



"Four Strategic Approaches": From a Dilemma to a Strategy for Improving the Quality of Public Education Services

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Abstract

The implementation of policy measures aimed at granting educational autonomy to schools, so granting them substantial managerial authority, has not effectively resolved the issue at hand. School-based administration only focuses on substantive education service matters, whereas the Ministry of Education and Culture oversees public schools and the Ministry of Religion oversees religious schools. This study employs a strategic management methodology to reveal diverse perspectives on these matters inside the organization's strategic operations. Interviews conducted with 30 high-ranking officials from the two technical organizations responsible for overseeing regional education services in the province indicated that there was still a significant disparity of around 50% between the desired number of teachers in the regions and the actual number of teachers already employed. Interviews conducted with 60 school principals in various regions have revealed a significant scarcity of teachers and a prevalence of instructors with subpar qualifications. Observations and document analysis confirm the existence of objective reality, identify obstacles, and offer data for developing initiatives to enhance service quality. This study presents a problem-solving framework known as the "Four strategic approaches" to enhance the quality of educational public services. This strategy model focuses on two service components that provide challenges: (1) the provision of comprehensive educational services by school institutions, and (2) the administration of education services by the regional Ministry of Education and Culture and Ministry of Religion. The text examines the primary stakeholders in secondary education services and presents four strategies to mitigate both direct and indirect risks and provide solutions.

Introduction

Internationally, education is agreed as a fundamental right. Its implementation at the national level in the form of public services is a constitutional right of citizens. To achieve this goal, the government must be committed and strive to continuously improve the quality of services. In this context, a number of studies show that continuously improving the quality of educational services is important because it has direct implications for the progressive fulfillment of constitutional rights (Steers, 1977; Meyer & Herscovith, 2001; Ashill et al., 2008; Al-Haddad et al., 2018; Heymann et al., 2014). It is in this praxis that demands for government commitment are addressed.

Educational services in government organizational settings characterize different role dimensions (Saguin, 2019). In Indonesia, this characteristic is illustrated through the roles of the following three actors, namely; 1) school institutions; 2) Education Department; and 3) Regional Offices of the Ministry of Religion. School institutions play a role in substantive

education services, the Education Service plays a role in managing education service affairs which are categorized into general education affairs. Meanwhile, the Regional Ministry of Religion Office plays a role in managing religious-oriented education affairs. The involvement of three actors in the role dimensions of educational services forms a variety of unique problem characteristics and interests (Dale, 1997; Burch, 2006). The specificity of this problem is even seen in this research as a scientific dilemma.

Not a few and various problems surround the two actors managing educational service affairs, the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Religion. Likewise with schools as providers of substantive education services. They experience obstacles and difficulties in providing educational services together. What makes each of these actors remain in a problematic condition for a long time is because the problems that shape the quality of educational services differ in type and dimension. Based on local government policy, schools have been given quite flexible managerial authority to maximize their ability to handle problems. Likewise, for the two actors managing education service affairs, support in the form of increasing budget capacity (20% of the total regional budget) has not been able to integratively shape the performance of quality education services.

Therefore, using a public sector organizational strategy perspective is used to examine the multi-dimensional problems of educational services as an integral part, more than just problems of service quality. Observe how the organization sets the provision of quality educational services as its goal and how it determines activity plans and allocates resources to achieve this goal. The choice of this perspective takes into account what Poister & Streib (1999) call the tendency of problems which generally involve external factors of service quality. Thus, the use of a theoretical perspective on organizational strategy, apart from being able to be used as a thinking instrument for assessing organizational capabilities, can also be used to identify the organization's translation of its environment, namely, the expectations of educational service users (Nutt & Backoff, 1992; Anthony & Young, 1988; Faguet & Sanches, 2008).

The organizational strategy perspective in this study emphasizes the opinion that what manifests as organizational capability is actually planned rational action (Planning mode; Chandler, 1992). As a program that refers to organizational goals, providing quality education services, it appears that it has not recommended various activity plans and efficient ways of allocating resources. It also has not identified a strategy aimed at optimizing operational activities amidst limitations and factual problems. It is hoped that this opinion can support the study's efforts to provide a scientific explanation of strategies for improving the quality of educational services as a research problem.

Literature Review

Strategic Management in the Public Sector

Strategy is a comprehensive need that determines guidance and direction for allocating resources to achieve the organization's long-term goals. In practice, the choice of strategy is a complex and risky task. Organizational strategies are expected to be able to face a progressive and even competitive environment. Strategy plays a role in integrating an organization's strengths and weaknesses with opportunities and threats in its environment. Strategy is formulated from two different perspectives, but this study refers to the opinion that strategy is a program that defines implementing organizational goals. This understanding refers more to the active role of organizations in implementing programs as a strategy to face environmental changes, which is known as strategic planning (Anthony & Young, 1988).

Strategic management relates to how to strengthen the viability and effectiveness of public sector organizations both in terms of substantive policies and long-term management capacity.

Strategic management integrates all other management processes to provide a systematic, coherent and effective approach to establishing, achieving, monitoring and updating an organization's strategic objectives. Strategic management is integrated with the actions of: 1) focusing the attention of all functional divisions and all levels of the organization on common goals; 2) internal management processes tie program creation to desired outcomes in the external environment; and 3) linking organizational operations in decision making to strategic long-term goals (Poister & Streib, 1999).

As an organization that wants to achieve a goal, public organizations need a strategic plan to achieve the goal, which is detailed in programs and activities that can work together to realize that goal (Ketll, 2009). Moreover, with its very large and complex organizational structure, by using strategic management, policy makers can motivate and direct employees to work better which in turn can improve organizational performance. The public sector can also formulate future strategies and see existing threats and opportunities and set clear targets and directions (Anthony & Young, 1988).

By implementing strategic management, the public sector can; 1) More reactive in dealing with dynamic and complex changes in situations; 2) Managing owned resources for maximum results (managing for results); 3) Changing orientation to become a future-oriented organization; 4) Make the organization adaptive and flexible, reduce complicated bureaucracy and be more transparent; 5) Making the organization able to meet the expectations of society as service users (Nutt & Backoff, 1992; Faguet & Sanches, 2008). In its application, the researcher recommends four strategy models; 1) The classic planning model focuses on the formality of government organizations to prepare a strategic plan that will be passed down to lower work units; 2) The visionary strategic planning model is oriented to a long-term mindset where managers will look for activities to be carried out in bringing the organization from its current condition to the expected future; 3) The strategic planning model focuses on developing areas of specialization or organizational capabilities and developing relationships and alliances with other organizations in order to ensure the achievement of the vision and mission.

Obstacles in implementing strategic management in the public sector occur because the characteristics of public organizations are different from private organizations. These constraints are defined as fixed conditions that tend to exist for some period of time, which an organization and its management must adapt to overcome. Barriers to the public sector in implementing strategic management were identified by (Nutt & Backoff, 1992; Anthony & Young, 1988; Faguet & Sanches, 2008); 1) Because there is legal control, it makes the public sector more rigid so that the process of formulating activity programs must always carry out cross checks to avoid possible conflicts with regulations; 2) Because public organizations are led by political extensions, public organizations have the potential for political penetration; 3) The existence of a counterproductive culture (bureaucratic pathology), procedures tend to be complicated, tiered and rigid, so that it takes time to complete a task/problem; 4) The process of measuring the performance of government agencies is more difficult. The output and objectives of public organizations have a broad scope of work making it complicated to measure objectives and results (outcome and impact); 5) Limited information and even information asymmetry also become obstacles for organizations to be able to produce quality decision making. This commonly arises due to a deviation from incentive objectives related to the implementation of strategic management.

Ring & Perry (1985) identified the situational context of public sector strategic management as including; 1) Policy ambiguity, the complex public sector organizational structure causes unclear strategic direction; 2) The openness of government, the media has a big role in exposing decision making and its implementation in government; 3) Attentive publics, government is

influenced by many interest groups who have certain agendas; 4) The time problem, term of office and regulations that provide time limits are a concern in strategic management; 5) Shaky coalitions, political alliances during planning and implementation are not necessarily the same composition.

In order to anticipate various obstacles related to the context of the situation of public organizations in implementing strategic management, Ring & Perry (1985) recommend the following solution; 1) Maintaining flexibility, the strategic management implementation process is expected to be able to adapt to internal and external changes; 2) Bridging competing worlds, open public organizations that have ties to various parties or interest groups. The government must treat all parties fairly; 3) Wielding influence not authority, political skills are needed in strategic management in order to build relationships and bring out positive values in confrontations between certain parties; 4) Minimizing discontinuity, political coalition instability must be prevented by managing resources related to coalition formation.

Specifically, Osborne & Plastrik (1997) proposed five strategies that can be applied to public organizations to improve the quality of public service delivery; 1) Core strategy, aims to clarify the vision and mission of the organization through the role of organizational leaders and employees as well as the direction of the organization by improving goals; 2) Consequences strategy to improve service quality by implementing an incentive system for government organization officials who demonstrate good performance and punishment for those who violate their main duties; 3) Customer strategy is implemented to improve service quality by creating a service delivery system implemented by bureaucrats that is oriented towards user satisfaction; 4) Control strategy to increase organizational strength through structuring and creating independence and public trust in the government as a public service institution and employees as public servants; 5) Culture strategy to improve service quality through cultural transformation that is oriented towards the status quo which can be changed into a culture that open to change.

Accommodation Service Quality Concept

Ten indicators proposed as theoretical categories in the service quality concept of Parasuraman et al. (1985), were considered for use in this qualitative descriptive study. Thus, these considerations also state the position of the researcher's advanced thinking thesis (TERRA), in terms of this research. However, this consideration still deepens their own argument which states that the ten theoretical categories may be overlapping because they developed them through an exploratory study using a qualitative approach.

The theoretical device of the service quality concept of Parasuraman et al. (1985) which is deemed capable of accommodating the needs of this study is played by ten indicators, which consist of; 1) Reliability indicators can play a role in explaining performance consistency and reliability. In this case, the organization indicates prompt service. Reliability also means the organization honors its promises, which in detail can include; accuracy of bills, correct record keeping, accuracy of schedules. 2) Responsiveness is an indicator that explains the desire or readiness of service provider personnel in providing services. These indicators may include; Prompt delivery of transaction slips, dealing with customer responses quickly and providing preliminary service (for example, quickly arranging appointments). 3) Competence is an indicator that explains how service provider personnel master the skills and knowledge needed to carry out their duties. These indicators may include; Knowledge and expertise in contact personnel, knowledge and expertise in operations support personnel, and organizational research capabilities.

Specifically regarding; 4) the Access indicator, the translation of which has been expanded to suit the administrative tendencies of a generally large area, both mainland and islands, without giving any influence to the concept proposition. The explanation of this indicator then becomes not only easy to reach, but quite close to an appropriate degree of reachability. These indicators may include; The service is easy to access via telephone (the line is not busy and does not require you to wait), the waiting time for service is not long, the operating hours are convenient, and the location of the service facilities is convenient and close. 5) Courtesy indicators include friendliness, respect, consideration and friendship in contact personnel (including receptionists, telephone operators, etc.). 6) Communication indicators are interpreted as ensuring customers receive information in a language they can understand and listen to them. It can also mean the organization has to adapt the language to different customers, which include; An explanation of the service itself, an explanation of how much a service costs, an explanation of how the service is and is usually exchanged, reassures the customer that the problem will be handled. 7) Credibility indicators view customer interests as everything. These indicators can include trust, confidence, honesty. Apart from that, this indicator can also include the emergence of contributors to credibility, including; The name of the organization, the reputation of the organization and the personal characteristics of the personnel who make service contact.

Furthermore, the eighth indicator (8) Security, is a condition that guarantees the customer's condition from risks, dangers and/or doubts which can include; Physical security, financial security and confidentiality. 9) Understanding/Knowing the Customer is interpreted as all efforts made to understand customer needs. These indicators may include; Learning to understand customers' specific needs, provide personal attention, and recognize regular customers. The tenth indicator (10), Tangibles are aspects that are directly or indirectly related to the physical appearance of the service. These indicators may include physical facilities, worker appearance, tools or equipment used to provide the service, physical representations of the service, such as plastic credit cards or bank statements, and other customers in the service facility.

The ten conceptual indicators of service quality, in relation to the interests of this study, are not referred to the customer perspective (expected service), but will be composed into national education service standards which are national regulations. Thus, service quality expectations in this case are parameters that are national standards which are seen to be related to theoretical indicators of organizational strategy applied to identify planned work programs and resource allocation aimed at improving service quality as an organizational goal.

Methods

This research starts from questions regarding the determinant factors inhibiting the provision of educational services in order to be oriented towards recommending a strategy model for improving the quality of educational services.

Data was collected through observation, interviews and document review. Primary data was obtained from 100 key informants who were in direct contact with the main tasks and functions of their respective organizations; 80 school principals and 10 structural officials each in the two relevant regional ministries (KEMENDIKBUD and KEMENAG). The usual informants are 25 teachers and parents each. Thus, there are 100 people in the key informant category and 50 other people as regular informants.

80 key informants, Principals and 20 structural officials from the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Regional Ministry of Religion, were asked questions about organizational strategies related to the delivery of educational services. 25 regular informants, parents of students, were asked questions about the quality of substantive educational services.

Meanwhile, 25 regular teacher informants were asked questions regarding the management of educational service affairs.

Results and Discussion

Dilemma of Improving the Quality of Education Services

In the strategic perspective of public sector organizations, the provision of educational services is a manifestation of organizational planning where a strategic plan is produced which is then passed down to the work units below (Nutt & Backoff, 1992; Faguet & Sanches, 2008). The results of this organizational planning are in the form of program policies with a yearly implementation period, which is very likely to lose actuality, and can even create the effect of new problems in the midst of the progress of society, before it is time to be implemented. In the context of this situation, views on the complexity of the organizational environment need attention. The organization's interaction with the strategic environment must be a feedback response because the resulting strategic plan is intended as an output, which is actually the result of management's perception of the organization's environmental conditions.

In fact, all discovered problems that have the potential to become inhibiting factors in the provision of educational services can be categorized as strategic environmental responses to the organization because these problems accumulate in the services provided. The quality and quantity of teachers and apparatus as well as school facilities that do not comply with national standards have been identified and complained about by the public as poor quality services (Parasuraman et al., 1985) which tends to have been going on for a long time (Responsiveness). In fact, the progressive environment described may still be influenced by the development of a competitive situation due to the increasingly mushrooming and advanced private schools, which are ultimately chosen by the public (Credibility). This condition requires the organization's active role in implementing programs as a strategy to face environmental changes, which is known as strategic planning (Anthony & Young, 1988).

The issue of teacher quality (Competence) cannot immediately be identified by parents of students or the community as users of educational services. Facts about teacher quality can only be obtained through inspection or study by competent parties. However, competency issues can manifest the consistency of performance and reliability of teachers in carrying out their duties. Specifically regarding the quality (Competence) of the apparatus that plays a role in the context of managing educational service affairs, this is directly focused on the experience of the teachers being served. The impact caused by this tendency is that teachers can lose their teaching time if the service they receive does not have a guaranteed completion time. Thus, this service phase is an indirect irony of substantive educational services. Meanwhile, the issue of the quantity of teachers (Tangibles) who carry out their duties in schools can be easily perceived by the public because it is a real fact that can be directly linked to meeting the needs and interests of educational service users (Parasuraman et al., 1985). In this study, the adequacy of the quantity of teachers is a condition that can be compared between one school and another (Access), including the adequacy of the number of qualified teachers.

Improving the quality and providing the number of quality teachers according to national standards in each school is a phenomenon of human resource development and teacher recruitment. Thus, the findings of this first problem require a human resource management perspective (Lengnick-Hall & Lengnick-Hall, 2002). Ironically, the HR management function for teacher recruitment matters is not inherent in the authority of school institutions as providers of substantive education services and the Education Service and the Regional Ministry of Religion Offices as managers of education service affairs. The affairs of teacher competency development are the authority of the central government (Kemendiknas and Kemenpan RI)

which are delegated to regional teacher education and training implementing agencies. Meanwhile, the matter of recruiting teachers as government employees is the authority of the central government (Kemendiknas, Kemenpan and State Civil Service Agency) which is not delegated to the regions.

The construction of HR management for teachers indicates a dilemma, between the pressure to increase the number of (teachers) providing educational services in the regions and centralized authority which is completely impractical. Likewise, the need for recovery of teacher quality problems must go through a series of collaborations with development training organizers. This condition is very impractical even though efforts have been made to focus attention on all functional divisions and all levels of the organization to improve service quality (Poister & Streib, 1999). The background of this problem is what causes the condition to persist for a long time without providing certainty to the community (Communications and understanding the Customers).

The need for a partnership network is considered to be included in the category of determinant factors inhibiting the provision of educational services based on a strategic management perspective. Partnership in the context of problem findings is seen as a solution to create accelerated progress in handling problems that hinder quality education services (Freeman, 1984). Even private schools in Indonesia have demonstrated the strategic benefits of partnership networks with industry in meeting the needs for learning facilities at various levels of education (kindergarten, elementary school, junior high school) with a pattern of realizing mutual benefits. In this partnership, all elements get what they need. Synergy between elements is the key in playing their respective roles. Being involved in this kind of partnership network certainly requires the strategic role of organizational leaders in making strategic decisions. Partnerships can even be called an important part of strategic relationships between organizations and other stakeholders (Freeman, 1984; Poister & Streib, 1999).

Budget needs are categorized into determinant factors inhibiting the implementation of educational services with the consideration that they have resulted in obstacles to the teaching and learning process or the running of educational services. Moreover, the budget allocated specifically for education (DAK) is a policy rolled out by the central government. The manifestation of budget constraints in the context of providing educational services even has an impact on the smooth construction and addition of school buildings. This can affect the reputation (Credibility) of public organizations in general and managers of educational service affairs in particular.

The relationship between problems and theoretical indicators used in the identification and analysis of the four determinant factors inhibiting improving the quality of educational services is depicted in table 1 below:

Table 1. Findings of Determinants Inhibiting the Delivery of Education Services and Their Relation to Research Indicators

Findings Potential Problems	Relation to:	
	Servqual indicator	Strategy Indicators
The lack of quality-quantity of teachers and apparatus	1. <i>Reliability</i> 2. <i>Responsiveness</i> 3. <i>Competence</i> 4. <i>Cridibility</i> 5. <i>Communications</i>	1. Core strategy (Leadership role) 2. <i>Customer strategy</i> 3. <i>Control strategy</i>

	6. <i>Understanding costumers</i>	
Fulfillment of infrastructure facilities	<i>Tangible</i>	1. Core strategy (Leadership role) 2. <i>Customer strategy</i>
Utilization of partnership cooperation network		1. Core strategy (Leadership role) 2. <i>Cultur strategy</i>
Lack of fulfillment of budget needs		1. <i>Control strategy</i> 2. <i>Customer strategy</i>

A strategic approach to the problems of providing educational services is directed at strengthening the viability and effectiveness of public sector organizations both in the substantive service dimension and the capacity to manage educational service affairs in the long term. In this strategic approach all other management processes are integrated to provide a systematic, coherent and effective approach to building, achieving, monitoring and renewing steps to improve the quality of educational services through addressing inhibiting factors, as an organizational strategic goal.

"Four Strategic Approaches": A Strategy for Improving the Quality of Education Services

The design of the "Four Strategic Approaches" conceptual model is a qualitative hypothesis that describes a series of relationships between the four determinant factors which are believed to have an impact on the delivery of educational services. This model is oriented towards improving educational services, making it a point of concern as it departs from the real conditions in question (Coburn & Turner, 2011). As a conceptual model, the design refers to criteria as in Sokolowski & Banks (2010); 1) Show a picture of the real situation of providing educational services; 2) Shows the estimated relationship between the four inhibiting determinants as factors that influence the conditions for the provision of educational services; 3) Show the main direct and indirect threats that affect the provision of educational services; 4) Present only relevant factors; and (5) Based on reliable data and information.

Thus, the four recommendations for inhibiting determinant factors found in this research must be able to identify the actors/implementers of each problem found. After identifying the actors/implementers, the identification is then aimed at activities that are the recommended problem domain. This is followed by identifying direct and indirect threats to determine a handling approach. In the final part, identification is directed at the target to be achieved as a solution step from the designed approach model (Sokolowski & Banks, 2010; Coburn & Turner, 2011; Bertalanffy, 1968).

Visualization of components and factors in the model developed as a strategy to improve the quality of educational services is as shown in Figure 1 below:

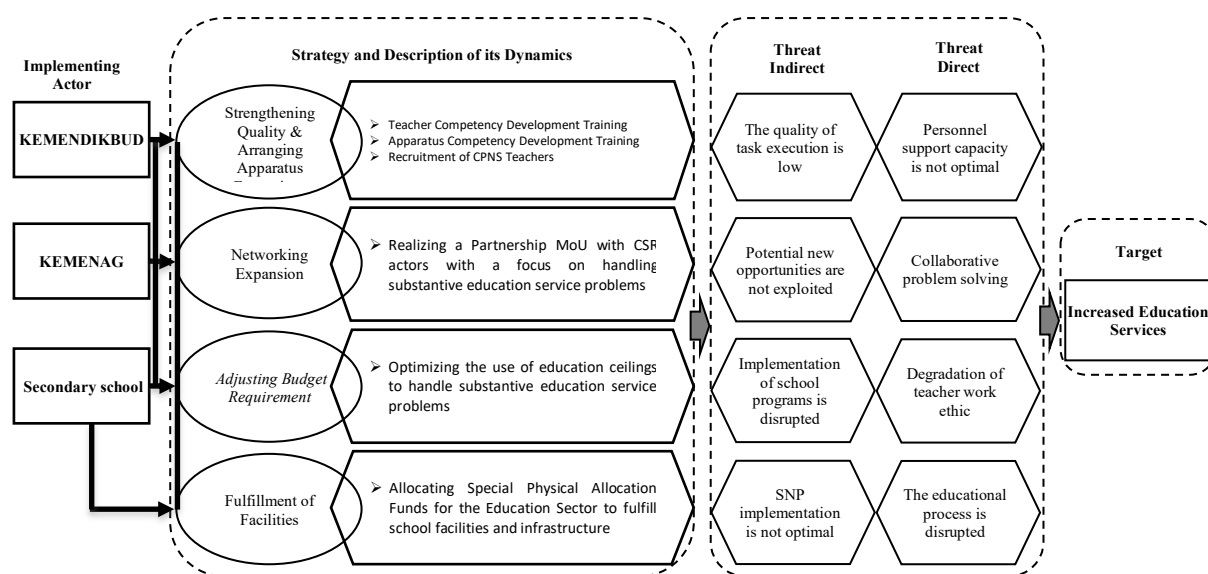


Figure 1. Model Diagram of Education Service Quality Improvement Strategy

The conceptual model for strategies for improving the quality of educational services is named Four Strategic Approaches, containing four strategic steps aimed at overcoming problems that have the potential to become inhibiting factors in improving the quality of educational services. The description of the strategy process model for improving the quality of secondary education services is presented as follows: (1) The model formation consists of actor/implementation components, activities that are recommended solutions, factors that are direct and indirect threats, solutions, and expected achievement targets; (2) In the actor/implementer component, as the locus of problem discovery, three parties are determined, namely, the Education Service, the Regional Ministry of Religion Office and the school, who in this conceptual model act as actors/implementers of the recommended solution activities; (3) Based on the recommendations of the four inhibiting determinant factors and the two actors/implementers, three problems were determined to be in the domain of the actors/implementers of the Education Service, the Regional Ministry of Religion Office and the school, namely; (1) problems with the quality and quantity of apparatus; (2) minimal use of collaboration networks (partners); (3) budget requirements; and (4) the problem of lack of supporting facilities and infrastructure in schools. Point four is a problem that is only in the school domain. Based on the constellation of inhibiting determinant factors, three solution activities are then proposed to overcome the problems of the three actors/implementers, including: (a) Strengthening the quality and quantity management of apparatus (staff and teachers) is carried out by: (1) Teacher Competency Development exercises; (2) training to develop apparatus competencies; and (3) recruitment of CPNS Teachers. (b) Expansion of the partnership collaboration network is carried out by realizing a Partnership MoU with CSR actors with a focus on handling substantive education service problems. (c) Fulfilling budget needs by optimizing the use of education ceilings to handle substantive education service problems. (d) Fulfillment of supporting facilities and infrastructure in schools. The solution activities in point four are only recommended to the school by allocating "Special Physical Allocation Funds for the Education Sector" to fulfill school facilities and infrastructure. (4) The four groups of solution activities are recommendations that anticipate factors that pose direct and indirect threats. Direct and indirect threats that could potentially arise if the four recommended solution activities are not implemented include: (1) The carrying capacity of personnel is not optimal—the quality of task implementation is low; (2) Collaborative problem solving is not utilized---Potential new opportunities are not exploited; (3) Degradation of teacher work ethic---Implementation of

school programs is disrupted; and (4) The educational process is disrupted---Implementation of National Education Standards is not optimal. The direct and indirect threats in point four are specifically potential consequences if solution activities to fulfill supporting facilities and infrastructure in schools are not implemented. (5) By implementing the series of strategic model components, estimates can meet the strategy target, namely, improving the quality of educational services.

The causes of the emergence of these four potential obstacles have also been analyzed as determinant factors for the formulation of the strategy model design as in Figure 1 above. Thus, the contribution of this research is to propose a strategy process model in order to create empirical implications for real problem nodes within the scope of educational service delivery.

Conclusion

Determinants of barriers to the delivery of educational services identified through the Servqual perspective include two findings; The lack of quality and quantity of teachers and apparatus as well as budget requirements. Two other inhibiting determinants identified through a strategic management perspective include two findings; Utilization of partnership collaboration networks and budget requirements. These last two findings are not directly related to service quality indicators but act as a driving force for efforts to handle service problems. Handling this problem requires the collaboration of various parties, not only elements of government and education stakeholders in the regions but also the central government, as is the need for a recommended strategy model for improving the quality of education services.

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