

**IMPLEMENTATION OF CHANGE MANAGEMENT IN IMPROVING EDUCATION  
QUALITY IN THE DIGITAL ERA CASE STUDY AT SMK MUHAMMADIYAH  
KARTASURA**

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**ABSTRAK**

Pendidikan di era digital menuntut perubahan sistem pembelajaran yang cepat agar tetap relevan dengan perkembangan teknologi. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan implementasi manajemen perubahan dalam peningkatan mutu pendidikan di SMK Muhammadiyah Kartasura, khususnya dalam menghadapi tantangan digitalisasi. Pengumpulan data dilakukan secara deskriptif kualitatif melalui observasi, dokumentasi, dan wawancara dengan desain penelitian studi kasus. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa SMK Muhammadiyah Kartasura telah melakukan upaya penyiapan sarana prasarana dan pelatihan bagi para pendidik untuk mendukung pembelajaran berbasis digital. Namun tantangan besar masih muncul, terutama dalam hal pembentukan karakter mahasiswa, kesiapan infrastruktur, serta sumber daya manusia. Meskipun proses digitalisasi pendidikan mengalami kemajuan, penerapan manajemen perubahan di SMK Muhammadiyah Kartasura masih memerlukan perbaikan terutama pada kesiapan infrastruktur dan pengelolaan teknologi.

**Kata Kunci:** *Manajemen perubahan, Digitalisasi pendidikan.*

**ABSTRACT**

Education in the digital era demands rapid changes in the learning system to remain relevant to technological developments. This study aims to describe the implementation of change management in improving the quality of education at SMK Muhammadiyah Kartasura, especially in facing the challenges of digitalisation. Data were collected using descriptive qualitative through observation, documentation, and interviews with a case study research design. The results showed that SMK Muhammadiyah Kartasura has made efforts to prepare infrastructure and training for educators to support digital-based learning. However, significant challenges still arise, especially in terms of student character building, infrastructure readiness, as well as human resources. Despite the progress in the education digitalisation process, the implementation of change management at SMK Muhammadiyah Kartasura still needs improvement, especially in infrastructure readiness and technology management.

**Keywords:** *Change management, Digitalisation of education.*

**INTRODUCTION**

In the ever-evolving digital age, education not only emphasizes general knowledge, but must also prepare children to face global challenges in the future (Sinaga & Firmansyah, 2024). Rapid and complex technological developments have influenced learning methods, causing the education system to change rapidly to remain relevant (Alimuddin et al., 2023). Thus, the implementation of change management is very important to improve the quality of education.

Although the digital age provides many advantages, many schools still experience limitations in resources and technology. Lack of facilities, poor internet access, and outdated devices can hinder the learning process (Isma et al., 2023). Effective change management is

needed to overcome these barriers and improve the accessibility of technology in the educational environment.

William Bridges, states that change is not only a shift from an old state to a new state, but more important is the transition that everyone experiences during the process. He argues that the situation determines change, while the individual's response to change constitutes the transition. Change management is a systematic process of applying the knowledge, means, and resources necessary to influence the people who will be affected by change.

The process of updating an organization to meet changing needs is known as change management. Furthermore, Kudyay and Kleiner (1997) describe change management as an ongoing process to include the organization with the market and to do so more responsively and effectively than its competitors. When an organization needs to make changes gradually to adjust to internal and external conditions, change management is the tools, processes, and techniques to manage the consequences of such changes. The success rate of change management can also be influenced by individual or organizational behavior.

Changes in curriculum and teaching methods are important elements in implementing change management (Agus et al., 2022). The curriculum needs to be adjusted to match the demands of industry and cutting-edge technology to meet global education standards (Ahmad Tantowi, 2022). The use of more interactional and inclusive learning approaches is necessary to increase student achievement and improve the learning experience. Teachers are an important key in improving the quality of education. However, many teachers still need training and professional development to keep up with technological and curriculum developments. Teacher participation in change management planning, implementation and evaluation is essential to prepare them for new challenges (Hamid & Muadin, 2024). The positive thing about government policies to improve the quality of education is that they continue to develop by improving teachers' competencies and increasing assistance for school facilities and infrastructure (Sulaeha, 2022).

According to Sudarwan Danim (2006), improving the quality of education is a systematic effort to improve the quality of education with a focus on the quality of inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes of education. Meanwhile, according to Edward Sallis (2002), improving the quality of education is a process that focuses on meeting the needs and expectations of educational clients, both internal and external. Another definition was also conveyed by Prof. Dr. Soedijarto (2008) who emphasized that improving the quality of education must include the following; 1). Improving the professional ability of educators, 2). Improving effective education management, 3). Increased quality learning resources.

Based on the opinions of these experts, improving the quality of education is an integrated effort that includes improving all components of education, both in terms of inputs, processes, and outcomes, to meet the needs and expectations of all stakeholders, both internal and external. This includes improving the professionalism of educators, effective education management, and the provision of quality learning resources to support the achievement of optimal educational outcomes.

Although change management is crucial, many schools still experience difficulties in implementing it. Things like cost, manpower and lack of infrastructure can hinder the implementation of change management. Therefore, effective strategies are needed to overcome these barriers and ensure the smooth implementation of change management. Therefore, implementing change management to improve the quality of education in the digital age is not only a necessity but also an obligation to prepare future generations to face global challenges.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This type of research uses descriptive qualitative with a case study research design. Data collection using observation, documentation and interviews. Qualitative approach according to Sargeant in Marinu (2023) In qualitative research, data analysis is carried out with the aim of interpreting the resulting data and themes, making it easier to understand, identify, and describe the results.

With this qualitative research, it can describe the implementation of change management in improving education in the digital era at SMK Muhammadiyah Kartasura in detail. The informant of this research is Mr. Wawan Budianto, S.Pd., as the Head of Curriculum of SMK Muhammadiyah Kartasura.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The digital age presents both opportunities and challenges for improving education. Implementing change management effectively is critical to capitalizing on these opportunities (Widayani, 2020). This involves leadership that can motivate educators to adopt new approaches. Educators themselves must also be willing to change their mindsets and implement new strategies (Rambe, 2024).

*“The change of education towards digitalization is important to keep up with the times and the implementation of digital learning is important to adapt civilization and curriculum.”* (Interview with Mr. Wawan Budianto, S.Pd., Waka Curriculum on September 13, 2024).

It can be understood that SMK Muhammadiyah Kartasura views that digitalization of education is very important to maintain the relevance of education to the times. This transformation is needed so that the education system is able to answer the needs of modern society, as well as a curriculum that always adapts to technological and social changes. The application of digital-based learning is important in building a generation that is better prepared to face this technological age.

In addition, digitalization is also a strategic step that not only helps adjust civilization but also opens up opportunities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of learning (Belva et al., 2024). Proper change management can bring education to a more modern level and relevant to today's global demands.

*“There is a decline in children's character when learning is not face-to-face, because children tend to do as they please. Then, to deal with changes from conventional to digital learning requires preparation of Human Resources (HR) and infrastructure. Also, training and self-development are conducted to prepare teachers to face the changes.”* (Interview with Mr. Wawan Budianto, S.Pd., as the Head of Curriculum on September 13, 2024).

It can be concluded that the main challenge in digitizing education involves the character aspect of students. With more online learning, some students tend to lose discipline and focus, which has a negative impact on their character development. The lack of face-to-face interaction makes it more difficult for students to be supervised and directed, so school management must find solutions to maintain their discipline.

In addition to the challenges of student character, the readiness of infrastructure and human resources is also a significant challenge. SMK Muhammadiyah Kartasura needs to prepare technology devices, adequate internet connections, and ensure that teachers and other staff have sufficient skills in using technology. Continuous training for teachers and staff is one way to overcome this challenge.

*“Preparation for installing wi-fi hotspots for learning activities using applications, for that there is a team that helps in developing or managing applications, but only one person develops it.”* (Interview with Mr. Wawan Budianto, S.Pd., Waka Curriculum on September 13, 2024).

SMK Muhammadiyah Kartasura has shown readiness by preparing critical infrastructure such as Wi-Fi hotspot internet used to support digital learning. With good connectivity, the teaching and learning process using digital applications can run more smoothly. This technical readiness is the foundation for the implementation of technology-based education in schools.

However, limitations are still seen on the application development side, where only one person is responsible for the technology development. This shows that schools still need more teams to handle technology management so that the implementation of digital learning can be more effective.

*“Schools must assist children to adapt to changes and challenges. And there are also extracurricular activities at school that support children's interests and talents in the digital world and there is assistance for students who have talents in social media.”* (Interview with Mr. Wawan Budianto, S.Pd., as Waka Curriculum on September 13, 2024).

SMK Muhammadiyah Kartasura's strategy is carried out by prioritizing more assistance for students in facing changes towards digital technology. SMK Muhammadiyah ensures that students are not only directed to adapt to new technologies, but also given support to overcome challenges that arise during the adaptation process. This assistance helps students adjust to a more interactive learning environment.

In addition, SMK Muhammadiyah Kartasura also provides extracurricular programs that aim to develop students' interests and talents in the digital world. The program also provides space for students who are interested in social media to develop their skills, so that the process of adapting to technology focuses not only on formal learning but also on developing students' personal interests and talents.

*“Training and development to support digital transformation is conducted to prepare teachers for change.”* (Interview with Mr. Wawan Budianto, S.Pd., Waka Curriculum on September 13, 2024).

SMK Muhammadiyah Kartasura provides training and capacity building programs for teachers to deal with technological changes in the education process. The training aims to improve teachers' digital competencies so that they can use the various technology tools available effectively in learning. This is an important step to ensure teachers are able to adapt to the demands of the digital era.

However, the effectiveness of this training still needs to be further evaluated. Often, despite the training, some teachers may still require more intensive assistance in the practical application of the technology in the classroom. Continuous evaluation of the impact of the training on teachers' performance is needed to ensure that they can support digital transformation without any obstacles.

*“The change from traditional learning to digital is new for the children. From the students themselves, there is no significant change in terms of academics, but there is a change in character in learning. Actually, the results of digital learning for each student are different.”* (Interview with Mr. Wawan Budianto, S.Pd., as the Head of Curriculum on September 13, 2024).

We can conclude that SMK Muhammadiyah Kartasura responded to the shift towards technology-based learning quite positively. Digital learning is considered more interactive and provides a new learning experience for students. It also helps them to be more involved in the learning process, which previously may have felt monotonous in traditional learning methods. However, the effectiveness of digital learning still varies between students, depending on their level of adaptation to technology.

On the other hand, academically, there is no significant change in students' learning outcomes. However, major changes were seen in their character and behavior. While some



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students showed improvement in independence, others had difficulty in maintaining discipline and focus while learning online. Digital learning has a different impact on each student, depending on how they adapt to the new learning environment.

## CONCLUSION

Broadly speaking, the implementation of change management in improving the quality of education at SMK Muhammadiyah Surakarta can be said to be not fully ready or successful as a whole, although it has shown some significant efforts. Students at SMK Muhammadiyah Surakarta have indeed become accustomed to digital learning that is more interactive. However, one of the major challenges is the decline in character building due to reduced face-to-face interaction. This shows that the changes have not been fully successful in maintaining a balance between academic learning and student character development. While the school has set up facilities such as wi-fi hotspots to support digital learning, the technology infrastructure and human resources still seem to need strengthening. The application development team, for example, only consists of one person, indicating that technology support has not been fully maximized to serve the needs of digitizing learning.

SMK Muhammadiyah Surakarta has shown commitment by providing mentoring for students who have interests and talents in the digital world, including in social media. This is a positive step in preparing students for the digital world. However, this is still a first step and the success of change implementation needs to be measured by long-term results.

Overall, SMK Muhammadiyah Surakarta is in the process of moving towards digital education, with some aspects showing progress. However, challenges in terms of human resources, student character and infrastructure readiness indicate that the implementation of change management is not yet fully ready or optimally successful.

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