

# Utilization of Learning Communities in School Policy Decision Making (Case Study at SMAN 1 Pamukan Utara)

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**Abstract:** This study aims to explore how learning communities can be utilized in school policy decision-making through a case study at SMAN 1 Pamukan Utara. The research method used is a qualitative method. Data collection was collected through interviews with members of the learning community, the principal, education staff as well as document analysis and field observations. This study presents insights into the role of learning communities in improving the quality of school policies and their implications for the development of education in the school. This study also aims to identify the advantages and disadvantages of utilizing learning communities in school policy decision-making, as well as provide recommendations to improve the effectiveness of learning communities in the school context. By understanding the role of learning communities in school policy decision-making, this study is expected to contribute to the development of education at SMAN 1 Pamukan Utara and other schools.

**Keywords:** Learning community, decision making, school policy

## 1. Introduction

Education is one of the important aspects in the development of a nation (Herdiansyah & Kurniati, 2020). Good quality education will produce a generation that is intelligent, creative, and has character (Arif, 2022). Therefore, improving the quality of education is a top priority for every country (OECD, 2020). Quality education can help improve students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor abilities, so that they can become productive citizens and contribute to national development (Chapman et al., 2005).

According to (Roberts & Pruitt, 2008) one strategy to improve the quality of education is to develop learning communities in schools. Learning communities are an important forum for educators and education stakeholders to share knowledge, experiences, and best practices in improving the quality of education (DuFour et al., 2004). Thus, learning communities can help improve teachers' teaching abilities and improve student learning outcomes.

According to (Khalman et al., 2024) the learning community optimization guidebook published by the Directorate General of Teachers and Education Personnel in 2023, a learning community is a group of GTK who learn together in collaboration on a scheduled and ongoing basis with clear and measurable goals to improve the quality of learning so that it has an impact on student learning outcomes. The learning community places its focus on student learning, fosters collaboration and collective responsibility, and is oriented towards student learning outcome data.

Effective school policy decision-making requires active participation from various stakeholders, including teachers, education personnel, students, parents, and the wider community. Learning communities can be an important forum to facilitate this participation and improve the quality of school policies. Thus, learning communities can help improve the quality of education in schools.

However, the utilization of learning communities in school policy decision-making still needs to be improved. Many schools have not utilized learning communities effectively in school policy decision-making. Therefore, this study aims to explore how learning communities can be utilized in school policy decision-making at SMAN 1 Pamukan Utara. SMAN 1 Pamukan Utara has developed a learning community as one of the strategies to improve the quality of education in the school. This study will explore how the learning community learning can be utilized in school policy decision making. By understanding the role of learning communities in school policy decision making, this study is expected to contribute to the development of education at SMAN 1 Pamukan Utara and other schools.

## 2. Formulation the Problems

Based on the background above, in this study the following problems can be formulated:

- How can learning communities be utilized in making school policy decisions at SMAN 1 Pamukan Utara?
- What is the role of the learning community in improving the quality of school policies at SMAN 1 Pamukan Utara?
- How can learning communities increase stakeholder participation in school policy decision making at SMAN 1 Pamukan Utara?
- What is the impact of utilizing learning communities on transparency and accountability in school policy decision making at SMAN 1 Pamukan Utara?

## 3. Research Purpose

Based on the formulation of the problem, the objectives to be achieved in this research are as follows:

- Exploring the use of learning communities in school policy decision making at SMAN 1 Pamukan Utara
- Analyze the role of learning communities in improving the quality of school policies at SMAN 1 Pamukan Utara.
- To find out how learning communities can increase stakeholder participation in school policy decision making at SMAN 1 Pamukan Utara.
- Analyze the impact of utilizing learning communities on transparency and accountability in school policy decision making at SMAN 1 Pamukan Utara

## 4. Literature Review

### 4.1 Learning Community

A learning community is a group of individuals who share a common goal of improving their knowledge and skills (Kilpatrick et al., 2003). Learning communities can be an effective vehicle for facilitating learning and professional development (DuFour et al., 2004). According to (Ahmadi, 2023), learning communities can help improve individual abilities through collaborative and reflective learning processes.

According to (Khalman et al., 2024) the learning community optimization guidebook published by the Directorate General of Teachers and Education Personnel in 2023, Learning communities focus on student learning, foster collaboration and collective responsibility, and are oriented towards student learning outcome data. These three focuses are three big ideas in running a learning community (DuFour et al., 2004).

### 4.2 School Policy Decision Making

School policy decision-making is a complex process involving multiple stakeholders, including teachers, students, parents, and the community (Mokoena, 2011). Effective school policy decision-making requires active participation from all stakeholders and transparency in the decision-making process (Chun & Cho, 2011). According to (Ginting & Haryati, 2012), effective school policy decision-making also requires strong leadership and a commitment to educational quality.

### 4.3 The Role of Learning Communities in School Policy Decision Making

Learning communities can play an important role in school policy decision-making by facilitating stakeholder participation, improving policy quality, and increasing transparency and accountability (Akhyar et al., 2025). Learning communities can also help improve teachers' teaching skills and improve student learning outcomes (Vescio & Adams, 2008). According to (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009), learning communities can be an effective vehicle for promoting sustainable educational change and improving the quality of education.

### 4.4 Factors Affecting the Effectiveness of Learning Communities

Some factors that influence the effectiveness of learning communities are strong leadership, commitment to quality education, and active participation from all stakeholders (Maisaroh & Untari, 2024). According to (DuFour et al., 2004), effective learning communities also require clear structures and systematic processes to facilitate learning and professional development. In addition, learning communities also require a supportive and inclusive culture to facilitate the participation of all members (Busher, 2005).

### 4.5 The Impact of Learning Communities on School Policy Decision Making

Learning communities can have a positive impact on school policy decision-making by improving policy quality, increasing stakeholder participation, and promoting transparency and accountability (Sholeh, 2023). According to (Mitchell & Sickney, 2003), learning communities can be an effective vehicle for promoting sustainable educational change and improving the quality of education.

According to (Miliani et al., 2023) the learning community optimization guidebook published by the Directorate General of Teachers and Education Personnel in 2023, to see the improvement in student learning outcomes, a closed cycle can be implemented, namely: initial reflection, planning, implementation and evaluation. Decision making can be seen in the planning and implementation process.

## **5. Research Methodology**

### **5.1 Research Design**

This study uses a case study design with a qualitative approach. Case studies are used to understand in depth the use of learning communities in school policy decision making at SMAN 1

Pamukan Utara. This research design was chosen because it allows researchers to obtain rich and in- depth data about the phenomenon being studied.

### **5.2 Research Design Objectives**

The purpose of this research design is to:

- a. Understanding in depth about the use of learning communities in policy decision making at SMAN 1 Pamukan Utara
- b. Identifying factors that influence the effectiveness of learning communities in school policy decision making
- c. Analyzing the impact of learning communities on school policy decision making at SMAN 1 Pamukan Utara.

### **5.3 Advantages of Research Design**

The advantages of this research design are:

- a. Enables researchers to obtain rich and in-depth data about the phenomena being studied
- b. Can help understand the context and process of policy decision making at SMAN 1 Pamukan Utara
- c. Enables researchers to identify patterns and themes that emerge from research data

### **5.4 Limitations of Research Design**

The limitations of this research design are:

- a. Research results can only be generalized in the same context.
- b. This research requires sufficient time and resources to obtain rich and in-depth data.
- c. Analysis of this research data requires good analytical skills to identify patterns and themes that emerge from the research data.

### **5.5 Data Sources**

The research data was obtained from:

- a. Interviews with principals, teachers, and members of the learning community
- b. Participatory observation in the school policy decision-making process.
- c. Analysis of school policy documents and learning community activity reports.

### **5.6 Data Collection Techniques**

- a. In-depth interviews using interview guidelines
- b. Participatory observation using field notes
- c. Document analysis using content analysis techniques

### **5.7 Research Instruments**

Qualitative research that becomes an instrument or research tool is the researcher himself. Therefore, the researcher as an instrument must also be "validated" to what extent the qualitative researcher is ready to conduct research that then go into the field. Validation of researchers as instruments includes validation of understanding of qualitative research methods, mastery of insight into the field being studied, researcher readiness to enter the research object, both academically and logistically (Villarino et al.,2024).

To obtain as much and in-depth data as possible during field research activities at SMAN 1 Pamukan Utara, the researcher was present directly at the research location. In this case, the researcher acts as the main instrument in data collection and is present to find data that is directly or indirectly related to the problem being studied. The role as an instrument and data collector is realized by the researcher being directly at the research location.

## **6. Results and Discussion**

Learning communities can have a positive impact on school policy decision-making by improving policy quality, increasing stakeholder participation, and promoting transparency and accountability (Sholeh, 2023). According to (Rahmawati & Nurachadija, 2023), learning communities can be an effective vehicle for promoting sustainable educational change and improving the quality of education.

Based on the results of field research conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation, research results were found that showed that SMAN 1 Pamukan Utara had developed a learning community as one of the strategies to improve the quality of education in the school, the development of a learning community was carried out through a cycle: initial reflection, planning, implementation and evaluation. The results of this cycle can then be data for making school policy decisions, both regarding the quality of learning, follow-up for improving learning, student learning needs and priority programs that will be implemented according to student needs both intracurricularly, co-curricularly or extracurricularly.

The learning community at SMAN 1 Pamukan Utara consists of large groups and small groups. The large group consists of the principal, all teachers and education staff and is named the Ratu Intan Learning Community. While the small group consists of subject teacher groups. There are 3 small groups at SMAN 1 Pamukan Utara, namely: the MIPA group, the Social Sciences Group and the General Group.

Community learning meetings are held routinely, for large groups they are held once a month, while small groups are held twice a month and the time is arranged by fellow members in the small group. The results of the meetings in small groups will be re-evaluated in the large group for school policy decision making.

### **6.1 Utilization of Learning Communities in School Policy Decision Making**

The results of the study indicate that the learning community at SMAN 1 Pamukan Utara has been utilized in making school policy decisions. The learning community has become an effective forum to facilitate discussion and joint reflection between school stakeholders. The utilization of the cycle starting from initial reflection, planning, implementation and evaluation in the learning community can be used as a reference and basis for decision making at school.

The research results also show that the learning community at SMAN 1 Pamukan Utara can play an important role in school policy decision making in several ways:

- a. Increasing Stakeholder Participation: Learning communities facilitate the participation of various stakeholders in the school policy decision-making process
- b. Improving Policy Quality: Learning communities help improve the quality of school policies by facilitating the exchange of knowledge, experiences, and best practices among community members
- c. Increasing Transparency and Accountability: Learning communities facilitate transparency and accountability in the school policy decision-making process

### **6.2 Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of Learning Communities**

The research results show that several factors that influence the effectiveness of learning communities in school policy decision making are:

- a. Strong leadership and commitment to quality education
- b. Active participation from all school stakeholders
- c. Clear structures and systematic processes to facilitate learning and professional development.

### **6.3 Impact of Learning Communities on School Policy Decision Making**

The results of the study show that the learning community has had a positive impact on school policy decision making at SMAN 1 Pamukan Utara. The learning community has helped improve the quality of school policies, increase stakeholder participation, and promote transparency and accountability in decision-making processes.

### **6.4 Other Findings**

The research results also show that;

- a. Learning communities have helped improve teachers' teaching abilities and improve student learning outcomes
- b. The learning community has promoted sustainable educational change and improved the quality of education at SMAN 1 Pamukan Utara
- c. Learning communities have become an effective vehicle for facilitating collaboration and innovation in education

## **7. Conclusion**

The use of learning communities in school policy decision-making at SMAN 1 Pamukan Utara has great potential to improve the quality of education. By facilitating stakeholder participation, improving policy quality, and increasing transparency and accountability, learning communities can be an important tool in creating more effective and responsive school policies.

This study has shown that the learning community at SMAN 1 Pamukan Utara has been utilized effectively in school policy decision making. The learning community has become an effective forum to facilitate discussion and joint reflection between school stakeholders, improve the quality of school policies, and promote transparency and accountability in the decision-making process.

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## **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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