

The Roles of Educational Stakeholders in the Finnish Education System: Insights for Islamic Education in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – This study aims to identify the role of educational stakeholders in the Finnish education system and analyse the principles that can be used to improve the quality of Islamic education in Indonesia.

Design/methods/approach – This research is library research that collects data from various sources, such as academic journals, books, websites, and also related publications. Content analysis is used to analyse data in three steps, namely data collection, data reduction, and drawing conclusions.

Findings – The principles in the role of educational stakeholders in Finland could provide new insights to improve the quality of Islamic education in Indonesia. Some of these principles include intense collaboration between educational stakeholders, educational policies whose main aim is to support the student learning process, a participatory approach in making curriculum and educational policies, and a research-based approach is applied in the education system.

Limitations – The data from this study is limited to the literature. Future research can use different approaches to get more in-depth results, for example by conducting in-depth interviews with educational stakeholders in Finland and Indonesia.

Originality/value – This study provides a new perspective to improve the quality of Islamic Education in Indonesia from Finnish approach.

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Introduction

Many countries have been interested in the Finnish education system since the PISA result was published (Chung, 2009). Finland is at the world's top in reading, math, and science. They want to imitate this system in their nation. However, they only focused on the micro level of this system, for example, minimizing the homework, having recess time in the middle of the lesson, and imitating the teaching method of Finnish teachers. However, the change takes time to occur. One of the reasons is the poor understanding of the Finnish education system in an enormous scope, from the micro to the macro level.

In addition, Finland also had good collaboration among their educational stakeholders, from parents, teachers, principals, municipalities, and the governments. Stakeholders' engagement is a headline characteristic of Finnish education (OECD, 2020). These stakeholders have their roles, and they have the same desire to create quality education in Finland.

On the other hand, in Indonesia, Islamic education is an important part of the national education system. Islamic education has an important role in developing students holistically, both from spiritual, emotional, cognitive, and social dimensions (Kosim et. al, 2023). Apart from that, Islamic education also aims to equip students with knowledge and skills that are important for their lives (Jalaluddin, 2016). For this reason, Islamic Education in Indonesia continues to improve in various existing challenges. One way that can be carried out is to take insights from other countries' education best practices, for example, Finland. The principles in the Finnish education system may provide new insights to enhance the quality of Islamic education in Indonesia.

This research aims to identify the roles of education stakeholders in the Finnish education system in creating quality education. Therefore, the results will establish a better understanding of the Finnish education system. Then, the principles that can be applied to Islamic Education in Indonesia also be analysed.

Methods

This research approach is library research. The sources used as data for this research come from scientific journals, books, websites, and other publications related to research topics. The researcher used these sources to answer research questions, namely: 1) What is the role of educational stakeholders in the education system in Finland? 2) What principles can be applied in Islamic education in Indonesia?

To analyse the data, the researcher employed the content analysis method. First, the researcher carries out data reduction or the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, and abstracting rough data. The next step is to present data or a series of information that forms arguments. After that, the researcher concluded from the results of data reduction (Fuad & Nugroho, 2014)

Result

This section will be divided into several sections. First, the researcher will explain the definition of the roles of education stakeholders in the Finnish education system.

Second, the role of every stakeholder will be explained and discussed. After that, several principles that exist in the Finnish education system will be explained and elaborated to Islamic Education in Indonesia. Then, the conclusion will be written in the last part.

In this research, education stakeholder is defined as various actors involved in providing education in an education system. Meanwhile, the role is the duties or responsibilities of each education stakeholder. These roles can be several and relate to other educational stakeholders.

1. The Roles of Educational Stakeholders in Finland

1.1 The Roles of the University

In Finland, the Faculty of Education is one of the faculties in great demand by prospective students. Many want to become teachers because society values this profession highly (Simola, 2005). Among the applicants, only about 10 percent are accepted into the education department, this shows that the competition is relatively high (Sahlbreg, 2011). Prospective students must also go through various entrance selections that filter out their passion for becoming a teacher. They must write essays about why they want to become teachers, after this, educational experts will interview them to find out more about their motivation. Then they must also pass a test to measure their academic abilities (Sahlbreg, 2011).

On the one hand, the tight selection process meant that only a few prospective students could enter the education department. Nevertheless, with so many entrance selection tests, students majoring in education who pass have good qualities to become teachers in the future.

Teachers in Finland have excellent quality in carrying out their duties. They have a great sense of responsibility in performing their duties because they have a passion for teaching and want to help develop children's potential (Sahlberg, 2011). One of the influences is the university's admission selection process, which is quite strict. Universities also have a curriculum that combines theory and practice to educate prospective teachers in Finland. In addition to learning about various educational and pedagogical theories, students also put these theories into practice through teaching practice in class. This activity is significant in teacher education studies.

Taking the example at the Teacher Training School in Turku, teaching practice starts in the first year in the autumn semester, and there are four practice periods during the five-year study process. In the first and second years, the prospective teacher will practice teaching at school as a teacher and educator. Then in the fourth year, these prospective teachers conduct weekly teaching practices related to the subjects they teach in depth. In their last year, they perform optional thematic teaching. (Turku Teacher Training School, 2022)

Skills in conducting research are highly emphasized at universities (Chung, 2023). The students majoring in education are educated on how to conduct research in the field of education. Thus, they can continue to innovate to develop the quality of the learning process based on direct data collected during the learning process. These research skills

are beneficial for helping children with learning difficulties and how to design effective learning by considering the various abilities of different students.

Apart from preparing prospective teachers, the role of universities in Finland is to conduct academic research on education ranging from small scopes such as classroom learning to broad scopes such as curriculum, Finnish government policies in terms of education, and comparisons of education with other countries. The results of this research can become one of the considerations in determining government policies in Finland, both at the national level such as in curriculum formulation, and at the regional level in educational development activities.

To conclude, some of the roles of universities in creating quality education in Finland are selecting prospective students with passion and good quality to become teachers. The university also educates and trains these prospective teachers, so they are ready to carry out their duties by combining theory and practice. Furthermore, another role of the university is to conduct research in the field of education as material for consideration by education policymakers.

1.2 The Roles of Teachers

Teachers are a crucial element of the Finnish educational success (Niemi et al., 2018). Teachers in Finland have significant autonomy in carrying out their duties. Teachers in Finland are also Master's graduates, which ensures that they are of good quality in carrying out their duties (Chung, 2023).

The teacher's primary role in Finland is to support the student learning process because, in the Finnish education system, the top pyramid of all the efforts made by the government and other education stakeholders is to support the student learning process. In addition, the teachers in Finland are crucial in realizing this goal because they constantly interact with students daily. Teachers are required to understand the students; therefore, they can deeply know each student's needs. That is because each student has a different personality, way of learning, and learning abilities. The teacher cannot uniform the different students and they must know the needs of each student in the learning process. (Niemi et. al., 2018)

Finnish teachers also play a role in providing support to students, and this support consists of three types. The first is general support, carried out by the teacher daily during the teaching process. For example, some children need help understanding the material and then ask the teacher. If students need help understanding the material they receive, the teacher can do remedial teaching. The second is intensified support. If general support is insufficient, pedagogical assessments and planning are carried out to support students intensively. Furthermore, the last is special support. This support is more intensive and also involves education providers gathering information from teachers and the school's welfare group, which will be used to make decisions related to special support (Finnish National Board of Education, 2016)

Teachers in Finland must also understand the current challenges in the world of Education in Finland. For example, the number of immigrants is increasing from year to

year, which causes many students in Finland to be from various countries. These challenges cause language barriers for the students when following class lessons. Teachers must be able to support the learning process of students with this multicultural background (Niemi et. al., 2018)

To deal with this phenomenon, Finland teachers are responsible for paying attention to different languages and cultures when performing teaching activities. First, they must be aware that their students' sociolinguistic backgrounds are different. Second, instead of viewing differences as an obstacle, teachers in Finland must view them as an asset that can be used as learning material. Third, teachers in Finland must be inclined to support and facilitate students who use different languages.

Globalization and technological developments are also challenges that teachers in Finland must face. They must be able to teach the skills needed by students in the future, such as 21st-century skills, which consist of communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity. (Niemi et. al., 2018)

Furthermore, Finnish teachers also play a role in involving parents to support the student learning process, especially at home. The involvement of parents can speed up the learning process of students. What teachers teach at school may differ from what happens at home. Therefore, continuous communication between teachers and parents can support student learning. (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2018).

In conclusion, some of the teacher's roles in the education system in Finland are teaching and supporting student learning processes with an individual approach; thus, every child can learn well. Teachers also play a role in teaching students the knowledge and skills needed in the future. In addition, teachers must also continue to communicate with parents to support the student's learning process.

1.3 The Roles of Principals

Principals in Finland have a role in organizing activities in schools, and they also play a role in conducting quality assurance regularly. However, in the education system in Finland, there is no external quality control system. Each school in Finland has its evaluation system to continuously develop the quality of learning at school (Sahlbreg, 2007).

This style is very different compared to other countries, they tend to apply a rigorous quality control pattern, where teachers are asked to report their teaching results in detail in many administrative formats. This method causes the teacher's time in teaching to be less, and their focus will be diverted to making quite a lot of learning administration.

With an internal quality control system, school principals in Finland can regularly discuss matters that need assistance from teachers. The focus of the discussion was not to evaluate past performance but rather to be oriented toward future visions and plans. Values and understanding of what is best for learners are the focus of school culture (Sahlbreg, 2007).

1.4 The Roles of Parents

Parents play a significant role in educating their children. Parents who care about their children's educational development will monitor and support their children's learning development. Parents can help their children if they experience learning difficulties. Good cooperation between schools and families will significantly help the development of children's learning.

In Finland, parents play a role in monitoring their child's learning progress through an online platform called Wilma. From there, they can see their student's progress at school, for example, their arrival, learning process, class schedule, and announcements from the school. Parents in Finland are required to monitor their child's development process through this platform. Educating is not only on the teacher, but parents also have a vital role. Children spend only a few hours at school but spend more time at home with their families. For this reason, the role of parents is crucial in continually educating their children, not only with academic lessons but also with moral values that will be useful in their later lives. (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2018)

1.5 The Roles of Municipalities

Municipalities have a role in managing education in their respective regions. This institution is responsible for providing basic services to its citizens. One is providing education services ranging from early childhood to upper secondary education. (Suomi, fi, 2022)

The education system in Finland is decentralized (OECD, 2020). The central government only outlines educational goals, but local governments play a significant role in implementing them. Municipalities or joint municipal authorities can manage funds, recruit staff, and develop more detailed local curricula in collaboration with schools. However, municipalities can also delegate decision-making to schools, especially in urban areas (OECD, 2020). The national curriculum, which contains general guidelines, is then adapted to the context of each area. The geographical conditions of regions in Finland are different. For example, in the northern region, there tends to be much forest, while in the south, it is closer to the sea; thus, the curriculum implementation can be adapted to that context.

Learning about forestry can be included by local governments to create awareness of the students of their surrounding nature. Learning about the sea can also be given; thus, students can get closer to the natural conditions around them. By giving the local government the freedom to adjust the curriculum according to the context in their area, learning will be more contextual and relevant to the environment in which they live.

Municipalities must also ensure that every child in Finland has the right to quality education. These children are entitled to basic compulsory education from the age of 7 to 18 or when they have completed upper secondary education or its equivalent.

In addition, the local government also ensures that children get good transportation facilities, ensuring that school trips are as safe and as close to their homes as possible. Students are entitled to free transportation fees from the government if the

trip is more than 5 kilo meters and the route is too difficult for students to go alone. The local government can provide more suitable transport for these students. The government also provides free warm meals for students. These facilities support the physical development of students. (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2022)

1.6 The roles of the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Finnish National Board of Education

The Ministry of Education and Culture leads the national education administration in Finland. The agency also has an obligation to prepare various legislation, education management policies, and distribution of education funds from the central government. According to government regulations, the Ministry of Education and Culture has the authority to manage daycare, education, training, research, art, culture, sports, youth work, the archival, museums, the public library system, religion, student financial aid, and copyrights. (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2022)

Then, under this institution, there is The Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI), a national development agency responsible for managing early childhood education and care, pre-primary, basic, general, and vocational upper secondary education. They manage adult education and training as well. However, higher education is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Culture (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2022). Although the central government plays an essential authority in the steering role, schooling decisions are mainly the responsibility of local education authorities (generally municipalities) and schools. (OECD, 2020)

The Ministry of Education and Culture determines the direction of Education in Finland. Thus, they must prepare the next generation in Finland so they can live well in the future. This policy can be seen from the latest Finnish education curriculum, which is concerned with various kinds of educational challenges in the future, for example, climate change which threatens human life. Children need to be equipped with the knowledge to apply an environmentally friendly lifestyle in everyday life.

The changing world that occurs very quickly makes various changes in human life. For example, Artificial Intelligence is replacing many jobs. The Ministry of Education in Finland is also targeting children to have long-life learning skills so they can continue to adapt to the changing times that are so fast.

2. Insights for Islamic Education in Indonesia

This section will explain the principles of the role of educational stakeholders in the Finnish education system and the implications for Islamic education in Indonesia. Four principles will be explained in this section, namely:

2.1 Good Collaboration among various Educational Stakeholders

The education system in Finland emphasizes collaboration (Shalbreg, 2007). This can also be seen in the collaboration of various educational stakeholders to provide quality education to students. One example is collaboration between schools and parents.

Teachers and parents in Finland can monitor their children's progress using a digital platform called Wilma. Teachers can update children's learning processes, so parents can know about this. That way, parents can also help their children's learning process at home.

The synergy between school and home is important in education. With this synergy, what is taught at school by teachers can be reinforced by parents at home. This makes the lessons or values taught at school align with what students do at home. If there is no good collaboration between schools and parents, it will be difficult to achieve educational goals.

In Islamic education, the family also has an important role in educating children. Children spend more time with their parents. Meanwhile, time at school is only limited. For this reason, collaboration between schools and families need to be strengthened. This collaboration does not only involve giving assignments to students that can be done with their parents but can be more intensive. For example, teachers and parents establish more regular communication regarding student development progress. With advances in technology, this communication can also be done through various digital platforms, for example, the WhatsApp application or policymakers can develop applications such as Wilma in Finland which allows parents to see students' learning progress in more detail and structure. In this way, teachers and parents can work together to support the development of students to be better, both in terms of academics and character.

2.2 Participatory Approach in Creating Educational Policies

The participatory approach is an important principle in the education system in Finland. This approach is applied in curriculum creation in Finland (Soini et al., 2021). Various educational stakeholders are involved in the process. Teachers, school principals, administrators, parents, students, government, and education experts are asked for their opinions on creating the curriculum (Soini et al., 2021). The participation of various educational stakeholders promotes the curriculum in Finland not only theoretical but also in line with needs in the real context. The input provided by teachers, students, and school principals will make the curriculum have a good practical side. This is important because even though theoretically the curriculum created is good, if it is difficult to apply in daily teaching, then this will create difficulties for teachers. For this reason, with this participatory approach, the curriculum created will be easier to apply by all educational stakeholders.

Furthermore, curriculum creation in Finland is also managed by an independent agency (Finnish National Agency of Education) which is not influenced by political interests (Soini et.al, 2021). It will reduce the influence of politics in the field of education and makes curriculum-making more objective because it involves various educational stakeholders. In this way, curriculum creation becomes more sustainable.

In the Indonesian context, Bakar (2015) argues that one way to overcome problems in Islamic education is to depoliticize education policy. According to him, new education policies tend to have no continuity with policies implemented by previous leaders. These new policies tend to have a "political" nuance rather than being based on changes in philosophy and substance. To overcome this, a participatory approach can be one way to

create education policies. A participatory approach can make education policies more sustainable and the influence of political power reduced.

In addition, by using a participatory approach, various Islamic education stakeholders will feel involved in improving the quality of Islamic education. Moreover, the educational policies and curricula created will be more in line with various needs in real contexts. Apart from that, the inclusiveness of Islamic education, especially in educational policy making, could also be better. All stakeholders in Islamic education, starting from the Ministry of Religion, Islamic Organizations, religious teachers, school principals, parents and students, have their opinions respected in making curriculum and educational policies.

2.3 Supporting Students' Learning is the Main Goal of Educational Policies

In the Finnish education system, the core goal of educational policy-making is to support the student learning process. Various education stakeholders work together to improve the quality of education so that students can learn well. Teachers are given the autonomy to teach students so that it suits the needs of the students in their class (Chung, 2023). This is important because every teacher has a variety of students and a one-size-fits-all approach cannot accommodate the needs of different students.

Moreover, in Finland, there is no external quality control in education. The teachers are not evaluated by outside parties, but together with the school principal, the teachers reflect to improve the quality of learning (Sahlbreg, 2007). This reflection does not focus on problems that occurred in the past but is oriented toward improvements in the future. This approach makes the process of improving the quality of education more appropriate to the needs of each school. In addition, with this approach, school principals and teachers can also provide better learning support to students because it is more in line with what students need.

In the context of Islamic education in Indonesia, supporting student learning processes should also be the main goal of educational policy. This can be done by reducing the administrative burden on teachers so that they have more autonomy in providing higher-quality learning for students. Teaching administration is an important thing for a teacher, but if teachers focus too much on this and are also required to make teaching administration reports that are too detailed, this will cause teacher autonomy in teaching to be reduced. Thus, they cannot provide sufficient support in the student learning process.

Moreover, the approach of conducting school-based evaluations can also be an alternative for improving the quality of Islamic education. Teachers together with the principal can regularly reflect on the student's learning process so that future-oriented improvements can be made to provide the best support to students in learning the Islamic religion. With this approach, school principals can also provide support that suits teachers' teaching needs. Thus, teachers will be able to create higher-quality learning. This is different from the teacher performance evaluation system which tends to put pressure on teachers to continue to improve their performance. In the short term, this method may be

effective, but in the long term, it will have a bad impact on teachers' well-being, so that they cannot provide quality learning to students.

2.4 Research-based Approach is Applied in the Education System

In Finland, research-based approaches are applied in various sectors in the field of education. This approach allows the making of educational policies, both in the classroom and in the national scope, to always be based on valid data. Thus, quality of education can always develop in a better direction. To become a teacher in Finland, the ability to conduct research is something that must be mastered (Sahlbreg, 2011). With these skills, teachers in Finland can carry out research in the classroom to overcome existing challenges. With this research they can make decisions that suit their students' learning needs. Apart from that, with good research skills, teachers in Finland can consume the results of the latest research in the field of education so that they can be used to improve the quality of their teaching (Sahlbreg, 2011).

In a broader scope, a research-based approach is also an important principle in formulating a curriculum. Curriculum creation must be based on valid research results. Furthermore, this approach is also used to gather points of view from various educational stakeholders to improve the quality of education in Finland (Soini et al, 2021). By using this approach, educational decisions both in the micro and macro scope can be more accurate and not influenced by certain assumptions or interests.

In the context of Islamic education in Indonesia, this research-based approach seems to be a way that can be used to improve the quality of Islamic teaching in classrooms, schools, and in making educational policies on a broader scale. If Islamic religious education teachers have good abilities to conduct research within the classroom and school, then this will be able to improve the quality of teaching. Moreover, Islamic Religious Education teachers will also be able to use the latest research in education to provide better support in the student learning process. This research-based approach will also create more accurate education policies if implemented by other Islamic education stakeholders.

Conclusion

In conclusion, one of the reasons why the education system in Finland is of such high quality is because every education stakeholder carries out their role correctly. They work together and have the same goals to create quality education. Starting from universities that select teacher candidates very strictly, only people who are genuinely passionate about becoming teachers and have a calling to become teachers are selected. Then the university cooperates with schools to train these prospective teachers to become qualified teacher candidates.

All educational stakeholders in Finland have the same long-term goals. Education policies at the national level are adjusted to the realities on the ground so that they can be applied in everyday student learning, create quality learning processes, and support the

well-being of students. Schools can only carry out their duties with the support and cooperation of other educational elements. (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2018)

Moreover, in making the curriculum in Finland, all education stakeholders were involved, starting from parents' associations, teachers, school principals, governments, experts from universities, and the private sector. Not only a top-bottom approach but also a bottom-up so that all actors participate in creating quality education in Finland. Then, in the implementation of education, all stakeholders play a role in supporting the learning process for students.

Even though the education systems in Finland and Indonesia have quite a lot of differences from a socio-cultural perspective, it seems that the principles in the role of educational stakeholders in Finland could provide new insights to improve the quality of Islamic education in Indonesia. Some of these principles include more intense collaboration between education stakeholders, education policies whose main aim is to support the student learning process, a participatory approach in making education policies, and research-based approach is applied in the education system.

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