

STRENGTHENING THE EXISTENCE OF STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

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Abstract

Education is an important foundation for human resource development, and the involvement of stakeholders such as government, teachers, parents, and the community is key to the decision-making process. This study aims to strengthen stakeholder involvement in decision-making in the education sector. The methodology used is quantitative, with a survey of 115 stakeholders in five different schools in Kendari City. The results of the study indicate that stakeholder participation has a significant effect on the effectiveness of educational decisions, with a Pearson correlation value of 0.805. This indicates a very strong correlation between the two variables. In general interpretation, a correlation value between 0.70 and 1.00 is considered a strong correlation. When stakeholders are more involved in the decision-making process, the results of the decision tend to be better or more positive. These findings remain relevant in the long term and open up opportunities for further research on more structured decision-making mechanisms. The conclusion of the study emphasizes the importance of strengthening stakeholder involvement on an ongoing basis to ensure the sustainability of education quality.

Keywords: decision-making, education, participation, quantitative research, stakeholder involvement

Introduction

Education has an important role in shaping individuals and society. Education is not only aimed at the transfer of knowledge, but also at developing the critical skills necessary to participate in society. Decision-making in the education system is a complex process that involves various parties, including governments, schools, teachers, parents, and the community (De Wit-de Vries et al., 2019; Elfert, 2015; Galvis, 2018; UNESCO, 2015). The involvement of all stakeholders is critical to ensure that the resulting education policies are relevant, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of the community (Castellano et al., 2017; Stahnke et al., 2016).

Stakeholders have various complementary roles in the context of education. Parents act as the main support for their children and have insight into their educational needs. Teachers are responsible for teaching and developing the curriculum, while the government sets policies and provides the necessary funds. The community, on the other hand, serves as a liaison between the school and the wider community, contributing to the development of programs that support education (Bryk, 2010). However, despite the importance of stakeholder engagement, many education systems face challenges in involving them effectively in decision-making. Many decisions are made without consultation with affected stakeholders, which often results in ineffective or even counterproductive policies. Research shows that a lack of communication between schools and parents can result in dissatisfaction and a lack of support for education policies (Eden et al., 2024; Hill et al., 2018).

The lack of stakeholder involvement in decision-making has a significant impact on the effectiveness of education policies. Their non-participation can lead to a mismatch between the policies implemented and the real needs that exist on the ground (Flannery et al., 2018; Karger et al., 2022). This creates a gap between public expectations and the reality of existing education. Research reveals that policies that do not consider input from parents and the community often fail to achieve the desired goals. The lack of stakeholder participation also creates challenges in policy implementation. If stakeholders feel they have no part in decision-making, they are less likely to support or implement existing policies, resulting in ineffective policies (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Ni et al., 2018). This research is important to fill gaps in the literature regarding stakeholder engagement in education, as well as to offer a more holistic perspective on how stakeholders can contribute effectively to decision-making (Hsiao et al., 2018).

In the last decade, a lot of research has been done to explore stakeholder engagement in education. Research shows that parental involvement has a positive effect on student success, but the practice of this engagement varies significantly in different contexts (Benner et al., 2016; Boonk et al., 2018; Castro et al., 2015). Meanwhile, a study found that open and transparent communication between schools and parents can improve parental involvement and, in turn, student outcomes. Although many studies have examined the role of individual stakeholders, there is still a gap in understanding how all parties can work together within a more integrated decision-making framework (Fenton et al., 2017; Robinson, 2017). Research highlights the importance of collaboration between teachers, parents, and the community, but does not adequately emphasize how the education system can facilitate this process effectively (Balyer et al., 2015; Dolph, 2017).

The study fills this gap by exploring how stakeholder engagement can be strengthened through a more systematic collaborative approach, as well as providing practical recommendations for policymakers to increase participation in educational decision-making. This study aims to analyze the role of stakeholders in the educational decision-making process and evaluate the factors that affect stakeholder engagement effectively. As well as providing policy recommendations that can strengthen stakeholder involvement in education decision-making. Stakeholder engagement in education decision-making is a complex but important issue. By involving all relevant parties, education policies can become more

responsive and effective. Through this research, it is hoped that it can provide deeper insights into the role and impact of stakeholder engagement and identify existing challenges. The results of this study not only enrich the existing literature but also guide future educational practices.

Method

This study explored stakeholder engagement in educational decision-making with a methodological approach designed to uncover the nuances and complexities of the process (Creswell, 2014). The methodology used included research design, sampling, data collection, and data analysis. To explore stakeholder engagement, this study employed a blended research design that combined qualitative and quantitative elements. This method was chosen because it allows researchers to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the phenomenon under study.

The population in this study was 115 respondents covering a wide range of education stakeholders, including teachers, principals, parents, and government representatives. Sampling was carried out using the purposive sampling technique, which allowed the researcher to select respondents based on certain criteria relevant to the research objectives. Selection criteria include experience in decision-making at the school level and involvement in education-related activities (Palinkas et al., 2015). Data collection for this study was conducted with the consent of all respondents, who participated voluntarily and without any coercion from the researchers. The researchers guarantee the confidentiality of all respondents' personal data and used it solely for academic purposes.

Data analysis was carried out using qualitative and quantitative analysis methods. Quantitative data collected from a survey were analyzed using descriptive statistics to provide an overview of respondent characteristics and stakeholder engagement levels. This analysis includes calculations of the frequency, average, and percentage of responses given by survey participants (Field, 2024). In addition, a correlation analysis was conducted to explore the relationship between the level of stakeholder involvement and factors influencing decision-making. Then, qualitative data from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. This process involved coding data to identify themes and patterns that emerged from respondents (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Virginia et al., 2016). The methodology applied in this study was designed to provide a comprehensive picture of stakeholder engagement in educational decision-making. Using a blended research design, precise sampling, and careful data analysis, this study aimed to uncover the nuances associated with stakeholder engagement and its impact on educational decision-making.

Findings and Discussion

In this section, the results of the study were presented in detail, including findings related to the level of stakeholder involvement in educational decision-making and an analysis of the relationship between such involvement and decision-making effectiveness. Furthermore, comparisons with previous studies were conducted to provide further context for the results obtained.

Description of respondent data: The number of participants in this study was 115. Of these, **men** dominated engagement in the decision-making process with 60% of the total participants (69 out of 115). While **women make up** only 40% (46

out of 115). Distribution of Stakeholders by Occupation: Parents/guardians: 55 people (highest percentage of involvement), Teachers: 29, Principals: 8 people, Community: 13 people, Government: 10 people. Meanwhile, the duration of involvement in educational institutions was less than one year for 10 respondents, 1-3 years for 67 respondents, 4-6 years for 17 respondents, and more than 6 years for 21 respondents.

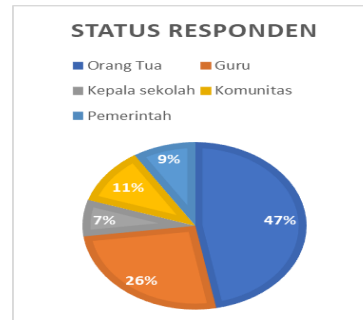


Figure 1. Respondents status

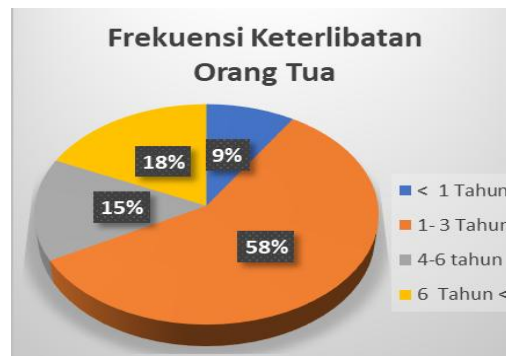


Figure 2. Duration of stakeholder engagement

Data obtained from the survey showed that the level of stakeholder engagement varied significantly among various groups, including teachers, parents, principals, and government representatives. The results showed that 68% of parents reported a high level of involvement in decision-making, while only 52% of teachers felt involved in the process.



Figure 3. Distribution of stakeholder engagement levels

Based on the stakeholder engagement data provided, the following are very frequent interpretations: 30 respondents (26.1%), Often: 25 respondents (21.7%), Sometimes: 29 respondents (25.2%), Rare: 20 respondents (17.4%), Never: 11 respondents (9.6%). This shows that the majority of stakeholders (73%) report involvement ranging from occasional to very frequent, meaning there is a significant level of participation in the educational decision-making process. However, 27% of stakeholders are in the low engagement category (rarely or never). This points to the potential for increased participation for certain groups to ensure that more stakeholders are actively involved in the decision-making process. This data shows that although the vast majority of stakeholders participate, there is still a sizable percentage who rarely or never engage. Further research can be focused on identifying barriers to participation for stakeholders with low engagement and developing strategies to encourage more active participation. This could include training, better communication, or policy changes that allow for wider access for all parties.



Figure 4. Distribution of stakeholder engagement rates

Based on the data provided about the level of stakeholder satisfaction in the decision-making process, here is the interpretation and analysis. Distribution of Satisfaction in Decision Making Very Satisfied: 44 respondents (38.3%), Satisfied: 32 respondents (27.8%), Sometimes: 20 respondents (17.4%), Dissatisfied: 11 respondents (9.6%), Very Dissatisfied: 8 respondents (7.0). The majority of stakeholders (66.1%) are satisfied or very satisfied with the decision-making process, which indicates that this process has gone well in the eyes of most stakeholders. However, 17.4% felt their satisfaction varied (sometimes), indicating uncertainty or inconsistent experiences in their engagement. And as many as 16.6% of respondents were in the category of dissatisfied to very dissatisfied, indicating that there are groups that feel that the decision-making process is inadequate or does not meet their expectations.

Additionally, it provides deeper insights into the factors influencing their engagement. Many teachers state that a lack of time and resources is a major obstacle to their engagement. In contrast, school principals report that they have better access to the decision-making process, thanks to support from the government and policies that facilitate participation. One of the themes that emerged from the thematic analysis was the importance of effective communication between all stakeholders. Respondents stated that open and transparent communication increases trust and encourages greater engagement.

From the correlation analysis conducted, it was found that there was a significant positive relationship between the level of stakeholder involvement and the effectiveness of educational decision-making.

Table 1 shows the results of a correlation analysis that highlights the relationship between stakeholder engagement and decision-making effectiveness.

Table 1. Correlation analysis: Stakeholder engagement and decision-making effectiveness

		Stakeholder involvement	Results
Stakeholder involvement	Korelasi Pearson	1	.805**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	115	115
Results	Korelasi Pearson	.805**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	115	115

Based on the data from the Pearson correlation test provided regarding the relationship between stakeholder engagement and decision-making, the following is the interpretation of the data is the Pearson Correlation Value (r): The Pearson correlation value between stakeholder engagement and decision-making is 0.805. This value shows a very strong correlation between the two variables. In common interpretation, a correlation value between 0.70 and 1.00 is considered a strong correlation.

A positive correlation (0.805) indicates that there is a direct relationship between stakeholder engagement and decision-making. This means that the higher the stakeholder involvement, the better the quality or results of decision-making, and vice versa. The resulting significance value (Sig.) is 0.000, which means it is very significant (less than 0.05). This suggests that the relationship between stakeholder engagement and decision-making is statistically significant. In other words, the chances of this outcome happening by chance are very small. The number of samples used in this analysis was 115, which is a large enough sample size to support the strength of the results of this correlation test. So it can be concluded that the relationship is very strong and significant. Stakeholder engagement has a very strong relationship with decision-making. This means that when stakeholders are more involved in the decision-making process, the outcome of the decision tends to be better or more positive. Given that this relationship is statistically significant, it can be concluded that increased stakeholder engagement will have a positive impact on the decision-making process. On the other hand, if stakeholder engagement is low, it is likely that the decisions taken will be less than optimal. The results of this study are consistent with the theory of stakeholder participation, which states that involvement in the decision-making process increases the legitimacy and acceptance of decisions. By involving stakeholders, the decision-making process becomes not only more inclusive but also more responsive to the needs and expectations of the community (Birnbbaum, 2016).

The results of this study are in line with many previous studies that show the importance of stakeholder involvement in educational decision-making. Research shows that schools that involve parents and the community in decision-making tend to have better student outcomes (Brezicha et al., 2020; Fenton et al., 2017; Nederhand & Klijn, 2019). These results support our finding that stakeholder

engagement is positively associated with the effectiveness of decisions taken. In an international context, research by By found that in different countries, stakeholder involvement in education decision-making has a positive impact on the quality of education (Bischoff et al., 2018; Hatipoglu et al., 2016; Wang & Ran, 2023; Zhuang et al., 2019). The study identified several factors that contribute to the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement, including education and training for teachers and policy initiatives that encourage participation.

However, the findings of this study also show some important differences with previous research. For example, a study showed that although many parents want to be involved, they often feel alienated from the decision-making process. In our study, high levels of parental involvement showed that local factors such as effective communication and support from schools strongly influenced their participation (Connor & Cavendish, 2018). This suggests that local context can play a key role in determining the level of stakeholder engagement (Toros, 2021). Results and research show that stakeholder involvement in educational decision-making has a significant influence on the effectiveness of these decisions. Quantitative data show that parents and principals have a high level of involvement, while teachers show lower involvement. The results of the analysis also showed a positive relationship between stakeholder engagement and decision effectiveness. (Erickson et al., 2016).

The findings of the study show that stakeholder involvement in education decision-making is an important factor influencing the effectiveness and success of education policies. The high involvement of parents and principals reflects awareness and desire to contribute to the decision-making process, while the low involvement of teachers indicates that there are challenges that need to be addressed (Benner et al., 2016; Boonk et al., 2018; Hornby & Blackwell, 2018). Some of the factors that support stakeholder engagement include effective communication between schools and the community. For example, when principals actively involve parents in discussions, they feel more valued and committed to supporting the policies taken. This is in line with research showing that good communication between schools and parents can increase parental involvement in a child's education (Datnow & Hubbard, 2016). On the other hand, there are significant inhibiting factors, such as a lack of time, resources, and training for teachers to be involved in decision-making. Research confirms that these barriers often prevent teachers from participating in the broader process, reducing their potential contribution to decision-making.

The results of this study have important implications for education policy, especially related to stakeholder participation. Considering the important role stakeholders play in decision-making, education policies need to be designed to ensure that the voices of all parties are heard and taken into account. In line with this, training for parents on how to contribute to the educational process should also be considered. Developing an open and transparent communication platform between schools and the community can encourage greater engagement. Initiatives such as regular meetings, discussion forums, and the use of social media can be leveraged to reach stakeholders more effectively, and providing a mechanism for evaluation and feedback from stakeholders on policies and decisions taken is critical. This will not only increase transparency but also strengthen trust between stakeholders.

Although this study provides important insights into stakeholder engagement in educational decision-making, there are some limitations to note: this study relies on survey data and subjective interviews, which may affect the validity of the findings. Although the triangulation method is used to improve validity, the potential for bias remains; the findings of this study may not be generalized to other contexts. Cultural, economic, and social factors can influence stakeholder engagement in other areas, as shown in a study that compared educational contexts in different countries, and more research is needed to explore how contextual factors can influence stakeholder engagement. Therefore, the factors that support and hinder engagement must be identified and managed to achieve optimal participation. The implications for educational policy and practice are critical, and recommendations can help strengthen stakeholder engagement. Finally, the limitations of the research suggest the need for further research to explore more complex dynamics in diverse educational contexts (Bischoff et al., 2018).

Conclusion

The study found that stakeholder engagement, including parents, teachers, principals, and the community, is a key element in effective educational decision-making. The data show that high levels of engagement are directly proportional to the success of education policies and the achievement of student learning outcomes. In this context, stakeholder participation not only enriches the decision-making process but also increases a sense of ownership and commitment to the resulting policies. This research makes a significant contribution to the literature on stakeholder involvement in educational decision-making. Previously, many studies focused on participation theory without providing empirical evidence about the impact of stakeholder engagement in specific contexts. This study fills this gap by presenting data that shows how the involvement of various parties can affect the effectiveness of educational decision-making. In addition, this research also provides practical insights for education policymakers. With the resulting recommendations, it is hoped that education policies can be designed to be more inclusive, ensuring that all stakeholder voices are heard. This is in line with recommendations that emphasize the importance of stakeholder participation in education policy formulation to create a more responsive and effective education system.

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