Is the Education Quality in Indonesia Equal? An Analysis on the Findings of Principal Partnerships Program

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Abstract: The purpose of this research is to analyze the achievement of the results, progress, and obstacles encountered during the two years of the commencement of the principals' partnership program in Indonesia. The scope of the Principal's Partnership program comprises three main components, such as curriculum management, academic supervision, and management of the school ecosystem. Data were analyzed using survey methods. Sampling data were taken from 106 impacted schools, using the percentage results of action plan reports in 15 indicators from the three main components program's implementation. The findings indicate that the principal partnership program activities, in general, have been well implemented and according to the percentage target of the principal's partnership program with a national increase in achievement of the Curriculum Management component from 61% to 69%, academic supervision from 61% to 71% and management of the school ecosystem from 48% to 56%. The percentage increase also occurs when instrument data is processed per indicator in components. The findings imply that the partnership program has a significant impact on equity growth in remote areas.

Keywords: *Education, equity, Indonesia, partnership program, principal partnership.*

Introduction

The government carries out various ways to proliferate education in Indonesia. Geographical and cultural conditions, the development of infrastructure of educational supporting facilities, training of teachers, and education personnel may also contribute to the progress of the quality of education in Indonesia. Analytical and Capacity Development Partnership (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2013) reported that 1) The competencies of school/madrasah principals are rated lowest for competence concerning supervision and use of ICTs for management, teaching and learning; 2) the competencies of school principals were rated higher than madrasah principals concerning managerial dimensions, entrepreneurship, supervision, and teaching and counseling; the differences were statistically significant; 3) the competencies of female school/madrasah principals were assessed lower than male school/madrasah principals concerning managerial, entrepreneurship, and supervision dimensions; 4) The level of qualifications of school/madrasah principals, level of school accreditation, school status (public or private), and school locations are significant variables for the dimensions of managerial competence, entrepreneurship, supervision, and teaching and counseling; 5) In most competency indicators, the competencies of school/madrasah principals in rural and remote areas were assessed lower than that of school/madrasah principals in urban or semi-urban areas.

Bartoletti and Connelly (2013) through the National Association of Secondary School Principals, stated leadership characteristics of school principals. Those include: visionary, confident and having the ability to trust others, able to communicate work expectations, have high standards, be role models, willing to sacrifice, have integrity and consistency, curriculum developer, assessment expert, a disciplined individual, community developer, expert in

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building relationships, financial analysts, facilities and infrastructure managers, program administrators, experts in observing regulations and contracts, and policy breakers and initiatives.

A principal possesses the following competencies: visionary leadership; unity of purpose; community learners; instructional leadership abilities; owning curriculum and its tools; professionally develop; proper organizational management; owning assessment tools; ability to reflect, collaborate, and sense of inquiry, and professional behavior (Green, 2012; Thessin & Clayton, 2013). Rhodes and Fletcher also emphasize that school principals are also necessitated to possess acculturation, assimilation, and actualization abilities (Sarros et al., 2008; Sciarappa & Mason, 2014; Woolley et al., 2011). A good school leader can provide positive impacts on the school climate, instructional processes, and perceptions of classroom learning (Leithwood et al., 2004). Gulsen and Gulenay (2014) states that school principals play a role in stabilizing a school's climate to form effective school organizations. The ability of school principals to interact with the inhabitants of the school and establish cooperation with external parties of the school is one of the supporting factors for school success. Without effective leadership, then a school is unable to achieve its goals, as stated by Nastiezaie and Musavinejad (2018).

From the various descriptions above, it can be concluded that the role of a principal is important, not only as a leader of a school but also as the central regulatory system that is applied in a school. This indicates that the quality of a school will be directly influenced by the role and quality of its principal.

Up to the second year (2017), there remains a diversity and disparity in terms of access, quality, relevance, and competitiveness among advanced schools, which are generally located in Java, with less developed schools that are generally located in remote areas outside of Java. Diversity and disparity in relevance and competitiveness among the abovementioned schools, do not only appear in terms of meeting and exceeding national standards but also mainly in three essential components: Curriculum Management, Academic Supervision, and School Ecosystem Management.

In the curriculum management component, for instance, the disparity of quality not only lies in the type of curriculum applied at the educational unit level but also the level of teaching materials and outcomes of student learning at certain levels of education. In the academic supervision component, deficiencies can be found in the weak academic supervision planning documents and the principal's supervision competency. The mentioned component is even weaker when it is based on its academic supervision outcome data to improve the quality of learning and competency of teachers. Whereas in the school ecosystem management component, many schools have yet to develop school ecosystems that involve relevant school stakeholders such as supervisors, committees, business and industry, the Education Quality Assurance Agency, Universities, and Alumni. The conditions of the school's internal environment yet to receive adequate management, while the external school environment has yet been actively involved.

The Principal Partnership Program is designed to bridge poor quality schools in particular areas (after this referred to as impacted schools) with advanced schools that are generally located in Java Island (after this referred to as Partner Schools), in order for the culture of quality in partner schools flow to impacted schools, so that both types of schools are equal in terms of quality, relevance, and competitiveness. Therefore, diversity and quality disparity, relevance and educational competitiveness between regions in Indonesia may be increasingly bridged.

Literature Review

Sanders and Simon (2002); Henderson and Mapp (2002); Christenson (2004); ascertained that partnerships produce a definite increase in the achievement of school goals (increased achievement, behavior, students' attendance, parents' participation and the community in school activities and various other activities). Ertmer and Hruskocy (1999) and Bryan (2005) reported that the impact of partnerships could help promote school development, to ease access to technology and information. The partnerships produce a definite increase in the achievement of school goals (improvement in achievement, behavior, students' attendance, parents' participation and the community in school activities and various other activities). Effective school can be achieved through effective leadership (Yildirim, 2018).

The scope of the principal's Partnership program in Indonesia includes three main components, as follows: Curriculum Management, Academic Supervision, and Management of School Ecosystem. These components also appear in leadership articles by Elmore (2000) and Krug (1992). The development design of the principal's partnership pattern in the second year is aimed at ensuring the implementation of the three components of the partnership and the achievement of the percentage target of the principal's partnership goals in the second year. Its general objectives comprise an equal distribution of quality, relevance, and competitiveness of education throughout Indonesia. Particular attention in this partnership is given to schools in particular areas. Schools in these areas encounter a variety of quality obstacles, including lack of prerequisite infrastructure (such as electricity, phone signals, roads, and accessibility), high transportation costs to and from school, low socio-economic conditions, isolated geographical conditions, and so forth. These various conditions have led to challenges in efforts to improve the quality of education through educators and education personnel. Therefore, this article serves as a reference regarding the principal's partnership program that has been implemented since 2015, due to the lack of scientific papers related to the mentioned program.

One of the breakthroughs of the mentioned program is enriching competencies and motivations of school principals to conduct modifications to their school's quality culture. This effort is implemented through the principals' partnership program, namely efforts to share best practices of experiences and success stories among principals of partner schools and principals of impacted schools, in particular in the areas of conducting and solving curriculum management, academic supervision, and management of school ecosystems problems, as well as the implementation of programs in impacted schools.

The program, as mentioned above, has an impact on the Follow-up Action Plan prepared by the principals of impacted schools. Impacted schools are classified into two categories. The first category of impacted schools comprises 60% of school principals, which provide an impact towards surrounding schools in 2018. The second category comprises of the remaining 40% of schools that conduct impact in 2019. Henceforth, the Follow-Up Plan prepared by the category of 60% of school principals is applied to activities concerning strengthening the indicators of the three components of the principals' partnership program which are still considered weak and drawing up a plan to prepare the schools as impactors of other schools for the upcoming year. Whereas the Follow-up Action Plan, prepared by the category of 40% of school principals, is arranged in the form of activities related to strengthening the indicators of the three components which are assessed to be weak.
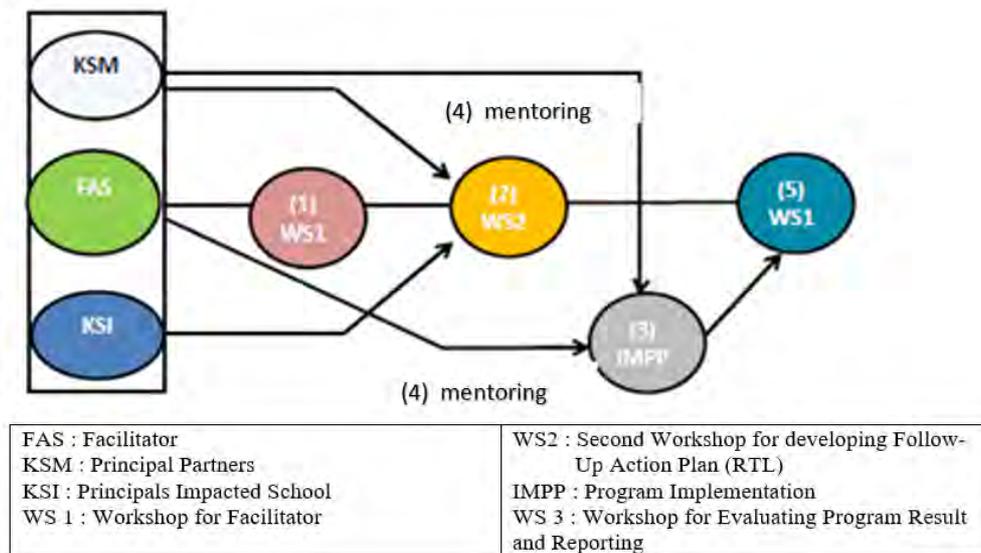

FAS : Facilitator
KSM : Principal Partners
KSI : Principals Impacted School
WS 1 : Workshop for Facilitator

WS2 : Second Workshop for developing Follow-Up Action Plan (RTL)
IMPP : Program Implementation
WS 3 : Workshop for Evaluating Program Result and Reporting

Figure 1. Implementation of School Principals' Partnership Program (Pusporini et al., 2019)

Methodology

Research Goal

This research was conducted to analyze the impact of the principals' partnership program in Indonesia on three main components: school curriculum management, academic supervision, and management of the school ecosystem. The purpose of this research is to seek the achievement of the results, progress, and obstacles encountered during the two years of the mentioned program.

Sample and Data Collection

The sample of this study comprises data derived from 106 follow-up action plans report realized by principals of impacted schools, which have been conducted in the second year. The principal of an impacted school located in a particular area must demonstrate performance, potential, and willingness to progress; and willingness to pursue quality, relevance, and competitiveness in the first year, proven by the triangulation of reports regarding the reciprocal accompaniment by Principals of Partner Schools and a Facilitator.

The data in this study were collected during 6 (six) months through the process of mentoring the implementation of the Partnership Program's Follow-Up Plan by principals of impacted schools, accompanied by principals of the partner schools and facilitators. Both school principals were involved in the direct and online mentoring process for 6 (six) months, beginning from April to September in the second year.

Data Analysis

This article is using survey methods. This article presents and describes the data regarding the percentage of achievement of the three main components of the principals' partnership program in the second year, namely: Curriculum Management, Academic Supervision, and School Ecosystem Management. The analysis of this study uses

descriptive analysis. Data were in the form of baseline data, which were used as the starting point to see modifications in the three main components of the partnership program and government policy after the implementation of the Follow-Up Plan in the second year, and final aggregation data on the achievement of the percentage of the second year of the principals' partnership program per component and aspect.

Findings / Results

The types of activities listed in the principals' follow-up action plan were selected based on self-evaluation by completing baseline instruments. The indicators of the three components with low scores on the baseline instrument were followed up by including them in the principals' follow-up action plan. It can be assumed that the activity items in the principals' follow-up action plan only included indicator items in the baseline instrument that have low scores. Thus, the indicator items listed in the principals' follow-up action plan are priority activities that are quite realistic to be realized by the principals of impacted schools for 6 months during the principal partnership program period in the second year. The implementation and achievement of principals' follow-up action plans in impacted schools will affect the performance of the principals' action plan of that education unit, which in turn will contribute to the cumulative percentage of the achieved target of the three components of the principal partnership program in the second year. The instruments of the Principal Partnership Program in the second year comprises 3 (three) main components, and 15 indicators. The Curriculum Management component comprises 8 indicators; the Academic Supervision component comprises 4 indicators, while the School Ecosystem Management contains 3 indicators. Therefore, it is important to emphasize in advance that unlisted indicators in the principals' follow-up action plan of activities of impacted school units in the second year, can be interpreted that those indicators are already included in the good category; hence, Principals of impacted schools only need to ensure that indicators not included in the principals' follow-up action plan are sustained and improved.

The aggregate percentage figures for the achievement of the Principals' Partnership Program in the second year are illustrated below in table 1.

Table 1. The Percentages of Achievement of principals' partnership program main components

No.	Component	Year	
		1st	2nd
1.	Curriculum Management	63%	68%
2.	Academic Supervision	59.27%	70%
3.	School Ecosystem Management	64.75%	66%

The results of achieved components in the implementation of the principals' partnership program in the second year shows the highest level of achievement in the Academic Supervision component (Table 1), which attains 70%. This can be interpreted that the impacted schools focus on Academic Supervision when preparing the principals' follow-up action plan to improve the school quality. If it is assumed that the Principals' Partnership Program in the first year is in the phase of document adaptation, then the Principals' Partnership Program during the second year arrives at the stage of executing academic supervision in classrooms by the school principals and utilizing academic supervision data to improve school quality.
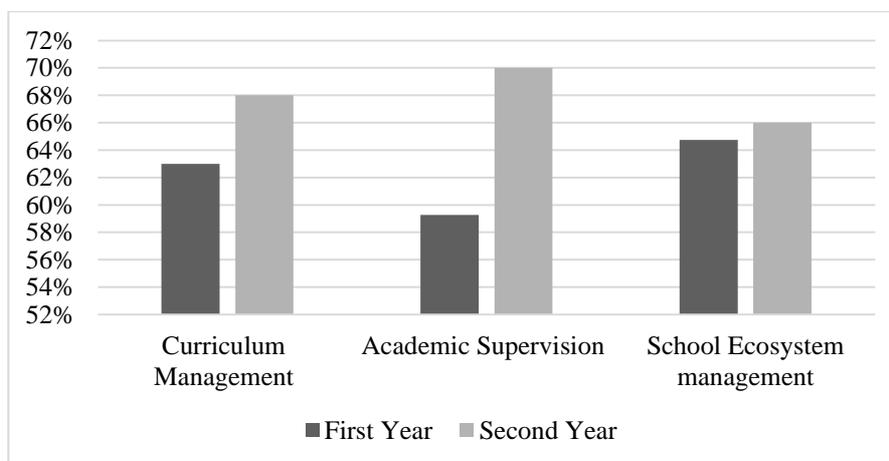

Figure 2. Percentage Comparison of Achievement of Comprehensive Principals' Partnership Program in 2 years.

The achievement of those components is based on the implementation of indicators carried out in accordance with the Principals' Follow-up Action Plan that has been prepared before its implementation. In the implementation of the Principals' Follow-up Action Plan activities, the average percentage of implementation of the Curriculum Management

component indicator was 7.16% (on average 8 indicators), the average percentage of implementation of the Academic Supervision component indicator was of 17.05% (on average 4 indicators), and the average percentage of implementation of the School Ecosystem Management-component indicators was of 17.05% (on average 3 indicators). The implementation of indicators in the Principals' Follow-up Action Plan developed by impacted schools were obtained based on monthly reports on the implementation of the Principals' Follow-up Action Plan through online assistance (web-based).

During the two years of the implementation of the program, implementation priority was placed on the three mentioned aspects and completeness of documents in impacted schools. Therefore, the improvements that were made have yet to attain a significant figure. Program activities of some schools may cause this was still new, and deep habituation was required to improve the aspects of the partnership program.

The achievement of the curriculum management component is indicated, among others, by the percentage of existing indicators. These indicators include: national curriculum is developed 75% in accordance with the characteristics of the education unit and school environment (in accordance with the vision, mission and goals of education, and characteristics of the school's environment); 67% is based on the graduate competency standard of primary and secondary school levels; Learning plan fulfills the provisions following process standards, of 54%; The implementation of learning is carried out using scientific, inquiry, problem-solving and discovery approaches by 55%; Assessment of learning outcomes to measure competence in accordance with the learning plan as a basis for determining the completeness of each basic competence by 55%; Developing character that is integrated with learning planning, implementation, and assessment by 76%; Developing good habits at school by 88%; and Developing students' literacy skills by 66%. The average percentage of achievement of the curriculum management aspects is 66.94%. This achievement appears in Figure 3 below.
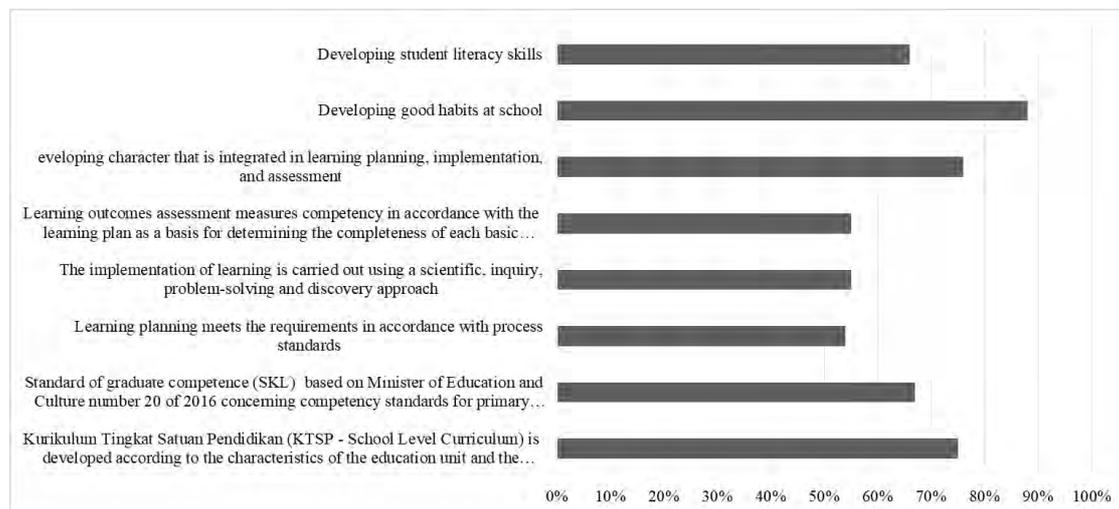

Figure 3. Achievement percentage of each indicator of curriculum management aspects.

The achievement of indicators of the Academic Supervision component is part of the implementation of the Follow-Up Action Plan developed by Principals of impacted schools, as illustrated above in Figure 3. In the Academic Supervision component, two indicators achieved 78%, namely 1) Planning academic supervision activities to improve teachers' professionalism, and 2) Implementing academic supervision activities which displayed high achievement. This finding shows that impacted schools in the previous period (first year) were still weak in academic supervision planning, so the development of Follow-Up Action Plan activities focused on achieving these indicators; On the other hand, the achievement of results evaluation of academic supervision activities remains low at 65%.
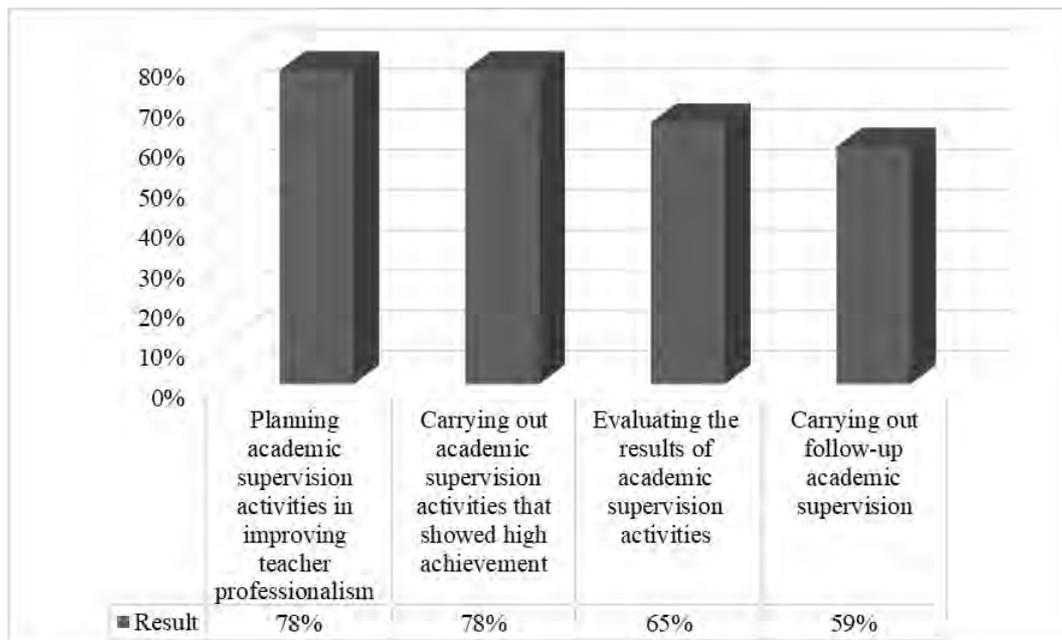
Figure 4. Achievement of Academic supervision component per indicator.

Indicators regarding planning and implementation of academic supervision rank the highest compared to other indicators, at 78%. Moreover, indicators regarding evaluating the results of academic supervision activities achieved 65%, while indicators regarding carrying out follow-up only achieved 59%. This condition is caused by the results arising from several interviews with school principals, in which data found that not only a few principals conducted the evaluation and followed up the results of academic supervision.
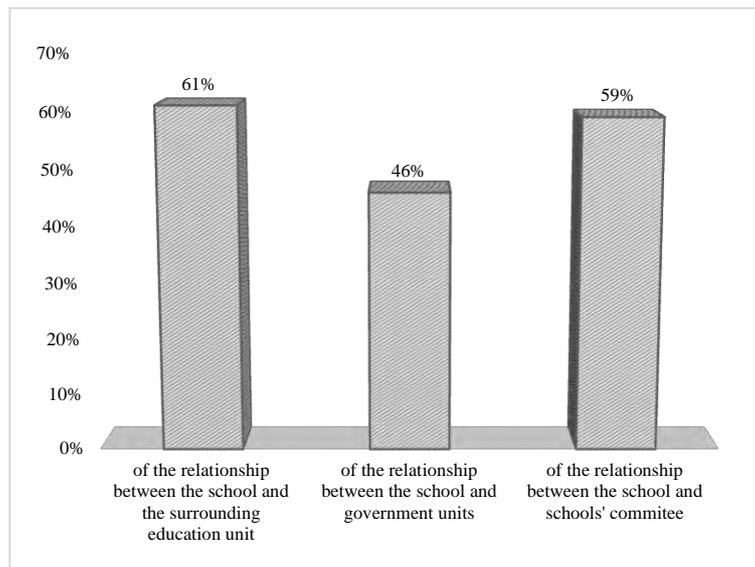

Figure 5. Achievement of School Ecosystem Management.

The achievement of the School Ecosystem Management component ranks lowest among all three principals partnership program components, which is only 55.25%, compared to the Curriculum Management and Academic Supervision components of all impacted schools that carry out the Principal's Partnership Follow-Up Plan in the second year.

Based on the achievements of the School Ecosystem Management component, the indicator of the relationship between the school and surrounding education units is the indicator with the highest achievement compared to another indicator at 61%. This shows that impacted schools focused more on activities to build relationships and cooperation amongst schools in their surrounding areas through school community development activities, such as Teacher Working Groups, School Principals' Working Group, and School Principals' Deliberation Group that aims to formulate their Follow-Up Action Plans.

Achievement indicator of the relationship between schools and Government Institutions ranks the lowest at 46%. This finding implies that impacted schools were still lacking in building cooperation with government and business

institutions or private sectors, in an effort to improve education in their schools. Impacted school's low collaboration with government institutions (including Provincial and District/City governments), industry and business sectors (including State-Owned Enterprises), universities, Education Quality Assurance Agency, maybe due to the locations of these schools in particular areas, and category 40 of impacted schools were located in remote areas. In the following year (2018), the power of impacted school principals in collaborating with industry and businesses, universities, the Education Quality Assurance Agency, government institutions, and local Education Agency, were used as capital to strengthen impacted schools, in order for them to become an impact for its surrounding schools.

Conclusion

The principals' partnership program activities, in general, have been well implemented and are in accordance with the target percentage of the principals' partnership program. This is evident from the increase in national achievements in the curriculum management component, from 61% to 69%, the academic supervision component, from 61% to 71%, and the school ecosystem management component, from 48 % to 56%. The percentage increase also occurs if the instrument data is disaggregated per indicator per component, per education level, per province, and district/city.

Out of the 106 impacted schools' principals who participated in the baseline and follow-up action plan preparation workshops in the second year, 106 impacted schools remained to participate in the mentioned program until the end of the second year of the partnership program. 64 impacted schools were included in the 60% category in the three components of the program. They were recommended to become schools bringing impacts at the provincial and district/city levels, and 42 schools included in the 40% category that has increased their target achievements in the three components of partnership and was ready to become partner schools in the following year (2019).

In conclusion, there is an increase in the three components of the principal's partnership, as expressed in other partnership programs. This research focused on data produced from the implementation of this program, conducted in 106 impacted schools in Indonesia in the second year of the program. Thus, the results of this study can only be used within the scope of similar research and may display different data if the partnership activities are carried out at the working unit / educational unit/school unit levels.

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