

Empowering Activator Teacher in The Context of Educational Transformation in SMKN Kota Malang

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Abstract: The presence of activator teachers in schools can be an agent of change in schools. The purpose of this study is to explore and identify how activator teachers can be empowered in the transformation of education in Vocational High Schools (SMK). This study used qualitative research method of exploratory case study type. The conclusion of the research shows that the transformation of education in SMKN Kota Malang is well planned so that it has a significant positive impact. By involving all stakeholders, including teachers, students, and industry. Teachers play a crucial role as agents of change in educational transformation. They act as initiators, motivators, mentors, collaboration facilitators and inspirers for other teachers. The integrated approach taken by the school in utilizing the activator teachers has proven to be effective in achieving the goals of educational transformation. By providing appropriate support, assigning additional tasks and involving them in various aspects of school management, the lead teachers can be effective agents of change in creating an adaptive, innovative and relevant learning environment. Transformation not only improves the quality of education but can also better prepare students to face future challenges.

Keywords: Education transformation; activator teacher; teacher empowerment

INTRODUCTION

Transformation of Education in Vocational High Schools (SMK) is designed so that education in SMK becomes more adaptive, relevant and sustainable in facing and responding to the demands of future economic dynamics (Direktorat Vokasi, 2023). The implementation of vocational secondary education aims to realize competent human resources (HR), according to the needs of the world of work and capable of entrepreneurship (Habibah, 2023). But the fact that until now the transformation of vocational secondary education has not gone as expected can be seen from the high unemployment rate of SMK graduates, from BPS data in August 2022 the number of unemployed in Indonesia was 8.42 million and of that number 9.42% were SMK graduates.

Educational transformation will not run well without the support of an important element of education, namely teachers. The quality of teachers in Indonesia is still diverse, which is one of the causes of the lack of competitiveness of SMK graduates in the world of work. Therefore, teachers need to continuously develop professional and pedagogical competencies to be able to deliver students to achieve their best potential to win competition in the world of work.

Research conducted by Unal (2020) shows that teachers have a key role in educational transformation and must have the necessary skills and competencies to face the challenges of educational transformation. In addition, the importance of teachers' professional development to help them meet the demands of their roles and responsibilities in the face of changing educational transformation. As well as teachers must take an active role in education transformation and work together with all education stakeholders to achieve the goals of education transformation.

Therefore, teachers need to attend training, conduct continuous self-development and collaborate with other teachers to contribute to the transformation of education. The Ministry of Education Research and Technology currently has a program designed for teachers to improve the quality of learning, this program is known as the activator teacher education program. When participating in mobilizing teacher education, teachers will be trained to have various competencies, including demonstrating self-development practices based on personal awareness and willingness (self-regulated learning), developing the competencies of school members to improve student quality (facilitating, coaching, mentoring) and actively participating in school leadership professional organizations and other communities for career development. With these competencies, activator teachers can be empowered as agents of change in education to improve the quality of education in their schools.

Previous research conducted by Yokoyama et al (2023) showed that the driving teachers in Tana Toraja district have implemented their competencies after attending the activator teacher education which began to bring changes in their environment. This research is reinforced by research conducted by Sibagariang et al (2021) which shows that activator teachers can carry out the role of trainer and activating for other teachers to carry out creative and innovative student-centered learning and are able to become agents of change in their educational ecosystem. From the results of these two studies, it can be seen that the activator teacher is able to become a the activating force for change at school.

Research conducted by Forefry (2017) shows that teacher empowerment can improve the quality of education in schools. Teacher empowerment can also improve the quality of teacher performance and teacher commitment to education. From the results of the study it can also be seen if this can be achieved with proper planning, management, teacher empowerment. The opportunity for the existence of activator teacher can be utilized by schools to make

transformations in improving school quality.

However, in the field it appears that not all schools are able to manage the existence of human resource assets in the form of activator teachers well, this can be seen from the results of initial observations of schools that have activator teachers for the SMK level, it is known that only 33% of teachers play a role in educational transformation activities in their schools. And from the results of these observations, SMKN 12 Malang has 6 activator teachers and SMKN 12 Malang is a school that is able to manage the existence of activator teachers well so that it begins to bring good changes to the educational ecosystem at SMKN 12 Malang. So this school is used as a research location.

Currently, there are not many articles that raise the results of research on the enrichment of activator teachers in schools, especially for SMK levels in Malang city. Especially if it is related to the transformation of education that has occurred in schools. Based on this background, the problems raised in this problem are a. how the description of educational transformation that has been implemented in SMKN Kota Malang . b. How the role of the activator teacher as an agent of change in the implementation of educational transformation at SMKN Kota Malang c. How the school strategy in utilizing the activator teacher for educational transformation at SMKN Kota Malang. The purpose of this study is to explore and identify how activator teachers can be empowered in the transformation of education in Vocational High Schools (SMK).

METHODS

Based on the research problem, a qualitative approach was chosen in this study. So that researchers can easily explore, describe and reveal the empowerment of activator teachers in the transformation of education in SMK Malang city. According to Moleong (2018) qualitative research is an appropriate method used when the position or initial understanding of the research problem is still vague or not clearly defined. This method is effective in understanding social interactions and further exploration of research topics.

The type of this research is a case study, namely an exploratory case study. This is done in order to describe the context under study while solving problems and providing feedback. Merriam & Tisdell (2016) suggests that the case study design is to investigate the process or because the phenomenon being investigated is very unique.

The research design includes determining the source of data in the study by selecting research informants. Determination of informants using purposive sampling technique, where data sources are determined with certain considerations (Fiantika et al, 2022). The selection of informants for this study was based on the consideration that the potential informants had important information for this study, including the activator teacher, the activator teacher's

colleagues and the school principal.

The data collected is in accordance with the focus of the research, using interview, observation and documentation methods. Key informants or key sources in this study are the activator teacher. Other data sources from this research are the principal, vice principal, other teachers, students and this research document, namely any form of visual or physical information about activities that show the empowerment activities of the activator teacher.

In collecting data in the field, researchers used three techniques, namely: in-depth interview techniques, observation, and document studies. The most important technique used in data collection is the interview technique. Researchers conducted questions and answers with predetermined informants, both with key informants and supporting informants. Researchers utilize semi-structured interviews that are tailored to the focus of the research being undertaken. Semi-structured interviews provide more space than structured interviews in allowing more flexible discovery of problems from the informants' point of view (Pahleviannur et al., 2022). The research was conducted from October to November 2023.

A Qualitative data analysis is inductive, meaning that the analysis begins with collecting data, making hypotheses, and then collecting data again repeatedly to determine whether the hypothesis is accepted or not. In qualitative data analysis, triangulation techniques are used to collect repeatable data, then accepted hypotheses can develop into theories (Sugiyono, 2013).

This research uses source and technique triangulation. With source triangulation, researchers will compare and cross-check information or data obtained from different sources/informants. While in the triangulation technique, by comparing and crosschecking information or data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation (Creswell, 2015)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Overview of Educational Transformation that has been Implemented at SMKN Kota Malang

The findings of the research on the empowerment of activator teachers in the context of educational transformation regarding the description of educational transformation that has been implemented at SMKN Kota Malang show that the educational transformation that occurs begins with determining the objectives of implementing educational transformation in schools. This goal supports the achievement of the school's vision, mission and goals. Educational transformation is gradual and sustainable, including changes in the way teachers view the learning process, curriculum changes and integration of technology in learning, and collaboration between teachers. Changes in the paradigm of how teachers view the learning process where students are no longer objects but subjects and teachers are not the only source of learning.

Changes to the curriculum implemented at SMKN Kota Malang, by compiling an education unit level curriculum (KTSP) that is adaptive to technological developments and labor market needs. This is done by cooperating with the industry in the preparation process. Then the addition of material outside the applicable curriculum with material that is in accordance with industrial developments.

The learning approach has changed by reducing the conventional approach and using more project-based learning. In addition, the learning approach has changed to student centered learning by accommodating differences in learning styles and student abilities by implementing differentiated learning. Changes in learning approaches make learning activities change. In learning activities, teachers have utilized digital technology, such as the use of e-learning platforms. The use of digital technology spurs learning innovation among SMKN Kota Malang teachers.

Other changes in learning activities are changes in student assessment, assessment no longer only depends on the value of assignments and student exam results but also considers other aspects such as creativity, student performance in project work and student social skills in collaboration. In addition, assessment activities are also paperless, replaced by using a digital assessment platform.

The transformation of education at SMKN Kota Malang has had a significant impact on students, teachers and school community. Students are more motivated and enthusiastic in participating in learning, as well as motivated to be more accomplished and creative, and collaborative, so that they can develop themselves to achieve their best potential and be ready to compete in the job market. For teachers, the transformation of education makes SMKN Kota Malang teachers experience increased professionalism through participation in continuous self-development through training in innovative learning methods, industrial internships and skills in the use of learning technology. In addition, teachers are also getting used to implementing collaborative learning. Educational transformation also increases teachers' motivation and job satisfaction due to the support provided by the school. For the school community, it has an impact on changing the school culture to be more inclusive, collaborative, improving the wellbeing of the work environment, and increasing the ability to use information technology for education personnel, as well as increasing the participation of education personnel in learning.

The Role of Teachers as Agents of Change in Implementing Educational Transformation at SMKN Kota Malang

The research findings on the role of the activator teacher as an agent of change in the implementation of educational transformation at SMKN Kota Malang show that the activator

teacher acts as an initiator and motivator of change in learning where the activator teacher encourages and motivates other fellow teachers to develop methods and approaches that can support the achievement of maximum student potential, among others by introducing project-based learning. The activator teacher encourages his/her colleagues to utilize information technology in learning. Another role is that of mentor and coach for fellow teachers by providing guidance for other teachers, especially on the application of new learning methods and approaches, to develop teaching skills and improve learning performance in the classroom.

The activator teacher facilitates collaboration among teachers and initiates the formation of teacher learning communities as a place for teachers to learn from each other and share good practices. They also inspire other teachers in innovative learning and self-development. They also play a role in building an inclusive and collaborative school culture.

The activator teacher acts as a catalyst for the transformation of the school, plays an active role in the development of the school curriculum in the school development team, and plays a role in school management. To encourage educational transformation at SMKN Kota Malang, the activator teacher takes steps, namely making a SWOT analysis of school conditions to identify weaknesses and opportunities for innovation that can be applied at school, then making an action plan by setting goals in accordance with the desired educational transformation achievements. From the results of the analysis, the activator teacher plans and proposes training and workshops for teachers and education personnel to the school, including training on the use of information technology in learning, innovative teaching methods.

Teachers encourage the integration of technology in learning by using digital platforms in learning such as Google Workspace for Education, quiz and social media. Lead teachers implement project-based learning in learning activities to encourage students to work together in solving real problems. Encourage the development of curriculum and teaching materials that are relevant to the development of the world of work and the future needs of students. Activating teacher learning communities as a forum for sharing best practices, ideas and collaboration between teachers. In addition, build networks with industry, universities and other parties that can help improve learning for students. Initiate programs and activities that can increase student activeness and hone student abilities, including extracurricular activities and challenging projects and student participation in competitions.

The final step is monitoring and evaluation, collecting data and feedback from students and teachers. Then evaluate the progress and identify the shortcomings of the educational transformation that has taken place. The various roles that have been carried out by the activator teacher have an impact on students, including increasing student learning motivation and developing student skills in critical, creative, collaborative and communicative thinking. This then

encourages an increase in student learning outcomes and student readiness to face future challenges.

The impact on teachers is increasing teacher competence, collaboration between teachers, and maximizing the role of the teacher learning community. As for schools, the change of school culture to be more inclusive and collaborative, the development of school curriculum is more adaptive to the times and the needs of students.

School Strategy in Utilizing Activator Teachers for Educational Transformation at SMKN Kota Malang.

Research findings on school strategies in utilizing activator teachers for educational transformation at SMKN Kota Malang show that schools provide additional tasks to activator teachers in school management by previously identifying the potential of activator teachers through performance analysis of teacher performance results, activeness in school activities, learning innovations that have been carried out, ability to master technology and leadership, also pedagogical skills.

Teachers are also assigned to school programs such as school development teams, curriculum development teams, and school activity coordinators. Assigned to be the motor of the teacher learning community at school to accommodate teachers in self development. Also assigned as mentors for other teachers in the use of technology, making learning tools.

To optimize the utilization of activator teachers, the support provided by the school includes encouraging and facilitating activator teachers in self-development both at school and outside school. The school provides facilities and financial support in accordance with the school budget. Support for the program designed by the activator teacher in supporting the transformation of education at school. Opportunities and facilities for activator teachers to develop their careers and participate in activities organized by the Center for Activator Teachers (BPGP) and the activator teacher community. As well as the opportunity to send activator teachers to participate in industrial apprenticeship activities.

The school involves the lead teachers in school policy-making, among others, by becoming a curriculum development team, involving the lead teachers in school management, involving the lead teachers in the school development team, and giving authority and responsibility to the lead teachers as teacher performance appraisers.

DISCUSSION

Overview of Educational Transformation that has been Implemented at SMKN Kota Malang

The transformation of education at SMKN Kota Malang begins with determining clear goals, so that it can support the achievement of the vision, mission and goals of the school. The process of change is gradual and sustainable, including a change in the teacher's paradigm towards the learning process. Curriculum adjustments, integration of technology in learning, and increased collaboration between teachers.

The finding of the research is a change in the teacher paradigm in the learning process. Teachers at SMKN Kota Malang began to view students as active subjects in learning, and no longer as passive objects. Thus making students the center of the learning process, where students actively play a role in finding and processing information. This is in line with constructivist theory which emphasizes the importance of students' active role in constructing their own knowledge (Fosnot & Perry, 2018). The teacher is no longer the only source of learning but acts as a facilitator who assists students in finding and processing information from various sources. This approach is in line with research that shows that students who are actively involved in learning will increase their motivation and learning outcomes (Hattie, 2018). At SMKN Kota Malang, this change has created a more dynamic and participatory learning environment, where students contribute more to the learning process.

Research findings, the curriculum at SMKN Kota Malang has undergone adjustments to be more responsive to technological developments and labor market needs. The preparation of the Education Unit Level Curriculum (KTSP) is carried out in collaboration with the industry, this is to ensure that the material taught is relevant to the needs of the world of work. In addition, it is also to help students to be better prepared to enter the world of work after graduation. This strengthens the relationship between vocational education and industry, ensuring that graduates have skills that match market needs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

The addition of materials outside the official curriculum, which are adapted to industry developments, is also done to give students a competitive advantage. This is in line with the concept of adaptive curriculum, which emphasizes the importance of flexibility and responsiveness in responding to the challenges of the times (Tomlinson, 2017)

Findings The learning approach at SMKN Kota Malang has undergone a significant change from conventional methods to using more project-based learning. This method allows students to learn through exploration and completion of complex projects, which can improve their critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Larmer et al., 2019).

In addition, a student-centered learning approach by implementing differentiated learning has been adopted to accommodate students' different learning styles and abilities. This approach ensures that each student can learn in a way that best suits their needs, ultimately improving student engagement and learning outcomes (Tomlinson, 2017).

The finding of digital technology integration in learning activities at SMKN Kota Malang is one of the major changes. Teachers utilize e-learning platforms to support the teaching and learning process, which not only improves efficiency but also encourages innovation in teaching methods. Digital technology can increase student motivation and participation, and provide flexibility in the learning process (Luo et al., 2021).

The use of technology has also changed the way students are assessed. Assessment no longer relies solely on assignment and test scores, but also considers aspects of students' creativity, project performance, and social skills. This comprehensive assessment provides a more accurate picture of students' overall abilities (Guskey, 2018) In addition, paperless assessment activities using digital assessment platforms can improve efficiency and accuracy in student assessment.

The findings of the educational transformation at SMKN Kota Malang had a positive impact on the teachers. They become more open to new and innovative learning methods. The use of technology in learning also improves their digital competencies. This is in line with research showing that technology integration in education can improve teacher professionalism (Howard et al., 2021).

Education transformation also increases teacher motivation and job satisfaction. The support provided by schools, such as training and opportunities for collaboration, makes teachers feel valued and supported in their efforts to improve learning quality (Darling-Hammond et al, 2017).

Student findings benefit from a more student-centered approach to learning. Project-based learning and the use of digital technology make learning more interesting and relevant to real life. Students become more actively involved in learning, which ultimately improves their learning outcomes (Hattie, 2018). More comprehensive assessments also provide a more accurate picture of students' abilities, covering both academic and life skills aspects.

This transformation of education also prepares students to be more competitive in the job market. The skills they learn are not only relevant to current industry needs, but also give them a competitive edge in an increasingly complex and dynamic world of work.

The findings of the educational transformation at SMKN Kota Malang also had a positive impact on the school community as a whole. Collaboration among teachers increased, creating a more dynamic and innovative work environment. The school culture became more inclusive and collaborative, which improved the wellbeing of the work environment and the ability to use information technology for education personnel (Fullan, 2016)

In addition, industry involvement in curriculum development helps strengthen the link between schools and the world of work, which is important for improving the relevance of vocational education. It also enhances the participation of education personnel in learning, which strengthens the learning community in the school.

The Role of Activator Teachers as Agents of Change in Implementing Educational Transformation at SMKN Kota Malang

The research findings show that activator teacher at SMKN Kota Malang play an important role as agents of change in educational transformation. They act as initiators, motivators, mentors, coaches, collaboration facilitators and inspirers for other teachers. This role is important to create a dynamic and adaptive learning environment that supports the achievement of students maximum potential.

As initiators and motivators, activator teachers encourage fellow teachers to develop innovative learning methods and approaches, such as project-based learning. This approach has been shown to be effective in improving students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Nuangjamnong, 2020) It also motivates the use of information technology in learning, which is in line with research showing that technology can improve student motivation and learning outcomes (Scherer et al., 2015)

As a mentor and coach, the activator teacher provides guidance to fellow teachers in implementing new learning methods. This is important for improving teaching skills and learning performance in the classroom. Research shows that mentoring and coaching are effective in improving teacher competencies and student learning outcomes (Kraft et al., 2018).

The activator teacher also acts as a facilitator of collaboration between teachers and an initiator of teacher learning communities. These learning communities provide a platform for teachers to learn from each other and share good practices, which is important for continuous professional development (Admiraal et al, 2021). Collaboration between teachers can increase innovation in learning and support professional development.

Activator teachers inspire other teachers to adopt innovative learning and develop themselves. This inspiration encourages other teachers to continue learning and implementing more effective learning methods, ultimately improving the quality of education in schools (Darling-Hammond et al, 2017).

Activator teachers act as catalysts in school transformation, actively participating in curriculum development and school management. They conduct a SWOT analysis to identify weaknesses and opportunities for innovation and create a clear action plan. These steps are in line with effective change strategies in educational settings (Fullan, 2016)

Activator teachers encourage the use of digital technologies in learning, such as Google Workspace for Education and social media. The use of these technologies not only makes learning more interactive but also prepares students for the increasingly digital world of work (Knezek et al, 2023). The use of digital platforms also allows for more flexible learning that can be tailored to students' individual needs.

Activator teachers play a role in developing curriculum and teaching materials that are relevant to developments in the world of work and the future needs of students. Collaboration with industry and universities helps ensure an adaptive and applicable curriculum. Research shows that a work-relevant curriculum improves students' work readiness (OECD, 2019).

Activator teachers initiate programs and activities that increase student engagement and hone their abilities, such as extracurricular activities and challenging projects. Participation in competitions also encourages students to achieve higher and develop important skills (Hattie, 2018).

The final step that activator teacher take is monitoring and evaluating the educational transformation. By collecting data and feedback from students and teachers, they can evaluate progress and identify areas that need improvement. This ongoing evaluation is important to ensure that the transformation is proceeding according to the plans and goals that have been set (Guskey, 2018).

School Strategy in Utilizing Activator Teachers for Educational Transformation at SMKN Kota Malang

The findings of this study show that SMKN Kota Malang implements various effective strategies in utilizing activator teachers to support educational transformation. These strategies involve identifying their potential, providing additional tasks, supporting their personal development and involving them in school policy-making. This approach aims to maximize their contribution in creating an innovative and adaptive learning environment.

The first step taken by the school is to identify the potential of the activator teachers. This identification is done through performance analysis, which includes teacher performance results, activeness in school activities, learning innovations that have been made, ability to master technology, pedagogical skills, and leadership. Research shows that mapping teacher competencies is an important step in developing effective professional development strategies (Knezek et al, 2023). By understanding the strengths and weaknesses of each activator teacher, schools can assign additional tasks that match their abilities and potential.

Activator teachers are given significant additional assignments, including being part of the school development team, curriculum development team and school activities coordinator. They

also serve as the motor of the teachers' learning community in the school, as well as mentors in the use of technology and the creation of learning tools. Research by Putra (2018) shows that meaningful additional assignments can be a powerful stimulus for teachers' professional.

The school provides strong support for the self-development of the teacher movers both within and outside the school. This support includes facilities, financial support within the school budget, and opportunities for participation in professional development programs such as those organized by the Center for Promoting Teachers (BPGP) and the community of promoting teachers. The study by Weddle et al (2019) emphasizes that continuous support in teacher professional development is a key factor in improving learning quality.

Activator teachers are actively involved in school policy-making, including in curriculum development, school management and school development teams. They are also given the responsibility of assessing teacher performance. Research by (Bendtsen et al (2022) emphasizes the importance of teachers' role in decision-making to create an inclusive and learning-oriented school culture.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

CONCLUSIONS

The educational transformation at SMKN Kota Malang demonstrates how well-planned change can have a significant positive impact. The process involves gradual and continuous changes that include teacher paradigm shifts, curriculum adjustments, integration of technology in learning, as well as increased collaboration between teachers. By involving all stakeholders, including teachers, students and industry, the school succeeded in creating a more adaptive, innovative and relevant learning environment.

The research findings show that the activator teachers at SMKN Kota Malang play a crucial role as agents of change in the implementation of educational transformation. They function as initiators, motivators, mentors, coaches, collaboration facilitators and inspirers for other teachers. The role of activator teachers as agents of change at SMKN Kota Malang has had a significant impact on students, teachers and the school as a whole. Through their various roles, they have succeeded in creating an innovative, adaptive and inclusive learning environment.

The utilization strategy of activator teachers at SMKN Kota Malang shows that their utilization can be key in creating sustainable educational transformation. Through additional assignments, personal development support and involvement in school policy-making, activator teachers are able to become effective agents of change. They not only improve their own competencies but also help develop the competencies of their colleagues and create a better learning environment for students. Thus, schools can create a learning environment that is innovative, responsive and oriented to students' needs. The transformation of education not only improves the quality of education, but also

better prepares students to face future challenges.

SUGGESTIONS

This study has not yet revealed the real effect of the number of activator teachers in schools on educational transformation, nor has it revealed the effect of the principal's leadership style on the empowerment of activator teachers in schools and the effect of the principal's leadership style on educational transformation as if. For this reason, further research needs to be carried out to reveal these things

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