

## The Principal's Role as a Manager in Improving Learning Effectiveness

Rahmania Rahman<sup>1</sup>, Fendy Novten Aring<sup>2</sup>

Prodi Manajemen Pendidikan, Universitas Negeri Manado, Universitas Negeri Manado<sup>12</sup>

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### Abstract

*This study aims to describe and analyze issues related to the effectiveness of learning, such as low teacher discipline, insufficient instructional supervision, limited learning innovation, and the suboptimal use of technology. These conditions indicate that the principal's role as a manager has not been fully effective. The principal plays an important role in managing all school assets to achieve learning that is effective, efficient, and oriented toward improving the quality of education. The approach used in this study is qualitative descriptive, with research respondents consisting of school leaders, educators, and administrative staff at the junior high school level. Data were collected through interviews, field observations, and document review, which were then processed using an interactive model that includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings of this study indicate that the principal has carried out managerial duties optimally, covering the stages of planning, organizing, implementing activities, and controlling the learning process. In the planning function, the principal develops programs to improve learning quality by involving all school members. In the organizing function, the principal allocates teacher and staff responsibilities proportionally and forms effective work teams. During the implementation stage, the principal provides motivation, supervision, and support for teachers in applying innovative learning methods. Meanwhile, in the supervision function, the principal conducts continuous evaluations of teacher performance and student learning outcomes to ensure the effectiveness of the learning process. Overall, the results show that principals who effectively perform their managerial role are able to create a conducive learning environment, enhance teacher professionalism, and encourage active student participation in the learning process. Thus, the principal's role as a manager contributes significantly to improving learning effectiveness and the quality of education in junior high schools.*

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### Corresponding Author:

Rahmania Rahman

Universitas Negeri Manado

Email: [rahmaniarahman@unima.ac.id](mailto:rahmaniarahman@unima.ac.id)

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a crucial element in developing the quality of human resources. Through effectively managed educational pathways, there is hope to produce a generation with adequate intellectual, emotional, and spiritual capabilities. Schools, as formal educational institutions, are mandated to realize nationally established educational goals. The position of the principal is crucial, given that the effectiveness of educational delivery in a school institution is largely determined by the leadership and managerial competencies they demonstrate.

As managers, principals are required to create a conducive work climate, manage teaching and administrative staff, optimally utilize infrastructure, and foster a collaborative work culture. This role is crucial given that curriculum changes, technological demands, and the need for student-centered learning increasingly necessitate adaptive and professional leadership.

However, in reality, many schools still face challenges in learning effectiveness, such as low teacher discipline, inadequate instructional supervision, limited learning innovation, and suboptimal use of technology. These conditions indicate that the principal's role as a manager is not yet fully effective. Therefore, an in-depth study is needed to determine how principals carry out their managerial functions in an effort to improve learning effectiveness in schools.

Several previous studies have shown that principal management plays a crucial role in improving teacher performance in schools. For example, research by Muflikha Muflikha (2025) suggests that principal management strategies for improving teacher performance include: 1) Listening; 2) Clarifying; 3) Encouraging; 4) Presenting; 5) Problem-solving; 6) Negotiating; 7) Demonstrating; 8) Directing; 9) Standardizing; 10) Providing reinforcement. Furthermore, research by Andriani (2021) suggests that a leader's job is not to solve problems alone, and leaders do not face challenges alone but rather to inspire those they lead to solve problems. Therefore, to improve teacher performance, principals as leaders can begin by demonstrating good performance, leadership, and principal management.

Based on this description, this research is important to determine the extent to which the principal's role as a manager can contribute to improving learning effectiveness, as well as the supporting and inhibiting factors that influence it. The results of this study are expected to provide a concrete picture and recommendations for principals, teachers, and related parties in optimizing learning management in schools and identifying factors that support and hinder the implementation of such effective learning.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research qualitative descriptive approach. A qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to understand the phenomena occurring in the field, specifically regarding how principals carry out their role as managers in improving learning effectiveness. According to Creswell (2016), qualitative research focuses on understanding the meaning contained in actions, processes, and social interactions from the perspective of participants. Using a descriptive approach, the researcher seeks to systematically and factually describe the principal's role in managing the planning, implementation, and supervision of learning in schools.

Data analysis in this study was carried out dynamically and continuously, starting from the data collection phase to the preparation of the final report. The applied analysis model includes three crucial stages. First, data reduction, in which data collected from the field is filtered, simplified, and focused on aspects relevant to the research focus, namely the role of the principal as a manager in efforts to improve learning effectiveness. Second, data presentation, in this stage, the reduced data is presented in narrative format, tables, or diagrams to facilitate the researcher's understanding of the interconnections between variables and the identified patterns. Third, conclusion drawing and verification, in which the researcher interprets the presented data to formulate valid conclusions. This verification process involves comparing the findings with existing theories and previous research results.

### 3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted in SMP Negeri 4, Satu Atap Kakas, located on Jl. Tumpaan Jaga II, Tumpaan Village, Kakas District. This school is a junior high school with a vision to create students who are faithful, high-achieving, and have character. The school's teaching staff consists of 10 teachers, 2 administrative staff, and 16 students divided into three grade levels. In carrying out educational activities, the school implements a learning system based on the Independent Curriculum that emphasizes active, contextual, and student-centered learning. The principal plays a crucial role as a manager in managing all available resources, ensuring that the learning process runs effectively and efficiently.

#### 3.1. Research result

Based on interviews, observations, and documentation studies, data show that principals play an active role as managers in four key management functions: planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising. Furthermore, principals also play a strategic role in managing human resources, facilities, and school culture.

##### 1. Planning

The principal prepares an annual work program plan and a medium-term school plan (RKJM) involving teachers and staff. This planning includes:

- a. Improving the quality of learning through teacher training.
- b. Procurement of technology-based learning media.
- c. Development of literacy and numeracy activities.
- d. Formation of a culture of discipline and cooperation in the school environment.

This planning activity is carried out at the beginning of each school year through a school work meeting. The principal prioritizes participatory principles, where each teacher and education staff member is given the opportunity to express their ideas and needs in their respective areas. This creates a sense of shared responsibility for the success of the learning program.

##### 2. Organizing

After the plan is developed, the principal organizes the work by establishing a clear work structure. Teachers are grouped by subject area, and various teams are formed, such as:

- a. Curriculum and Learning Team
- b. School Quality Assurance Team
- c. Student and Extracurricular Team
- d. Teacher Professional Development Team

Each team has duties and responsibilities outlined in the principal's decree. This organization facilitates coordination and expedites the decision-making process. Observations have shown that this proportional task allocation helps teachers focus on their respective areas, thereby increasing learning effectiveness.

##### 3. Implementation (Actuating)

During the implementation phase, the principal plays a role in providing direction, motivation, and support to teachers so they can effectively implement learning. Some concrete steps taken include:

- a. Carry out clinical and non-formal supervision of teachers at least twice a semester.
- b. Encourage teachers to use active learning methods such as project-based learning and problem-based learning.

- c. Organizing in-house training activities and encouraging teacher participation in district-level MGMP activities.
- d. Give awards to innovative and high-achieving teachers to increase work motivation.

Interviews with teachers revealed that the principal's communicative and open leadership style enhances teacher enthusiasm. Teachers feel valued and supported to continue innovating in their teaching.

#### 4. Monitoring and Evaluation (Controlling)

The principal also carries out a supervisory function by conducting routine evaluations of learning implementation. This supervision is carried out through:

- a. Direct observation in class.
- b. Examination of learning administration (RPP, teaching journal, student assessment).
- c. Monthly evaluation meetings to discuss problems that arise in the teaching and learning process.

Based on the evaluation results, the principal provides constructive feedback to teachers and collaboratively seeks solutions. Furthermore, the principal uses the evaluation results as a basis for determining policies to improve the quality of learning in the following period.

#### 5. Management of Resources and Infrastructure

The principal also plays a role in efficiently managing school resources, including BOS funds, learning resources, and digital facilities. Through careful planning, the principal ensures that every learning activity is supported by adequate facilities, such as projectors, science laboratories, a digital library, and the school's internet network.

School committee participation is also maximized to support funding for academic and non-academic activities. Transparency in the use of funds fosters trust and responsibility among the school community for the school's progress.

### 3.2. Discussion

The research results show that the principal's role as a manager has a direct impact on improving the effectiveness of learning in junior high schools. The principal's success in managing managerial functions creates a learning system that is focused, measurable, and adaptive to modern educational developments.

#### 1. The Principal as a Visionary Planner

A principal with a long-term vision can design learning programs that are relevant to students' needs. This aligns with educational management theory according to Terry (2010), which states that planning is the initial step that determines the success of an educational organization. The involvement of all school members in program development also creates a sense of belonging to the school's goals.

#### 2. Effective Organizing for Collaboration

The organizational structure established by the principal allows for a clear and efficient division of labor. The results of this study are in accordance with the opinion of Mintzberg (2011), which emphasizes the importance of coordination in educational management so that all resources can be directed toward achieving learning goals. With good organization, communication between teachers and staff becomes smoother.

#### 3. Implementation Based on Motivation and Democratic Leadership

The principal demonstrates a democratic leadership style by providing opportunities for teachers to innovate. According to Mulyasa (2013), Effective

principals are those who can mobilize the full potential of teachers to achieve learning goals. The results of this study indicate that the principal's motivation and support impact teacher performance and student enthusiasm for learning.

#### 4. Supervision that Drives Continuous Improvement

The principal's supervision is not repressive, but rather emphasizes mentoring and coaching. This approach creates a harmonious work environment and fosters a spirit of self-reflection among teachers. This aligns with the concept of academic supervision submitted by Sergiovanni (2009) that supervision should be a tool for teacher professional development, not just an administrative assessment.

#### 5. Impact on Learning Effectiveness

The principal's role as a manager has implications for increasing the effectiveness of learning. This is evident in year-over-year improvements in student learning outcomes, increased student discipline and participation in learning activities, and teachers' more active use of a variety of learning methods and media. Thus, the effectiveness of learning in junior high schools increases because the principal successfully integrates managerial aspects with a humanistic and participatory leadership approach.

The principal plays a central role as a manager in enhancing the effectiveness of learning. Through planned, systematic, and participatory management functions, the principal is able to optimally mobilize all educational resources, improve teacher competence and professionalism, and create a conducive learning climate oriented toward student learning outcomes. The principal's role as manager extends beyond school administration to serving as a driving force in building a culture of quality and meaningful learning.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study conducted regarding the role of school leaders in optimizing the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process in junior high school, it can be concluded that school leaders play a crucial role in managing all dimensions of school management to improve the quality of learning. School leaders not only carry out administrative functions, but also act as leadership figures, motivators, agents of change, and competent supervisors in directing the entire school community towards achieving educational goals. In the scope of planning, school leaders successfully formulate the school's work agenda in a structured and collaborative manner by involving educators and educational staff, thereby creating a sense of ownership and collective accountability for the implementation of learning activities. With regard to the organizing function, school leaders establish a well-defined organizational framework, distribute responsibilities in a balanced manner, and ensure smooth communication and synergy between school elements.

Furthermore, in its implementation, the principal adopts a participatory and open leadership approach. He motivates educators to consistently innovate and update teaching strategies to remain engaging and relevant to current needs. The principal also actively carries out academic supervision, offers guidance, and ensures the availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure to support smooth teaching and learning activities. Regarding the supervision and evaluation function, the principal not only observes the learning process but also provides constructive feedback and utilizes evaluation findings as a basis for continuous improvement of the school program.

Overall, the principal's role as a manager has been shown to significantly contribute to improving the effectiveness of learning in junior high schools. This is demonstrated by

improved teacher performance, higher student participation and motivation, and the creation of a more supportive learning environment within the school. Therefore, the success of an educational institution in improving its teaching standards substantially depends on the principal's competence in implementing various educational administration functions with a professional, collaborative approach focused on improving student academic achievement.

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