

This condition affects the low level of parental participation in supporting school programs. Many parents do not yet understand the objectives and functions of school committees, so their involvement remains limited. In fact, school-community relations require open and continuous communication so that support for education can grow in a healthy way. School committees also need shared vision, communication, coordination, openness, and cooperation with schools (Khausar & Anwar, 2023). This is also in line with findings showing that collaboration between school committees and parent associations can support school excellence (Fahrur & Haryanto, 2023). Therefore, the mediating function needs to be strengthened through regular communication forums, periodic meetings, and accessible mechanisms for conveying aspirations.

Factors Affecting School Committees' Understanding

The low level of school committees' understanding of their duties and functions is influenced by several factors. First, the committee organizational structure is available in the form of an appointment letter, but it has not been thoroughly socialized to all administrators. Second, task distribution among committee members remains unclear, so the implementation of committee functions depends largely on the committee chairperson or the principal's direction. Third, committee meetings are not held regularly and tend to be conducted only when urgent needs arise. Fourth, some committee members do not fully understand the provisions and scope of school committee duties.

In addition to these factors, limited data literacy and insufficient guidance also become obstacles. School committees are not yet accustomed to using school quality data as a basis for consideration and supervision. Documentation of committee activities is also limited, making it difficult to use as a basis for evaluation. Research shows that school-based management requires directed planning, implementation, supervision, and evaluation (Mulyasa, 2021). Furthermore, Winoto (2021) emphasizes the importance of strengthening school committee capacity in education quality management. Thus, strengthening school committees is not enough through structural formation alone; it also needs to focus on improving organizational capacity, communication, and literacy in school governance.

Discussion

In general, the results show that school committees' understanding of their duties and functions remains at a basic level. School committees understand that their existence is intended to assist schools, but they do not yet fully understand the concrete forms of the advisory, supporting, controlling, and mediating functions. As a result, the role of school committees has not made a maximum contribution to elementary education governance.

This finding reveals a gap between normative provisions and field practice. Conceptually, school committees have authority and functions in supporting the



improvement of education quality, but this understanding is not automatically possessed by all committee administrators (Ni Kadek Mariani et al., 2024). This is reinforced by the finding that one of the challenges to school committee effectiveness is the lack of understanding of duties and functions (Sukinawan et al., 2025). Therefore, schools and related education offices need to conduct continuous socialization of duties and functions so that committees understand the scope of their roles properly.

The results also show that school committees need more systematic work programs. A work program is important because it provides direction for implementing committee functions during a certain period. Committee efforts to improve quality are carried out through program planning, program actualization, accommodation of aspirations, and policy communication (Sandra, 2023). Quality management is also an important part of strengthening the role of school committees (R. Susanto, 2022). Without a work program, committee support tends to be incidental and difficult to evaluate. With a work program, schools and committees can build more directed, measurable, and sustainable cooperation.

From the perspective of school governance, strengthening the committee's role needs to be placed within a balanced partnership. The school committee is not a party that takes over the authority of the principal, but a partner that provides consideration, support, proportional supervision, and a communication bridge with the community. This balance is important so that committee functions are not misunderstood. If schools open communication spaces and committees improve their capacity, committees can play a more active role in promoting the quality of elementary education services.

Thus, school committees' understanding of duties and functions is an important foundation for improving education quality. The better the committee's understanding, the greater the opportunity for the committee to be involved in planning, supporting program implementation, monitoring accountability, and channeling community aspirations. Conversely, if this understanding is not strengthened, school committees will remain in administrative roles and will not be able to become strategic school partners.

This study also suggests directions for future research. Future studies could examine the effectiveness of training and capacity-building programs in improving school committee members' understanding of their roles and functions. Comparative studies across different regions or school levels, as well as quantitative investigations of the relationship between committee effectiveness and educational quality, would provide broader evidence for strengthening the role of school committees in school governance.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that school committees' understanding of their duties and functions in public elementary schools in Pantai Labu District remains suboptimal. School committees have understood their existence as school partners, but they have not fully understood their strategic roles as advisory, supporting, controlling, and mediating bodies.

The role of school committees still tends to be administrative, such as attending meetings, approving programs, and signing school documents. Committee



involvement in planning, supervision, evaluation, and channeling community aspirations has not run optimally. This condition is influenced by a lack of socialization, limited training, unclear task distribution, the absence of a systematic work program, and weak regular communication between schools and committees.

The implication of this study indicates that schools need to strengthen committee capacity through socialization of duties and functions, training, mentoring in developing work programs, and the establishment of scheduled communication forums. With good understanding, school committees can play a more active role as strategic partners in supporting governance and improving the quality of elementary education.

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