

Implementing Minimum Education Service Standards to Enhance Learning Quality in Indonesian Junior High Schools

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the implementation of Minimum Service Standards (SPM) in Education at SMP Negeri 4 Trumon Timur, South Aceh Regency, to evaluate its effectiveness in improving learning quality at the junior high school level. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach through interviews, observations, and documentation studies, the research analyzes learning planning, implementation processes, and infrastructure support using the Miles and Huberman interactive model. The results show that learning plans align with curriculum standards and basic competencies, teaching practices meet media and competency requirements, and infrastructure, such as laboratories, libraries, and technology facilities, adequately support learning activities. The implementation of SPM effectively enhances educational quality and supports the national goal of creating intelligent, character-driven learners. The findings provide valuable guidance for local governments and education authorities in formulating equitable and sustainable education policies to strengthen the realization of minimum service standards across regions.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The implementation of Minimum Education Service Standards (SPM) reflects the government's policy to regulate the type and quality of basic education services that local governments must provide, ensuring every citizen's right to quality and equitable education. SPM serves not only as an administrative instrument but also as a substantive strategy to guarantee students' rights to adequate education services by ensuring qualified teachers, appropriate curricula, and adequate infrastructure. However, in practice, implementing SPM, especially at the junior high school level, still faces significant challenges, including budget

constraints, uneven teacher distribution, limited teacher training, and inadequate facilities [1]. As Machali et al. [2] emphasized, the implementation of education quality standards becomes effective only when supported by strong monitoring and continuous training systems. Similarly, Harris et al. [3] note that limited digital literacy and insufficient facilities remain obstacles in remote areas.

Policy implementation in education is closely tied to the administrative behavior of institutions responsible for enforcing programs and ensuring compliance with target groups. Implementation is a key element in the policy process and serves as the final determinant of policy effectiveness [4]. Effective policy implementation, including the independent learning curriculum, requires collaboration among teachers, principals, parents, and the government to enhance the quality of education in Indonesia [5].

In this regard, the SPM framework can be viewed as a strategic step toward achieving the National Education Standards (SNP) [6], ensuring equitable access to and the quality of educational services for communities, s mandated by district and city governments [7]. Wijaya et al. [8] also highlight that SPM acts as a key driver of quality improvement by promoting equitable access, qualified teaching, and adequate facilities.

Despite the policy's importance, numerous reports show that many regions have yet to meet SPM indicators, particularly in terms of the availability of learning facilities and students' competency achievements [9]. Limited resources are identified as the main obstacle to effective SPM implementation, which in turn affects learning quality [10]. Furthermore, Putra and Wulandari [11] found that a lack of infrastructure support and minimal teacher training directly reduce learning effectiveness. Unlike previous studies that primarily examined general challenges of SPM implementation, this study focuses on SPM implementation in highly disadvantaged regions, specifically SMP Negeri 4 Trumon Timur, to identify localized strategies that can improve learning quality. This focus provides new insights into how SPM operates under resource-limited conditions and offers practical implications for regional policy improvement.

This study aims to analyze the implementation of Minimum Education Service Standards in enhancing learning quality at SMP Negeri 4 Trumon Timur. The main research question is: How do school planning, instructional implementation, and infrastructure support align with SPM indicators to improve learning quality? The research fills the existing gap in SPM literature by providing contextual analysis from a remote area perspective, offering empirical evidence that can guide local governments and policymakers in formulating equitable and sustainable education strategies to strengthen the achievement of national education goals.

2. METHOD

Research Design

Understanding the reality of education requires more than statistical data; it requires an approach that reveals the meaning behind educators' experiences. This study employs a descriptive qualitative design, selected for its suitability in exploring deeply the phenomena surrounding the implementation of Minimum Service Standards (SPM) in education. According to Arikunto [12], qualitative research relies on data obtained directly from

informants, both orally and in writing, and aims to describe social reality in depth. In this study, the researcher acted as the primary instrument in data collection through observation, interviews, and documentation. Supporting instruments included interview guides, observation notes, and school documents such as the School Work Plan, Lesson Plans, teaching schedules, and supervision reports.

Setting and Participants

The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 4 Trumon Timur in South Aceh Regency over two months. This school was chosen because it has implemented Minimum Education Service Standards but continues to face significant challenges, providing an opportunity for comprehensive analysis. The study involved three participants: the principal, vice principal, and one teacher selected using a purposive sampling technique. The sample size was limited to ensure in-depth data collection and analysis, and data saturation was achieved when no new information emerged during the interviews. The principal was selected for their role as a policymaker responsible for program implementation; the vice principal was included due to their administrative and academic responsibilities; and the teacher represented the direct implementers of classroom learning. Ethical considerations were observed through obtaining informed consent from all participants and securing formal permission from the school administration.

Data Collection

Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. Triangulation was employed to ensure data validity and credibility. Participant observation enabled the researcher to observe firsthand how the principal, vice principal, and teachers applied Minimum Service Standards to improve learning quality. In-depth interviews explored participants' experiences, perceptions, and strategies in overcoming obstacles in SPM implementation. Documentation studies examined supporting materials, including school infrastructure reports, teacher lists, and curriculum documents.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model [13], which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing [14]. Interview transcripts were read repeatedly and coded using open and axial coding to identify major themes related to SPM dimensions. The reduced data were then presented in thematic matrices to highlight patterns and relationships between participants and indicators. Conclusions were drawn inductively and refined through ongoing comparison with field data.

Data Validation

Data validity was ensured through triangulation of sources and techniques, member checking, and peer discussions to reduce researcher bias [15]. Member checking was carried out by sharing the summarized findings with participants to confirm accuracy. Peer discussions with academic colleagues helped validate interpretations and enhance analytical rigor.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

Learning quality is one of the main foundations for the implementation of education because it is from there that the quality of human resources is developed. Learning quality is not only understood as academic achievement in the form of grades alone, but rather as a comprehensive picture of the processes, inputs, and outcomes of continuous teaching and learning. Conceptually, learning quality encompasses three main aspects: input, process, and output. The input aspect includes the availability of competent teachers, a curriculum relevant to current needs, and facilities and infrastructure that support the creation of a conducive learning environment. The process aspect includes the learning methods used, interaction patterns between teachers and students, and a classroom atmosphere that encourages active participation. Meanwhile, the output aspect covers student learning outcomes, including knowledge, skills, attitudes, and character formed through learning.

Learning Planning Based On SPM Education Standards

Learning planning based on the Minimum Service Standards (SPM) for education is a strategic step to ensure that the teaching and learning process runs in accordance with these standards, so that every student has the right to quality, equitable education services aligned with curriculum objectives. This can be seen in the table below:

Interview results regarding the Implementation of Minimum Education Service Standards by the principal, vice principal, and teachers:

State Junior High School 4 East Trumon

- KS** : I first created a plan, discussed it with the teaching staff, and analyzed the school's performance by comparing school achievement data to the SPM indicators (e.g., student attendance, lesson hours, teacher qualifications, facilities and infrastructure, and special services). I also developed a School Work Plan (RKS) that included measurable targets for achieving the SPM indicators.
- WK** : I plan and manage the learning process by preparing appropriate and relevant teaching modules to meet students' learning needs. I align the number of lesson hours with the planned teaching modules. I manage time and class effectively and optimally during the learning process. I conduct learning evaluations and reflections on the achievement of the material learned.
- GR** : I develop teaching modules tailored to students' abilities and the school's support system. I also implement differentiated learning with the primary focus on the students.
- RC** : What form of support or supervision did you receive during the implementation of learning to ensure compliance with minimum education service standards?
- KS** : Support is provided through supervision, training, mentoring, provision of resources, and motivation, enabling teacher development and more effective learning. I also provide a discussion space for teachers so that if they encounter any challenges in the learning process, they can discuss them together and find solutions.
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- WK** : Support for the provision of facilities and infrastructure, direction for implementing classroom learning, and appropriate training to improve teacher competency.
- GR** : The support or supervision I received during the implementation of the learning. One of them is support for the provision of facilities and infrastructure, appropriate training to improve teacher competence, and the direction needed to improve the quality of learning.

Based on the interview results below, the principal has implemented the minimum education service standards effectively to improve learning quality. The school strives to meet the indicators of the Minimum Education Service Standards through strategic planning, teacher management support, and differentiated learning that focuses on student needs. Regular evaluations, the use of technology, and collaboration between educators are key to overcoming these limitations. Going forward, strengthening the principal's role and ongoing teacher training are expected to enable effective, standards-compliant learning.

Implementation Of Learning That Meets Standards: Learning Media Standards, Teacher Competency Standards, Curriculum Standards

Implementing learning that meets standards includes using appropriate learning media, ensuring professional teacher competence, and applying a relevant curriculum, so that the teaching and learning process is effective, interactive, and meaningful for students. Dewanto et al. [16] demonstrated that improving teachers' digital literacy and interpersonal communication directly contributes to their performance and learning effectiveness. Implementing learning that meets standards in terms of improving the quality of learning includes:

1. Learning Media Standards

Implementing learning that meets standards, particularly in the aspect of learning media, can be achieved by having teachers thoroughly plan and prepare media tailored to material needs. Interview results indicate that teachers benefit from various trainings, MGMP (teaching group discussions), and technical guidance programs that help improve their competence in creating more interactive and meaningful learning media. School support, particularly the availability of facilities and infrastructure such as science laboratories, is also a crucial supporting factor because it enables the use of relevant and applicable media.




2. Teacher competency standards

Implementing learning that meets teacher competency standards is demonstrated through increased professionalism through training, thorough learning planning, optimal utilization of infrastructure, implementation of learning aligned with core competencies, and ongoing evaluation. With school support and consistent self-reflection, teachers can optimally implement their competencies, ensuring that learning not only meets formal SPM standards but is also meaningful and effective for students.

3. Curriculum standards

Implementing learning that meets curriculum standards requires careful planning, interactive and contextual implementation, appropriate time management, and ongoing evaluation. With the support of school facilities and management, curriculum standards can be implemented consistently, ensuring optimal educational goals are achieved.

Table 2. Institutional Structure Interview Findings

Information	Documentation		
Teachers And Students Carry Out Learning Activities That Meet SPM			
	<p>Figure 1 Source: Researcher documentation</p>	<p>Figure 2 Source: Researcher documentation</p>	<p>Figure 3 Source: Researcher documentation</p>

The image above shows that learning in accordance with the Minimum Service Standards (SPM) of Education is implemented in a planned, systematic manner, and is oriented towards fulfilling students' learning rights. Teachers prepare learning materials by referring to the applicable curriculum, ensuring the availability of minimal facilities and infrastructure, and creating a conducive classroom atmosphere. The learning process is carried out through a variety of methods, including interactive lectures, discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and group work, thereby encouraging active student participation. Teachers act as facilitators and motivators, guiding students in understanding the material, developing critical thinking skills, and building positive character. In addition, learning that meets SPM is characterized by active student involvement at every stage of the activity, from planning and implementation to evaluation.

Educational Infrastructure Support

Support for educational infrastructure is a crucial factor in ensuring a smooth teaching and learning process. However, an evaluation by Nababan and Hanafi [17] revealed that gaps remain in the distribution of resources, teacher competency, and oversight mechanisms, impacting the quality of educational services. The findings of Adzkiya et al. [18] also demonstrate the importance of technology and digital media in establishing a safe and responsible learning infrastructure. Educational infrastructure comprises the facilities and systems that support the implementation of the teaching and learning process [17], [18], [19], [20]. The educational infrastructure support that can improve the quality of learning includes, for example, learning facilities such as classrooms, libraries, science laboratories,

computer laboratories, and learning media [21], [22], [23], [24], [25]. The educational infrastructure includes school buildings, electricity networks, clean water, sanitation, internet access, and a safe school environment. Good infrastructure will support the comfort, security, and health of students and educators. Infrastructure support also includes access to technological devices such as computers, LCDs, internet networks, and e-learning platforms. Moreover, all of this infrastructure support has been fulfilled at SMP Negeri 4 Trumon Timur, South Aceh Regency.

Based on the research results above, researchers believe that educational infrastructure is a fundamental component that helps ensure the effectiveness of the learning process, including adequate facilities, infrastructure, and a school environment. The availability of classrooms, libraries, laboratories, internet networks, and other supporting facilities has been proven to provide comfort, security, and health for students and educators. Furthermore, SMP Negeri 4 Trumon Timur in South Aceh Regency has adequate educational infrastructure to support optimal improvement in learning quality.

3.2. Discussion

This study found that implementing Minimum Service Standards (SPM) for Education at SMP Negeri 4 Trumon Timur has effectively improved learning quality through comprehensive planning, consistent implementation, and adequate infrastructure support. Unlike prior studies that primarily focused on policy-level analysis, this research provides field-based evidence of SPM effectiveness in a remote area context, offering insight into how standards-based educational governance can still function under resource constraints. The findings indicate that effective planning, teacher competence, and infrastructure synergy are key determinants in maintaining learning quality in disadvantaged schools.

Learning Planning Based on SPM Education Standards

Learning quality reflects the overall educational process, encompassing inputs such as teacher quality, curriculum design, and infrastructure; processes such as learning methods and classroom interactions; and outputs such as students' competencies and attitudes. To ensure this quality, the government established SPM as a benchmark for all schools. Prior research has noted that standardized planning should not be merely an administrative exercise but an operational strategy to align school objectives, activities, and assessments with both national standards and local student needs. Consistent and collaborative planning helps schools maintain the minimum education service level while fostering continuous improvement.

At SMP Negeri 4 Trumon Timur, the principal demonstrated strong leadership and commitment by integrating SPM principles into the School Work Plan (RKS). The RKS was not viewed as a static document but as a dynamic framework guiding all educators toward quality learning outcomes. Consistent with educational planning theories, effective planning combines participation, contextual adaptation, and systematic monitoring. The results confirm that planning involving teachers and administrators, tailored to students' local realities, ensures contextual, relevant, and meaningful learning experiences.

Implementation of Learning: Media, Teacher, and Curriculum Standards

The implementation phase translates planning into practice and focuses on three main SPM standards: instructional media, teacher competency, and curriculum implementation. Teachers at SMP Negeri 4 Trumon Timur demonstrated innovation in using interactive and relevant media, supported by training programs, MGMP activities, and science laboratory practices. These findings support earlier research linking resource adequacy and media interactivity to successful curriculum delivery.

Teacher competency emerged as a decisive factor in sustaining quality education. Teachers continuously engaged in self-reflection, refining their pedagogical, managerial, and socio-emotional skills. This aligns with the notion that effective teachers not only master content but also build emotionally healthy learning environments. Curriculum implementation, meanwhile, followed a well-structured, interactive, and contextually relevant model, preventing what some scholars describe as "curriculum silence," where learning loses depth and holistic development. Thus, implementation in this school extended beyond administrative compliance to a genuine, student-centered learning process.

Educational Infrastructure Support

Infrastructure remains a fundamental pillar of SPM implementation. SMP Negeri 4 Trumon Timur is equipped with functional classrooms, libraries, laboratories, computers, LCDs, and internet-based learning platforms. These facilities significantly enhance both teaching and learning effectiveness. Prior studies have similarly shown that the availability of physical and digital infrastructure is vital for sustaining modern learning environments. Nevertheless, this study underscores that while infrastructure adequacy supports success, its equitable distribution remains a challenge for schools in remote regions.

UNICEF and other stakeholders play important roles in strengthening school infrastructure, particularly in disadvantaged areas. This study highlights that professional teachers, a contextual curriculum, interactive media, and adequate infrastructure must operate in synergy to maintain and enhance learning quality.

Limitations and Practical Implications

This study was limited by its small participant sample, which, although sufficient for qualitative depth, restricts generalization to broader contexts. Future research could expand to comparative case studies across different regions. Practically, the findings underscore the need for continuous teacher professional development, improved digital literacy, and sustained infrastructure investment to ensure equitable learning opportunities nationwide.

In conclusion, the implementation of Minimum Service Standards at SMP Negeri 4 Trumon Timur demonstrates that even schools in remote areas can achieve meaningful learning improvements when supported by strong leadership, competent teachers, and adequate resources. The results offer policymakers valuable insights to refine SPM strategies and strengthen educational equity across Indonesia.

4. CONCLUSION

The study highlights that the quality of learning is shaped by the alignment of instructional planning, implementation, and infrastructure within the framework of the Minimum Service Standards (SPM) for education. Findings from SMP Negeri 4 Trumon Timur demonstrate that while efforts to improve learning quality are ongoing, their success depends largely on consistent implementation, teacher competence, and infrastructure adequacy. Unlike prior studies that primarily examined policy design, this research provides field-based evidence of SPM effectiveness in a remote area context, showing how contextualized implementation can support equitable access and learning quality. Theoretically, this reinforces the systemic view that quality learning results from coherent interaction among inputs, processes, and outcomes. In practice, the study emphasizes that consistent enforcement of SPM can serve as a mechanism for schools and local governments to sustain equitable and high-quality education delivery.

Policy implications emerging from this study suggest that local education authorities should institutionalize periodic SPM audits, allocate targeted funding to address infrastructure gaps, and develop continuous teacher capacity-building programs to ensure sustained improvements in learning quality. Furthermore, integrating digital platforms and participatory school management can strengthen compliance with national standards while fostering innovation at the local level. However, this study is limited to a single school context and relies on qualitative data from interviews and observations, which may limit generalizability. Future research should explore multi-site or comparative studies to capture broader patterns of SPM implementation across diverse educational settings.

Ultimately, achieving quality learning requires sustained collaboration among policymakers, educators, and communities to transform SPM from administrative compliance into a dynamic framework for continuous improvement. With strong institutional support, professional development, and adaptive management, Indonesia can move toward a more equitable and future-ready education system that not only meets minimum standards but aspires to exceed them.

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