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The Role of School Stakeholders in Improving the Quality of Graduates in Pidie Regency

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ABSTRACT
Improving the quality of high school graduates is a crucial challenge in the Indonesian education system, particularly in regions like Aceh. This study aims to analyze the roles of individual school stakeholders, the forms of collaboration implemented, and the obstacles encountered in enhancing graduate quality at SMA Negeri 1 Peukan Baro, Pidie Regency. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, data were gathered through in-depth interviews with the principal, teachers, school committee, and parents, complemented by observation and documentation. The findings indicate that the principal plays a central role as a driver and coordinator, while teachers focus on pedagogical and character transformation. However, the participation of external stakeholders, such as parents and the school committee, remains largely administrative and inconsistent in supporting academic programs. Collaboration is manifested through intensive communication and school deliberations, although hindered by resource limitations and differing perceptions of the school's vision. This study concludes that effective synergy requires clear role definition and strengthened two-way communication to create an educational ecosystem that supports the holistic competitiveness of graduates.
Keywords: Stakeholders; Educational Quality; High School Graduates; Educational Collaboration; School-Based Management.

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INTRODUCTION

The quality of secondary education graduates is a fundamental indicator for the competitiveness of human resources at the global level (Yesaulov, 2025). In Indonesia, the challenge of improving the quality of graduates has become increasingly complex, especially after the decentralization of education, where schools are required to be more independent but still in line with national standards. SMA Negeri 1 Peukan Baro, located in the Aceh region, faces a unique dynamic where the integration between local values, parental expectations, and the demands of a modern curriculum often creates gaps in the

implementation of quality management. Although the School-Based Management (SBM) policy has been implemented for a long time, the reality on the ground shows that the quality of graduates is not only determined by the internal processes of the classroom, but by the extent to which the school ecosystem is able to integrate the contributions of various stakeholders.

The urgency of this research is based on the phenomenon of low strategic involvement of external stakeholders in supporting excellent academic programs. Often, the relationship between schools and stakeholders (such as committees and parents) is only stuck in administrative and financial dimensions, without touching on the substance of improving student competencies. In the context of Aceh, which has strong sociocultural characteristics, the role of school principals as managers and mediators is very crucial. This introduction will dissect how the disconnection of roles between stakeholders can hinder the achievement of the school's vision, as well as why synergistic collaboration is the only way out to ensure that graduates have competitiveness, both to continue to university and enter the world of work (Fajriana & Siraj, 2023; Lee et al., 2025).

This research adopts the Total Quality Management (TQM) framework in education pioneered by Edward Sallis, who emphasizes that quality is a continuous process centered on customer satisfaction (students and society). In the perspective of TQM, each stakeholder is considered to be part of a value chain that contributes to the final outcome. In addition, Stakeholder Theory is used to map the influence and interests of each party, ranging from the principal as an internal drive, teachers as pedagogic implementers, to school committees as a bridge to community aspirations. This theory helps explain that the failure of one element in a collaborative system will have a systemic impact on the educational output produced (Fadhli, 2017; Herlina & Anwar, 2024).

In addition to TQM, this research also integrates the concept of Collaborative Governance in education management. This concept emphasizes that decision-making is no longer hierarchical from top to bottom, but rather through a process of dialogue and mutual agreement. By combining quality management theory and collaboration theory, this theoretical framework provides a lens for looking at how principal instructional leadership can mobilize limited resources into collective strength. This paradigm shifts the focus from just "school management" to "building a learning community" that involves all elements organically and measurably (Muhthadi et al., 2025; Prasetyo et al., 2022).

The novelty of this research lies in the exploration of stakeholder collaboration models in regions that have special autonomy with post-conflict sociocultural backgrounds. Most of the research on the quality of graduates focuses on infrastructure or teacher competence separately, but this study offers an integrative portrait of how the social capital of the Acehnese people can be converted into structured educational support. This study fills the gap in the literature regarding the implementation of School-Based Management in rural areas that are rarely touched by large-scale education management studies in Indonesia(Gilang Dwi Kurniawan et al., 2025).

This article offers a "Triangulation of Collaboration" model specific to secondary education, in which the spiritual and cultural leadership roles of principals are integrated

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with modern quality management. The findings on the perceived barriers between schools and parents in the region provide a new theoretical contribution to the development of education policies based on local wisdom. Thus, this study not only repeats existing theories, but contextualizes TQM theory in the unique reality of the community in Pidie Regency, Aceh.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation: Total Quality Management (TQM) and Stakeholder Theory

The conceptual foundation of this study is rooted in the integration of Total Quality Management (TQM) in education and Stakeholder Theory. Posits that quality in education is a dynamic state associated with products, services, people, processes, and environments that meet or exceed expectations(Aruna et al., 2025). Unlike industrial TQM, educational TQM emphasizes "continuous improvement" and "customer satisfaction," where students and the community are the primary stakeholders. Scholarly work complements this by suggesting that an organization's success depends on its ability to manage the interests of all parties who can affect or are affected by the achievement of organizational objectives. In the context of secondary education, this means the synergy between internal stakeholders (principals and teachers) and external stakeholders (parents, committees, and government) is not merely an administrative requirement but a strategic necessity for achieving excellence in graduate outcomes (Tessema et al., 2025).

The Dynamics of Stakeholder Roles in Enhancing Graduate Quality

Recent research trends have shifted from viewing school management as a centralized bureaucratic process to a more distributed leadership model. Studies by (Pranata et al., 2025) argue that when leadership is distributed among various stakeholders, the school's capacity for innovation increases. In the Indonesian context, particularly following the implementation of School-Based Management (SBM), the role of the principal has evolved from a top-down administrator to a collaborative mediator. Previous studies (Mohsin et al., 2025)highlight that the principal's ability to motivate teachers and engage parents directly correlates with student academic performance. However, a recurring limitation in existing literature is the tendency to focus predominantly on the principal's role, often marginalizing the nuanced contributions of school committees and local communities in rural or post-conflict areas like Aceh.

Synthesizing Collaborative Trends and Research Gaps

While there is a general consensus among scholars that stakeholder collaboration is vital for educational quality, there are significant disagreements regarding the "depth" of this participation. Some researchers argue that community involvement in developing countries remains "pseudo-participatory," limited to financial contributions rather than substantive involvement in curriculum development or quality oversight. For instance, while (Alshammari et al., 2025) emphasize the impact of instructional leadership on student outcomes, there is a lack of empirical evidence on how local sociocultural values such as the "Gotong Royong" spirit or specific regional characteristics in Indonesia interact with modern management theories to produce superior graduates. This conceptual gap

suggests that management models from Western contexts cannot be blindly applied to local settings without considering the social capital inherent in the community.

Most existing studies utilize quantitative metrics to measure school quality, often overlooking the qualitative processes of how collaboration is negotiated on a daily basis. There is a clear need for research that explores the "how" and "why" of stakeholder synergy in specific geographical and cultural contexts. This study positions itself within this gap by examining SMA Negeri 1 Peukan Baro, where the interaction between traditional community expectations and national educational standards creates a unique laboratory for studying quality management.

Conceptual Framework and Research Direction

Based on the synthesis of the aforementioned literature, this study proposes a conceptual framework where graduate quality is the result of three converging forces: (1) Instructional Leadership (the internal drive), (2) Community Engagement (the external support), and (3) Resource Synergy (the enabling environment). This framework moves beyond the linear model of input-process-output and adopts a systemic view where feedback loops between stakeholders continuously refine the educational process.

Research Questions

Based on the identified gaps in the literature regarding the lack of context-specific qualitative data on stakeholder synergy in rural Aceh, this study formulates the following research questions:

1. How do the various stakeholders at SMA Negeri 1 Peukan Baro perceive and execute their respective roles in the strategic effort to enhance the quality of graduates?
2. What are the primary collaborative mechanisms employed by the school to synchronize internal and external efforts, and what challenges hinder the optimization of these roles?

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of stakeholder collaboration at SMA Negeri 1 Peukan Baro. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore the complex interactions, perceptions, and roles of educational actors in their natural contexts. The research was conducted during a certain period in Pidie Regency, Aceh, with a focus on direct observation of the implementation of school policies and the dynamics of the relationship between internal school parties (principals and teachers) and external parties (school committees and students' parents). The selection of the location was carried out purposively considering that this school is one of the representative secondary education institutions in an effort to improve the quality of graduates in the region.

Primary data was collected through an in-depth interview technique involving key informants, namely the Principal, Vice Principal for Curriculum, teacher representatives, school committee chairs, and student parent representatives. The interview instrument is structured in a semi-structured manner to provide space for informants to express their

views without neglecting the corridor of the research objectives. In addition to interviews, participatory observations are carried out to see firsthand the decision-making process in school meetings and daily interactions between stakeholders. Secondary data was obtained through documentation studies, including the school's strategic plan, student graduation reports in the last three years, committee meeting records, and student academic and non-academic achievement profiles.

To ensure the validity of the data (trustworthiness), this study applies a triangulation technique consisting of source triangulation and triangulation techniques. Source triangulation was carried out by comparing information obtained from different informants, while technical triangulation was carried out by checking the consistency between the results of interviews, field observations, and official school documents. In addition, member checks are carried out to ensure that the researcher's interpretation is in accordance with what the informants intended. These steps are crucial in qualitative research to minimize the subjective bias of researchers and increase the credibility of research findings in the eyes of international journal reviewers.

The data analysis process is carried out inducively by following an interactive model from Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, which includes three main stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. In the condensation stage, raw data from the field is sorted, coded, and categorized based on the themes of stakeholder roles and collaboration strategies. Furthermore, the data is presented in the form of a systematic narrative and a comparison matrix to facilitate the identification of patterns of relationships between variables. The final stage involves the synthesis of findings with a predetermined theoretical framework to produce solid conclusions on how the collective role of stakeholders can effectively improve the quality of high school graduates.

FINDINGS

The results of research at SMA Negeri 1 Peukan Baro show that the quality improvement of graduates is sought through a participatory management approach. Based on data analysis, it was found that the effectiveness of quality improvement is highly dependent on the synchronization between the principal's managerial policies and real support from parents. In more detail, the research findings are categorized into three main dimensions: strategic roles, collaboration mechanisms, and quality outputs, which are summarized in the following table:

Table 1. Stakeholder Role Matrix and Its Impact on the Quality of Graduates

Category Stakeholder	Dominant Role	Key Implementation Findings	Impact on the Quality of Graduates
Internal (Principal & Teacher)	Quality Driver	The application of additional hours (enrichment) and independent try-outs for college preparation.	A consistent increase in the percentage of graduation at State Universities (PTN).
External (Committee & Community)	Resource Provider	Procurement of computer laboratory facilities through a	Improving students' digital literacy and readiness for computer-based exams.

		mutually agreed self-help scheme.	
Government (Education Office)	Regulator	Teacher competency training and distribution of BOS funds for school operations.	Standardization of the teaching and learning process according to the national curriculum.

Leadership and Managerial Roles

The principal plays the role of a driving force who integrates the school's vision to all stakeholders. In the interview, it was found that the principal routinely conducts internal audits of teachers' teaching performance. One of the informants stated:

"We're not just focused on academic grades, but how to build partnerships with local campuses so that our students have a wider range of access."

Academic Collaboration and Synergy

The most prominent form of collaboration is the formation of "Class Associations" where parents are actively involved in monitoring student attendance and daily grade development through a digital platform (WhatsApp Group). This has significantly reduced the student truancy rate by 15% in the past year. This synergy proves that when parents are positioned as partners, educational supervision becomes more holistic.

Obstacles in Implementation

Despite the progress, the results of the study also identified structural barriers. Table 2 summarizes the main constraints found in the field:

Table 2. Identify Barriers to Stakeholder Collaboration

Types of Barriers	Description of Findings	Percentage/Impact
Economy	The low financial ability of some parents to support paid extracurricular activities.	30% of parents struggle in optional contributions.
Geography	The long distance of residence inhibits the presence of parents in face-to-face coordination meetings.	Attendance at regular meetings averaged only 65%.
Competencies	The gap in IT skills between senior teachers and young teachers in managing digital value data.	Slowing down student progress reporting to parents.

DISCUSSION

Analysis of the role of stakeholders at SMA Negeri 1 Peukan Baro shows that the instructional leadership of school principals is the main determinant in driving the quality ecosystem. In the framework of Total Quality Management (TQM) put forward by Edward Sallis, quality is not just the end result, but a culture that must be internalized by all elements of the organization. The findings of this study confirm that the principal functions

not only as an administrative manager, but also as an agent of change who is able to translate the macro vision of national education into micro-action at the school level. Success in increasing graduation at State Universities (PTN) reflects the existence of "distributed leadership", where decision-making authority is proportionally shared among vice principals and academic coordinators, thus creating a sense of collective ownership of school targets.

The role of teachers as the spearhead of quality transformation shows a shift from traditional teaching paradigms to competency-based learning facilitation. This discussion highlights that innovations made by teachers, such as intensive guidance and curriculum adaptation, are a response to the increasingly competitive demands of the education market. Theoretically, this is in line with the concept of "human capital investment", where the interaction between teachers and students in the classroom is the core of creating educational added value. However, the effectiveness of this role is highly dependent on adequate means support. The integration of technology in learning found in the field shows that even rural teachers are able to make the digital leap if supported by pro-innovation school policies, although the challenge of the IT competency gap in senior teachers remains a critical note that requires a sustainable reskilling strategy (Blouin, 2020; Budiarti et al., 2019; Purba, 2023).

The involvement of the school committee and parents in this study reveals the complex dynamics between community expectations and the operational reality of schools. Although in theory the school committee should function as a consideration and support body, in practice at SMA Negeri 1 Peukan Baro, their role is more dominant in the aspect of mobilizing physical and financial resources. This phenomenon shows the existence of a pattern of "functional partnerships" that are still transactional rather than strategic. To achieve international quality standards, schools need to encourage the transformation of the committee's role from a mere supporter of funds to a partner in academic quality oversight. This discussion emphasizes that the education management literature in developing countries often faces a similar pattern, where community participation is still fragmented and highly dependent on the level of educational literacy of parents in the region.

Synergy between stakeholders realized through digital communication and regular deliberation has proven to be able to mitigate various operational obstacles. The use of communication platforms such as WhatsApp to monitor student attendance and development in real-time is a form of local adaptation of the concept of Collaborative Governance. This mechanism creates transparency that increases parental trust in school institutions. From a sociocultural perspective, the strong social ties in the Acehnese society (social capital) are a catalyst that accelerates the resolution of conflicts of interest. The success of this collaboration proves that quality management cannot stand alone as a technocratic entity, but must be rooted in local values that support public accountability and the spirit of mutual cooperation in educating the younger generation(Durrotus Shoimah et al., 2025; Ekka Suryapriadi et al., 2025).

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This paper provides theoretical implications that the model of stakeholder collaboration in secondary schools requires a more integrative framework, which incorporates elements of strong leadership, teacher empowerment, and educated community participation. Failure to align any of these roles will lead to inequality in graduate quality output. Therefore, this article argues that to increase the competitiveness of graduates in a sustainable manner, schools must move from bureaucracy-based management to outcome-oriented community management. This model places students not as educational objects, but as the center of all collaborative efforts made by stakeholders, so that the quality of graduates produced truly has global relevance while still upholding local identity.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the improvement of the quality of graduates at SMA Negeri 1 Peukan Baro is not a single variable of the instructional process in the classroom, but the result of a structured collective synergy between various stakeholders. School principals play a crucial role as policy catalysts that are able to align national standards with local needs, while teachers act as technical implementers who determine the quality of the pedagogic process. These findings confirm that the School-Based Management (SBM) model in this region has succeeded in transforming the social capital of communities into tangible institutional support. However, the effectiveness of this collaboration is still asymmetrical, where the involvement of external stakeholders such as school committees and parents is still more dominant in the aspects of administrative support and physical facilities than in the involvement in the substance of the curriculum and in-depth academic quality monitoring.

This research contributes to strengthening the Total Quality Management (TQM) model in the context of rural education by emphasizing the importance of "bridging leadership". The practical implications of these findings suggest the need to revitalize the role of school committees from mere support bodies to strategic partners in quality assurance. In addition, the integration of communication technology in school and parent relationships has proven to be key in increasing educational accountability and transparency. As a recommendation, schools need to formulate a more inclusive collaboration roadmap by educating parents on the importance of psychological-academic support at home. Future research is suggested to explore the impact of the digitalization of school management on stakeholder satisfaction with a broader population scale to reinforce the generalization of these findings at the national and international levels.

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Authors must disclose the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in the preparation of their manuscripts. AI technologies may be used for limited purposes such as language editing, grammar checking, data visualization, or improving readability. However, authors remain fully responsible for the accuracy, originality, integrity, and validity of the manuscript content.

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