

TOTAL QUALITY SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS: STUDIES IN PRIVATE AND STATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study is to analyze efforts accomplished by private and state elementary schools in improving five characteristics of Total Quality School. This descriptive thesis makes use of interviews and questionnaires as data collection methods. In addition, this study data is obtained from schools' principals, teachers, students, several students' parents, and committees. The study result showed that both schools have applied efforts in improving five characteristics of Total Quality School: focus on customer, total involvement, measurement, commitment, and continuous improvement characteristics. However, both schools should do more efforts on several aspects of total quality school, in order to make the schools more qualified.

Keywords: Customer focus, Total involvement, Measurement, Commitment, continuous improvement.

INTRODUCTION:

As Government Regulation of Republic of Indonesia number 19 of 2005 stated, national education acquires good quality when there are certification for teachers, evaluation, and accreditation from the government. Related to the first requirement, in 2013, data from Ministry of Culture and Education showed that government provided approximately 350 thousand of certifications to Indonesian teachers. Furthermore, in national context, one of various evaluation forms is national examination. This type of evaluation aims to assess the students' academic achievement at the end of Year 6, at the end of Year 9 (3th grade of Junior High School), and at the end of year 12 (3th grade of Senior High School) (Zulfikar, 2009). What is more, Gomby and Larson (1992) argued that evaluation in school context could be employed in order to find facts of the school's programs implementation. Meanwhile, in the accreditation field, the government affords basic guidance for accreditation that could be found in The Republic of Indonesian Law number 20 of 2013, about National Education System.

Relevant to education quality, which one of its criteria is accreditation, there are several elementary schools in Salatiga, Central Java, Indonesia that are estimated to acquire favorable quality since they earn quite satisfied accreditation grade. Among those qualified schools, there are private and state elementary schools. The former school gains A grade and the latter school accomplishes B for the accreditation. Several interviews were held to analyze deeper about both schools' efforts to enhance quality. Here is one of the state elementary school principal's statements:

"In order to improve our school's quality, we use accreditation and evaluation. Besides, we guide the students from the beginning until the end of their study in this school. Moreover, we increase our teachers' quality as well as facilities and infrastructures"

It is seen from the interview that the principal tries to apply standardized rules by the government, in order to increase the school's quality. In connection with schools' attempts to improve their quality, Arcaro (2005) proposed an idea of Total Quality School, which its five characteristics are focus on customer, total involvement, measurement, commitment, and continuous improvement. To begin with, Total Quality School is a part of Total Quality Management (TQM). TQM, which its origin was from industry world, is an efficient principle to do quality service (Sallis, 2006). As it was proven to be very effective in the industry area, it was then applied in several sectors, that one of them was education. In the education context, Atieh (2008) explained that TQM is a quality-based performance set for the first time to produce qualified educational product and fulfill the community needs. In order to improve the quality-based performance through TQM, Umiarso and Gojali (2010) suggested that the schools should apply several TQM principles, for instance customer focus, qualified headmaster type of leadership, staff involvement in school programs and activities, and good relationship between school and its customers. In accordance with TQM in education area, there is a management model that leads a school to be more independent and decentralized in terms of bureaucracy, prioritize its customers' satisfaction, and be able to face future educational challenge, which is called School Based Quality Improvement Management (SBQIM) (Mulyasa, 2002). Furthermore, Shortell, et al. (1995) stated that SBQIM's key elements are continuous improvement, structured processes, and whole organization participation. Related to characteristics of SBQIM, total quality school possesses the same ideas with the management model in terms of quality improvement efforts.

Regarding to quality enhancement, there are a few studies with their findings. The first study, which was conducted by Manoe (2009), found that a factor to quality improvement is a committed, consistent, and innovative principal. Nuraniyah (2012) added that quality could be enhanced if a school applies good continuous programs; evaluation; fun-effective-creative-innovative-active types of learning; teachers' and staffs' professional improvement; student self-development; and cooperation between school and students' parents. What is more, a study conducted by De Rozari (2012) showed that two strategies of quality improvement are teachers' empowerment and evaluation.

Based on the above explanation of the total quality school background study, it is found interesting to analyze further about the improvements of five characteristics of Total Quality School. At least there are two reasons this study is conducted. Firstly, although the three studies discussed about quality improvement, they have not analyzed the efforts to improve a school's quality through the five characteristics comprehensively. Secondly, since business field has been successfully implementing TQM, it could be applied to education world. Thus, this leads to curiosity of the Total Quality School application attempted by the private and state elementary schools. In other words, the purpose of this study is to describe efforts achieved by the private and state elementary schools in order to improve characteristics of Total Quality School.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

TOTAL QUALITY SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS:

As Arcaro (2005) stated, five characteristics of Total Quality School are focus on customer, total involvement, measurement, commitment, and continuous improvement. In focus on customer, Bush (2003) pointed out that the school's aim is to establish customer's satisfaction by fulfilling their needs towards the institution. Meanwhile, Tjiptono and Diana (2005) described that five fundamental things to focus on customer is by giving tangible proof, providing reliability, being responsive, presenting assurance, and showing empathy. Through tangible proof, school equips itself with facilities and infrastructures as well as extracurricular activities. In addition, reliability will be one of the schools' efforts to serve the customer well. Furthermore, school shows some responsiveness by responding complaints from the customers and solving problems as fast and precisely as possible. Moreover, school assures the customer's satisfaction by showing respects to them and being dependable. Further, one of school's ways to empathize the customer is by giving extra attention to them. Thus, Forza and Filippini (1998) stressed that it is utterly important for an organization to pay extra attention to the customers by maintaining the closeness through communication. There are two types of customers in a school context. Arcaro (2005) emphasized that internal customers in education context are students, students' parents, teachers, and staffs. Furthermore, society, companies, military, and other organizations are external customers. In total involvement, the teachers and staffs are invited to give ideas, opinion, and suggestions to the school. In other words, Dimitriadis (2000) suggested that school should involve its teachers and staffs to participate in its programs or events. Thus, the school's teachers and staffs are encouraged to engage in information processes, problem solving activities, and peer reviews. What is more, Schargel (1994) argued that teachers and staffs will be able to evaluate school's inaccurate system or element. Furthermore, Bridgehouse and Tomlinson (1991) suggested that school can involve students' parents as partners in education by giving opportunity to take part in delivering suggestions, ideas, and opinion related to the school's programs.

The purpose of enhancing measurement is to show the school's strong and weak points (Soria-Garcia & Martinez-Lorente, 2012). Thus, the schools will be able to undertake exact steps in quality improvement. Cullen et al. (2003) emphasized that the measurement could be done in form of evaluation. Related to the evaluation, Arcaro (2005) provided an example for evaluation: students' examination grades. The government is also able to give evaluation to the school's performances (including its teachers, staffs, and students) (Van der Westhuizen, 1996). In addition, evaluation can be in type of teachers' peer reviews.

Another attempt to improve total quality school is when the people in school maintain high level of commitment (Morrison, 2002). In other words, commitment is one of many strategies to keep schools obtaining or increasing their quality (Sallis, 2006; Manoe, 2009). In increasing this characteristic, school principal shows appreciation through giving reward and motivating to teachers and staffs (Creech, 1996).

The fifth total quality school character is continuous improvement. Reynolds et al. (2001) argued that one of many ways to gain school improvement is by possessing the ability to change. Another attempt is by developing teachers' and staff professional skills (Lunenburg, 2010). Also, according to Fuentes – Fuentes et al. (2004), learning from other school's management or experts could be also the next step to improve school's quality.

RESEARCH METHOD:

This study was conducted in Eben Haezer 3 Christian Elementary School (private) and Salatiga 01 Public Elementary School (state). The reason this study chooses the two schools because they are distinguished in Salatiga for their good tradition to prioritize quality. In addition, it was a descriptive of study, which aimed to describe efforts accomplished by the both schools in improving five characteristics of Total Quality School. Thus, this study used the five characteristics of Total Quality School as indicators. What is more, data collection methods in this study were interview and questionnaire spreads. Interviews were conducted to school principals. Furthermore, interviews and questionnaire were given to teachers, students' parents, school committees, and students of both schools. In addition, questionnaire made use of Likert scale. By using the Likert scale, each question has score: Strongly agree (5), Agree (4), Quite agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly disagree (1). In this study, data analysis applied three components such as data reduction, data display, and conclusion draw as well as data verification. In reducing data, the data from interview and questionnaire were simplified. Further, the data was grouped in the display step. The data then was clustered based on five characteristics of Total Quality Schools. Moreover, data analysis used text narration along with qualitative and quantitative tables. After that, the data was concluded by finding relation, similarities, and differences between both schools. Finally, there would be data verification.

RESULTS:

Based on the research, there are various efforts attempted by the private and state elementary schools in improving five characteristics of total quality school. In addition, this study employs principals, teachers, students, students' parents, and committees to reach the findings. Since there is different characteristic between both elementary schools, it is consequently found several different steps taken by them. Here are comparisons between the private and state elementary schools' efforts in enhancing total quality school characteristics, which are compiled in a table. However, in this journal, this study does not include Likert Scale Questionnaire results.

Table 1: Comparison between Private and State Elementary Schools' Efforts in Improving Five Characteristics of Total Quality School

No	Total Quality School Characteristics	Private Elementary School	State Elementary School
1	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers are friendly, respectful, and competent. However there are still found several teachers, who do not show friendly attitude towards their students. Teachers pay more attention to students with learning difficulty. School provides extra study helps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School responds the students' and students' parents' complaints as quickly as possible. Teachers are friendly and competent. School provides extra study helps.
2.	Total Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers suggest ideas and opinion in school's activities and programs. Teachers become committees in school activities and programs. Students' parents suggest ideas, opinion and help to provide fund in school's activities and programs. Students' parents become committees in several school activities and programs. Teachers do not have authority to make decision in meetings and other school programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers suggest ideas and opinion in school's activities and programs. Teachers and school committees involve in school programs and activities discussion, even in Criteria for Minimum Completion grade. Teachers help managing school's administration parts. Teachers have authority to make decision in meetings and other school programs. Several school committees do not fully participate in the school's activities and programs.
3.	Measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School evaluates students' achievement. School evaluates teachers' performance. Principal evaluates school programs and activities. The government evaluates school's accomplishment. Teachers' performance evaluation affects job promotion. School has not implemented formal peer review/evaluation for teachers yet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School evaluates students' achievement. School evaluates teachers' performance. Principal evaluates school programs and activities. The government evaluates school's accomplishment. Principal helps to teacher to be promoted, then evaluates his/her post-promotion working performance. School has not implemented formal peer review/evaluation for teachers yet.
4.	Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher and staffs are responsible to work well. School provides programs to enhance its quality, i.e: Weekly Plan and Character building programs. School provides facilities and infrastructure. Teachers have chance to be trained and join seminars. Principal rewards and motivates teachers as well as staffs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher and staffs are responsible to work well. School provides facilities and infrastructure. Principal prioritizes teachers' and staffs' welfare before evaluation. Teachers have chance to be trained and join seminars. Principal rewards and motivates teachers as well as staffs.
5.	Continuous Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School improves the programs held School keeps innovating its programs and activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School keeps innovating its programs and activities. School enhances teachers' and staffs'

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers and staffs have opportunities to attend seminar or training • School collaborates with governments, university, and other parties. 	<p>welfare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers and staffs have opportunities to attend seminar or training.
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Source: Primary Data, 2013.

As can be seen in the table above, focus on customer's attempt difference that can be drawn is that the private elementary school undertakes systematic strategies to solve problems. In this case, in-charge class teacher will be asked to solve problem when it happens. If the problem could not be solved by the in-charge teacher, then the homeroom teacher will help to deal with the problem. Finally, when the dispute is still unsolved, principal is going to fix it. Further effort taken is the school teachers try to give more help to students, whose learning ability is below the average, by giving them extra individual attention during their learning process. The private school also presents programs, for example Character Building and Weekly Plan. Different from the first school, the state elementary school attempts to improve focus on customer by possessing and maintaining good quality school standard. Moreover, this school also enhances its students' achievement. In the second characteristic of total quality school, the private school does not involve teachers to decide things independently related to school programs and activities. As a result, the teachers only deliver suggestions, ideas, and opinions, related to the programs as well as activities. Opposite to the first school, the second school gives chances to its teachers in making decisions in the school programs and activities. In addition, the school's teachers and committees involve in its agendas, even in the discussion of Criteria for Minimum Completion grade. The next difference between both schools is, in the later school, teachers help the schools to manage its administration things or other activities based on the teachers' skill and ability in school management.

The next contrasting effort taken by both schools in improving measurement is the first school will give job promotion to teachers if they show good performance. In other words, the teachers will be evaluated first before they are promoted. On the contrary, principal in the second school helps the teacher to be promoted, and then he will evaluate the teachers' post-promotion working performance. In enhancing commitment, differences found in both schools are the private elementary school provides several programs. Meanwhile, the state elementary school's principal prioritizes teachers' and staffs' welfare before evaluation. In the final characteristic, attempts that the private elementary school undertakes is to try improving the programs that have been implemented

DISCUSSION:

From previous analysis, five characteristics of Total Quality School are focus on customer, total involvement, measurement, commitment, and continuous improvement. Generally, the private and state schools mostly apply same efforts in improving the five characteristics of Total Quality School. However, since there is difference in both schools' status that leads to different each school's characteristics, it automatically creates slight disparate attempts in improving the five characteristics of Total Quality School. In discussion section, this study would analyze further about five characteristics of Total Quality School increase attempted by both schools.

Focus on Customer. By striving to do five principles of focus on customer, both schools' attempts are in accordance with Tjiptono's and Diana's (2001) opinion. The five principles of focus on customers are giving tangible proof, providing reliability, being responsive, presenting assurance, and showing empathy. In showing tangible proof, the private school's principal stated that the school creates a program called Character Building. This school's principal realized that there is another improvement that should be attempted besides the students' academic one, which is their character. This school argues that there should be a balance between academic and character lives, as stated in one of several interviews with the principal:

"We present a program named Character Building, where our teachers train the students to be a good character person. In addition, we do not only give theoretical lessons, but also apply them in our class activities as well as in the students' daily life."

Moreover, both schools try to improve the focus on customer by assuring them with competent teachers. The schools assure the costumers' satisfaction in various ways, one of them is by providing qualified teachers, who hold at least bachelor's degree and also several of them are gaining master degree for the students. The two schools also enhance empathy by creating smooth communication with its customer. As a result, the schools are able to maintain closeness with the customer. Thus this action is similar with Forza' & Filippini' (1998) and Umiarso' & Gojali' (2010) opinions. Since communication is the way to maintain the school's attempt to understand what customers need, both schools undertake various methods to fulfill it. Here is one of several interviews with the state elementary school principal, related to the school's way to communicate better with

the customers, especially the student' parents.

"To make our school-students' parents communication easier, we (school) try to be as open as possible to reach. Our customers can easily communicate with the school via my cellular phone, the school's telephone, letter, and direct communication. In the near future, we plan to create a school website, where there are the students' grades in it; in order to fulfill the students' parents need to easily check their children's academic improvement" As shown in the interview, the school's efforts to focus on its customer appear from the way the principal and teachers are reachable in terms of communication. Moreover, this school has a breakthrough by creating a website that one of its contents is the students' grades.

In a bigger picture, the two schools' steps to improve focus on customers have similarity with Arcaro (2005), where schools pay attention to its internal customers. However, this study has not investigated further about schools' efforts to focus on their external students. Although in the private elementary school, the teachers have shown their friendliness to the customers, there are still several of them who has not attempted fully yet. A possibility to this action is due to the fact that there are times when the teacher's performance is not supervised. Another assumption is that sometimes teachers experience stress since they face pressure and hard times at job, as Sutjipto (2001) stated that occasionally teacher involve in negative situation, which leads to emotional tension. As a result those teachers do not show pleasure behavior towards their students. In summary, strategies performed by both schools have been in accordance with Bush (2003) that the schools have been attempting to increase customers' satisfaction.

Total Involvement. Teachers' participation in both schools' programs and activities is in accordance with Dimitriadis (2000). Furthermore, teachers and staffs' role in evaluating, giving suggestion, and providing opinion in the schools resembles Schargel's (1994) description. Meanwhile, the schools' attempt to involve students' parents and committees has similarity with Bridgehouse and Tomlinson (1991) and Nuraniyah (2012). Nevertheless, there is an effort that has not been achieved by the private school: to give authority to teachers in making decision related to school programs and activities has been implemented. An assumption to this decision is the fact that the school is a private one. Since the school is run by a foundation, its boards possess authority to make a decision. As a result, the teachers only provide ideas or opinions. Another consideration, there is a possibility that the principal still applies top-down approach in leading the school. For the state elementary school, it has not implemented its school committees' role maximally yet, since there are only three out of seven committees who are actively contribute fully to the school's quality improvement. The first presumption for this behavior is the committees' occupations, which leads them not to be able to involve in the schools' program or activities. The second presumption is due to the committees' lack of commitment in the school's enhancement. In addition, there is a possibility that there are more various considerations for the school to choose the committees', besides the fact that the committees require commitment to school's quality improvement. Another assumption is that the school principal still has limitation to approach the committees to commit to their responsibility more.

Measurement. In improving measurement, an attempt that is in line with Soria-Garcia & Martinez-Lorente (2012) is both schools continuously try to find their strong and weak aspects. By conducting evaluation, the schools' effort is in accordance with Nuraniyah's (2012) study result and Cullen's et al. (2003) argument. What is more, evaluation to improve school's quality is actually also one of Manoe's (2009) and De Rozari's (2012) findings. It can be concluded that the two elementary schools always try not to be in their quality's comfort zone since they constantly seek the wrong steps or system and fix them. Specifically, one of the schools' efforts to do evaluation is using student' examination grade has similarity with Arcaro's (2005) opinion. In addition, government helps the two schools to evaluate by accreditation, which is in alignment with Van der Westhuizen's (1996) opinion. Furthermore, the teachers' performance is also another schools' way to improve this third character. Nonetheless, a different action by both schools was found in terms of teacher's evaluation. In private elementary school, its teachers will be promoted to a higher level if they have shown good result in their performance that leads to positive result in evaluation. The teacher's performance includes teacher's readiness in teaching, teacher's ability in handling his or her class, teacher's role in the students' learning improvement, and many more. Unlike the private school, in the state school, the principal helps the teachers to be promoted. Then, with teacher's new position and performance, the principal undertakes the evaluation. The assumption of the evaluation applied by the former school, that it is a private school, where it is managed by non-government organization (OECD, 2012). As a result, teachers or staffs will be rewarded in form of job promotion after they gain accomplishment related to the school's improvement. For the latter school, which is a state one, teachers' job will be promoted by the government. Hence, the principal does not possess an authority to decide whether the teacher should or should not be promoted. Thus, the only support the school's principal

owns is helping the teachers to be promoted. After that the principal applies the post-promotion performance evaluation to the teachers. Also, this study has not found peer teachers formal evaluation in both schools, which Van der Westhuizen (1996) has pointed. The assumption is both schools' principals have not realized the effectiveness of this kind of evaluation.

Commitment. First attempt of improving commitment applied by both schools, which is in line with Sallis' (2006) opinion, is providing facilities and infrastructures for learning and teaching process for teachers and students. This finding shows that the two schools realize that in order to support the learning process and the teachers' maximum performance, the schools equip them with facilities and infrastructures. In addition, both schools' principals give reward for their teachers and staffs who have performed well, and motivate them to achieve higher in their responsibilities, which is in accordance with Creech's (1996) statement. This both schools' action depicts that the schools appreciate the teachers' hard work and contribution to their schools. Generally, both schools' struggles in enhancing commitment possess similarity with Manoe's (2009) study result. The schools' attempts to enhance their commitment show how consistent they are to manage or even improve their schools' quality.

Continuous Improvement. The first attempt to improve the fifth character is supported by the fact that both schools' principal are not easily satisfied by many achievements they have been gaining. In other words, those two headmasters still consider many aspects to develop. In this case, those two principals' work performance is in accordance with Reynold et al. (2001). What is more, in order to fulfill the principals' aspiration, they constantly evaluate their schools' programs and apply innovations in terms of activities, quality, programs and many more. Thus, the principals' attempts are in line with Manoe's (2009) study result. Another both schools' effort to improve this characteristic is providing opportunities for teachers' skill development by seminars and trainings, which is in accordance with Lunenburg's (2010) opinion. This finding, which is also found in De Rozari's (2012), Manoe's (2009), and Nuraniyah's (2012) study results, depicts that the two school principals pay attention to their teachers' enrichment skills and knowledge in their own field. Thus this leads to their enhanced performance. Further action that both schools take, which is in alignment with Manoe's (2009) study result and Fuentes – Fuentes, et al. (2004) argument, is learning from the expert for the schools quality improvement.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

From the analysis and discussion, it is found that the private and state elementary schools possess various attempts to improve five characteristics of Total Quality School. This study also discovered that there are several different steps applied by both schools, due to the fact each school's characteristics. This section provides more concise summary of the private and state schools' effort related to the five characteristics. In enhancing focus on customer, both schools give tangible proof, present reliability, respond complaint as well problems as fast as possible, assure the customer, and show empathy to their customers. Nevertheless, some private elementary school teachers have not fully shown friendly attitude yet. What is more, in cultivating total involvement, both schools include their teachers, staffs, students' parents, school's committees' in the schools' programs and activities. However, the private elementary school does not give its teachers authority to make a decision related to its programs or activities. In other words, teachers only suggest and have opinion about ideas. Furthermore, the public elementary school has not maximized its schools' committee's participation related to idea and opinion contributions. In the third character, both schools' strategy in increasing measurement is by evaluating internally. In this characteristic, the government also holds the schools' quality evaluation, for example, accreditation. Nonetheless, the two schools have not applied teacher formal peer evaluation or review. In the next characteristics, both schools increase it by providing facilities and infrastructure, rewarding their teachers' performance, and motivating them. Finally, the two schools innovate and continuously evaluate aspects in their institutions as one of strategies to improve the last characteristic. In addition, the teachers also have opportunity to increase their skills by attending seminars and trainings.

Based on the conclusion, this study suggests several inputs related to several characteristics attempted by the private and state schools. For the public elementary school's principal, considering that there has not been chance for teachers to make decisions directly yet, it is suggested to increase the teachers' role with participative style or bottom-up approach. In addition, related to evaluation, the schools are recommended to hold teachers peer formal evaluation. In the view of the state elementary school's committees' lack of participation, the principal is recommended to encourage them more, by giving personal approach to them. Another suggestion for future time, the principal could appoint other school's committees who prioritize for the school's quality improvement. Moreover, the school's principal is suggested to hold teachers peer formal

evaluation.

Considering that there are the private elementary school's teachers who have not shown friendly attitude, it is suggested that the teachers' should be friendlier to school's customers, especially the students. Also, related to the state elementary school's committee lack of participation, it is proposed that the committees spare more time for school's meetings and other programs. In addition, the school's committee could contribute more in terms of ideas and opinions. Finally, from this study, other schools would be able to see and learn the efforts achieved by both schools in improving five characteristics of Total Quality School, since the schools have been proven to apply them.

This study has discussed the schools' attempts in enhancing five characteristics of Total Quality Schools. However, this study does not examine efforts' supporting and inhibiting factors. Thus future study could investigate the factors mentioned before. In addition, this study only focused on the developed schools. Hence, the forthcoming study could delve into schools that have not good quality yet.

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