



Principal Leadership and Administrative Management: A Key to Improving Educational Quality in Schools

Larasati Alifia, Ibrahim Bafadal*, Juharyanto

Program Studi Administrasi Pendidikan, Universitas Negeri Malang, Jawa Timur, Indonesia
larasati.alifia.2101316@students.um.ac.id, ibrahim.bafadal.fip@um.ac.id, juharyanto.fip@um.ac.id

Abstract: Education in Indonesia faces various challenges in an effort to improve its quality, which is greatly influenced by the leadership of school principals and the management of administrative staff. This study aims to analyze the contribution of these two elements in efforts to improve the quality of education. The method applied in this research is a literature study, by collecting data from various articles and relevant research. The findings show that the synergy between the principal's leadership with a clear vision and effective administrative management is crucial to creating a supportive learning environment. The conclusion of this study emphasizes the importance of harmonious collaboration between principals and administrative staff in improving the effectiveness of school operations, which in turn contributes to improving the overall quality of education. Therefore, capacity building and communication between the two parties should be continuously improved to achieve better educational goals.

Keywords: Principal Leadership, Administrative Management, Education Quality, Schools.

Introduction

Education is a long-term investment that is very important for the progress of a nation. Through education, individuals are not only equipped with academic knowledge and skills, but also trained to think critically, creatively and innovatively. A quality education will produce graduates who are not only ready to enter the workforce, but also become productive and responsible citizens. Schools as formal education institutions have a central role in shaping students' character and personality. In addition to equipping students with extensive knowledge, schools must also create a conducive learning environment to foster curiosity, a spirit of lifelong learning, and noble moral values. Thus, education is not only limited to the transfer of knowledge, but also becomes a process of forming a whole person who is able to make a positive contribution to society and the nation.

Schools as formal educational institutions are very important, especially in producing highly skilled generations. To be able to produce a generation that has high skills and excellence, of course, schools have a big role in order to create good quality education. Talking about the quality of education, Indonesia is still considered to have a quality of education that can be said to be poor because it is still lagging behind other countries that have developed their education rapidly. The main challenge in education is how to create a system that not only provides quality education but also ensures school operations run smoothly.

The quality of education is strongly influenced by various factors, including the leadership of school principals and the management of school administrative personnel. In line with the opinion of Ningsih et al (2021) that the principal is one of the components of education that plays the most role in improving the quality of education. Principals, in their capacity as educational leaders, bear primary responsibility for the academic



achievement of their institutions. (Manora, 2019). Principals must be able to manage and encourage all components in the school to carry out their duties and achieve educational goals. This includes managing school administrative staff. The principal's ability to optimize the performance of administrative staff is crucial, as they act as the spearhead in ensuring the smooth operation of the school.

Administration according to the opinion of Wijaya, A.W in Arina et al (2022) is a comprehensive process that involves the use of facilities and collaboration to achieve goals through planning, organizing, implementing, coordinating, regulating, and controlling dynamic and human activities. In the context of this research is administration in the world of education. Educational administration is the application of administrative disciplines to the field of education, as well as the support, development and supervision of educational practice initiatives. (Ulfah, 2023). Educational administration activities in schools are managed by school administrators who are tasked with ensuring smooth operations and supporting the overall educational process. School administrators are responsible for facilitating the educational process by providing administrative services that ensure an effective and efficient learning environment. (Pandi, 2022). Competent school administrators are essential in education, as their skills drive learning outcomes and determine the quality of education.

The creation of a high-quality educational environment relies heavily on two main pillars: the management of school administrative personnel and the leadership of the school principal. Effective management of administrative personnel ensures the smooth running of school operations, from resource management to accurate record keeping, thus supporting optimal learning processes. On the other hand, the principal's leadership plays a role in determining the strategic direction and vision of education, as well as creating a positive and collaborative work culture in the school. This synergy between efficient administrative management and visionary leadership is able to create a conducive educational climate that promotes student development and overall improvement in the quality of education. In addition to providing academic leadership responsibilities, the principal also oversees the overall operational management of the school. As stated by Purwanto (2021) effective principals are able to lead all components in the school and focus leadership on organizational development, instruction, staffing, learner services, and community relations and communication.

Effective management of administrative personnel plays an important role in facilitating the realization of the principal's vision and mission. By ensuring the smooth running of administrative functions such as financial supervision, scheduling and record-keeping, the administrative staff enables the principal to concentrate on strategic aspects and academic development. In the absence of efficient administrative management, it can cause disruptions in school operations, which ultimately impacts on the quality of education. Therefore, a strong synergy between the leadership of the school principal and the management of the administrative personnel is necessary to ensure that the school can function effectively and produce optimal educational outcomes.

Methods

This research method uses a literature study approach, which aims to understand the role of principal leadership and administrative management in improving the quality of education in schools. Literature study according to Creswell (2014) is a written summary based on journal articles, books, and other documents that explain theories and describe information organized according to the topics and documents needed. The data



sources used consist of various scientific articles, journals, books and research reports relevant to this topic. The main focus of the analysis is on theoretical studies and previous research that review the leadership of school principals, especially in strategic decision-making, and how administrative management supports school operations. The literature was collected by searching for credible and relevant sources, both locally and internationally, that offer a holistic perspective on the synergy between leadership and administrative management. The collected data were then critically analyzed to identify patterns, trends and gaps in the literature related to the role of school principals and the contribution of administrative personnel in supporting the improvement of education quality.

Results and Discussion

Results

Principal leadership and administrative staff management are two sides of a coin that cannot be separated in an effort to improve the quality of education. The transformative leadership of a principal can create a clear vision for the school, motivate all school components to work together, and encourage innovation in learning. On the other hand, effective management of administrative personnel ensures that all school resources, whether human, financial or physical, are optimally managed to support the achievement of educational goals. A strong collaboration between the two will create a positive synergy so that the school can create a conducive learning environment, responsive to students' needs and able to produce quality graduates.

Several factors can hinder collaboration between principals and administrators, including the lack of ongoing training for administrators, lack of effective communication, and different perceptions of the roles and responsibilities of each party. To overcome these challenges, systematic and sustainable efforts are needed. One of the efforts that can be made is to provide relevant training and focus on developing the competence of administrative staff in supporting the learning process. In addition, it is important to create an open and inclusive organizational culture where all voices are heard and valued. Principals need to act as facilitators in building effective communication between themselves and the administrative staff, as well as between administrative staff and teachers and students.

Discussion

Principal's Leadership Role

Principals have two very important roles to maintain the continuity of the education process as mandated by law. (Mukhlisin, 2021). First, the principal functions as the overall manager of educational activities in the school. In addition, principals also act as formal leaders in their educational institutions. The principal's role in leadership is very important because it covers various aspects that affect the achievement of school goals, namely improving the quality of education. The personality and active attitude of the principal play a crucial role in effective leadership. According to Mulyasa in Alhabsyi et al (2022) School principals must at least function as *educators, managers, administrators, supervisors, leaders, innovators* and *motivators*.

As an *educator*, it means that the principal must have the right strategy to improve the professionalism of education personnel at school. Creating a conducive school climate, and providing advice to school members. As a *manager*, the principal needs to formulate effective strategies to empower the educational staff. As an *administrator*, the principal plays a crucial role in various administrative management activities that include



recording, compiling, and documenting all school programs. As a *supervisor*, the principal is responsible for overseeing the work done by education personnel. As a *leader*, the principal must have the ability to provide direction and supervision, motivate education personnel, open two-way communication channels, and delegate tasks effectively. As an *innovator*, the principal must be able to formulate effective strategies to build harmonious relationships with the surrounding environment, seek new ideas, integrate various activities, and provide examples to all education personnel at school. As a *motivator*, principals must formulate effective strategies to motivate education personnel in carrying out their duties and functions.

As the heart of an educational institution, the principal plays a very important role in encouraging all elements of the school to achieve the vision and mission that have been determined. In addition to functioning as a decision-maker, the principal also acts as a source of inspiration, encouragement, and facilitator who can integrate all school components towards a common goal. Rahlil et al (2024) rightly emphasizes that a principal is not only in charge of ensuring that each individual's actions are in line with the set goals, but must also instill a deep understanding of the school's vision and mission to all its members. This deep understanding will encourage every teacher, staff and student to feel a shared responsibility in realizing the school's ideals. In addition to ensuring that actions are aligned with the goals, the principal also needs to instill a deep understanding of the vision and mission so that all members can actively contribute in designing appropriate educational programs. The principal's ability to convince and mobilize school members is the key to achieving the shared vision and mission.

Management Contribution of School Administrative Personnel

School administration personnel according to Zulkarnain & Sumarsono (2018) are educational personnel whose task is to provide administrative service support for the implementation of the educational process in schools. They are non-teaching staff who are generally referred to as administrative staff (TU). School administrative staff also have an important role in providing administrative services to all interested parties. The contribution of school administrative staff management is very important in improving the quality of education. Muspawi & Robi'ah (2020) explained that the efforts of administrative staff in improving the quality of school services are carried out through a series of steps which include planning, implementation, and evaluation. The quality of school services is a reflection of the values of the institution. To achieve this goal, each school needs to go through certain stages that function as a process in an effort to achieve the expected service quality standards.

As explained by Putri et al (2024) administrative management carried out by education administrators is divided into 3 sections. The education and teaching section has responsibilities that include making cohorts, coordinating with homerooms that have not reported student progress, including attendance, and coordinating with homerooms that have not submitted absorption data and recap scores. In addition, this section is also tasked with compiling reports, providing services to the general public or related agencies, and providing information to guests who are conducting comparative studies and to students who are conducting research. The finance and staffing section has duties including the preparation of monthly reports and accountability reports at the end of the school year, coordinating the implementation of tasks, and managing administration related to staffing and finance for which it is responsible. The general department has the responsibility to coordinate the data collection of goods that are in good or damaged



condition, as well as supervise the janitors during working hours. In addition, this section also plays a role in assisting the Head of Administration in planning the needs of school facilities and infrastructure. Other tasks include managing the stock off name program for school facilities and infrastructure, preparing a maintenance program for facilities and infrastructure that includes six aspects of cleanliness, as well as monitoring and reporting the implementation of the maintenance program. The general section is also responsible for coordinating facilities and infrastructure repair activities, as well as carrying out additional tasks assigned by the Head of Administration.

Educational administrators serve as the backbone in the management of school operations. Through effective and efficient administrative management, they ensure that all aspects of school activities run smoothly. From managing data on students, teachers and staff, to managing school finances, equipment and infrastructure, administrators carry out crucial tasks. As such, they free up teachers and principals to focus more on their core tasks, which are the learning process and curriculum development. Close collaboration between administrative staff and teachers and principals will create a positive synergy and support the achievement of the school's educational goals.

In addition, administrative personnel also play an important role in building a positive image of the school. Through effective communication with various parties, such as parents, communities and related agencies, administrative personnel can build good relationships and strengthen public trust in the school. They can also be a bridge between the school and the outside world, for example in establishing cooperation with other institutions to gain support for school development. Thus, administrative personnel are not only the executors of administrative tasks, but also the representatives of the school who play an active role in building a quality learning community.

The Synergy of Leadership and Management of School Administrators

The synergy between the leadership of the school principal and the management of the administrative staff plays a very important role in ensuring the smoothness and effectiveness of operations in the school environment. The principal serves as the director who carries out the strategic vision and leads the academic achievement, while the administrative staff supports the daily operations by managing various administrative aspects, including finance, facilities and human resources. The harmonious cooperation between these two parties ensures that all managerial aspects can run well, allowing the principal and educators to focus more on curriculum development and achieving educational goals, without being burdened by operational issues that may arise.

As stated by Chatzipanagiotou & Katsarou (2023) school leadership has a positive impact on staff motivation and fosters a healthy school culture. Such leadership not only guides academic excellence but also relies on the efficiency of the administrative team to achieve broader school goals. This close coordination between leadership and administrative management is essential to adapt to the changing educational landscape. Harmonious cooperation between the principal's leadership and the management of administrative personnel not only ensures smooth operations in the school but also influences staff motivation and a healthy school culture.

Research conducted by Khafidah (2019) revealed that the principal's leadership role in the development of administrative staff has a significant impact on improving the quality of education through the implementation of efficient management. In addition, other research by Nuraini et al (2023) emphasized the importance of competency training to improve the performance of school administrative energy, which is a crucial step in achieving educational goals. Therefore, a strong collaboration between leadership and



administrative management is indispensable to adapt to the changing dynamics of education and to achieve broader educational goals.

The Impact of Effective Management on Education Quality

Efficient management, both in terms of administration and leadership, is an important factor in improving the quality of education. Good administrative management ensures that all school resources, including budget and facilities, are optimally utilized to support learning activities. On the other hand, strong leadership provides clear guidance, encourages all elements of the school and creates a supportive learning atmosphere. Research by Purwani (2021) shows that effective implementation of education quality management can ensure that the learning process takes place optimally and produces quality results.

Research conducted by Nurkuntari (2023) provides concrete examples of schools that have successfully improved the quality of education through the implementation of effective management. Through an in-depth study of successful schools, Nurkuntari showed that the application of good management principles, such as transparency, quality education program policies, and a conducive work climate, can create an optimal learning environment. These schools not only pursue academic achievement, but also focus on developing students' overall character and competencies. Thus, graduates are not only knowledgeable but also have the life skills needed to face future challenges. The findings of this study underscore the important role of school management in shaping quality young people.

With the implementation of effective management, educational institutions can create a conducive and supportive learning atmosphere, which in turn contributes to improving the overall quality of education. The leadership role of the school principal is crucial in directing the vision and mission of the institution, while the management of the school administrative personnel serves as the link that ensures all aspects of operations run smoothly. This synergy between visionary leadership and efficient management not only enhances the learning experience for students but also encourages the involvement of all stakeholders, including teachers, parents and the community. As such, educational institutions can achieve academic and non-academic goals in a sustainable manner, creating an environment that stimulates holistic student growth and development.

Challenges in the Integration of Principal Leadership and Administrative Staff Management

Principals and administrators in schools are often faced with various challenges in the management of their institutions. One of the main challenges is the lack of appropriate training for administrative personnel, which makes it difficult to integrate administrative functions with the strategic vision set by the principal. When cooperation is hindered, the school's operational performance suffers, which in turn adversely affects the learning environment for students. Heenan et al (2023) argue that continuous capacity building of school administrators not only strengthens collaboration within the institution, but also builds a more solid foundation for the overall improvement of education quality.

Ineffective communication between principals and administrative staff is one of the biggest obstacles in achieving successful school management. When communication channels are cut off or not running optimally, there will be dysfunction in the implementation of educational programs. Policies that are supposed to be common guidelines become a source of confusion and debate. As a result, the learning program



cannot run smoothly and has a direct impact on the quality of education received by students. If allowed to drag on, these unresolved communication problems can lead to internal conflicts, decreased work motivation and even lead to personnel turnover. Therefore, effective leadership must be able to build open, honest and respectful communication with all members of the administrative staff. Thus, each individual can feel involved, valued and have a meaningful contribution in advancing the school.

Summary

This study reveals that the relationship between the principal's leadership and the management of school administrative personnel is very close and has a crucial role in improving the quality of education. Both serve as the main foundation in creating a learning atmosphere that supports and facilitates the achievement of educational goals. Visionary and inspiring leadership from the principal, coupled with effective and efficient management of the school's administrative staff, is the key to successful school management. However, challenges such as lack of training and ineffective communication can hinder collaboration between these two aspects. Therefore, it is imperative for educational institutions to continuously strive to improve the skills of their administrative staff and establish open and inclusive communication channels. Overall, this study emphasizes that collaboration between leadership and administrative management is a major factor in achieving quality education.

References

- Alhabsyi, F., Pettalongi, S. S., & Wandu. (2022). Peran Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah dalam Meningkatkan Kinerja Guru di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Jayasari. *Jurnal Integrasi Manajemen Pendidikan (JIMPE)*, 1(1), 11–19. <https://doi.org/10.59996/globalistik.v1i1.13>
- Arina, Y., Marsidin, S., & Sulastri. (2022). Peranan Tenaga Administrasi dalam Peningkatan Mutu Layanan di Sekolah. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Konseling*, 4(6), 9145–9151.
- Chatzipanagiotou, P., & Katsarou, E. (2023). Crisis Management, School Leadership in Disruptive Times and the Recovery of Schools in the Post COVID-19 Era: A Systematic Literature Review. *Education Science*, 13(118), 1–29. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13020118>
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*. SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Heenan, I. W., Paor, D. De, Lafferty, N., & McNamara, P. M. (2023). The Impact of Transformational School Leadership on School Staff and School Culture in Primary Schools—A Systematic Review of International Literature. *Societies*, 13(133), 1–27. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.3390/soc13060133>
- Khafidah, W. (2019). Manajemen Kepala Sekolah dalam Pengembangan Tenaga Administrasi. *Jurnal Studi Pemikiran, Riset Dan Pengembangan Pendidikan Islam*, 7(2), 245–264.
- Manora, H. (2019). Peranan Kepala Sekolah dalam Meningkatkan Mutu Pendidikan. *Edification Journal*, 1(01), 119–125. <https://doi.org/10.54371/jiip.v6i9.2718>
- Mukhlisin, A. (2021). Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah Kunci Keberhasilan dalam Pencapaian Kualitas Pendidikan. *ALIGNMENT: Journal of Administration and Educational Management*, 4(2), 193–199.
- Muspawi, M., & Robi'ah, H. (2020). Realisasi Kinerja Tenaga Administrasi Sekolah dalam Peningkatan Pelayanan. *JSMP (Jurnal Manajemen Dan Supervisi Pendidikan)*, 4(3), 232–239.



- Ningsih, R. E., Nuramalia, S., & Rostiani, T. (2021). Peran Kepala Sekolah Dalam Meningkatkan Mutu Pendidikan Di SDN 1 Sigong Kecamatan Lemahabang Kabupaten Cirebon. *Standarisasi Pendidikan Sekolah Dasar Menuju Era Human Society*, 75–81. <https://ojs3.unc.ac.id/index.php/pro/article/view/2216><https://ojs3.unc.ac.id/index.php/pro/article/view/2216/1315>
- Nuraini, N., Afriza, & Andriani, T. (2023). Pembinaan Kompetensi Sebagai Upaya Meningkatkan Kinerja Tenaga Administrasi Sekolah. *JMPIS: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Dan Ilmu Sosial*, 4(1), 489–499.
- Nurkuntari, Y. (2023). Pengaruh Manajemen Sekolah terhadap Mutu Pendidikan Sekolah Menengan Atas di Kota Semarang. *Value Added: Majalah Ekonomi Dan Bisnis*, 12(2), 85–100.
- Pandi, A. (2022). Peran Tenaga Administrasi dalam Meningkatkan Mutu Layanan Administrasi di MTs Hidayatul Muhsinin. *MUDIR : Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan*, 4(1), h.164. <http://ejournal.insud.ac.id/index.php/mpi/index>
- Purwani, A. T. (2021). Dampak Peningkatan Manajemen Mutu pendidikan terhadap Mutu Lembaga Pendidikan. *Al-Ishlah: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 1(2), 44–54.
- Purwanto, M. B. (2021). Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah Yang Efektif Di Sman Negeri Kota Palembang. *UTILITY: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dan Ekonomi*, 5(01), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.30599/utility.v5i01.1160>
- Putri, N., Yulia, F., & Zuliana, E. (2024). Peran Tenaga Administrasi dalam Meningkatkan Mutu Layanan Administrasi di Madrasah Tsanawiyah Al Hidayah Patumbak. *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai*, 8(2), 19166–19181.
- Rahlil, M., Wahab, I. A., & Khairani, C. (2024). Kepemimpinan Transformasional dalam Peningkatan Mutu Pendidikan di Sekolah Dasar Negeri Se- Kelompok Kerja Kepala Sekolah (K3s) Kecamatan Samudera Kabupaten Aceh UtaraH. *Jurnal Review Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran*, 7(4), 12870–12874.
- Ulfah, M. (2023). Peran Tenaga Administrasi Dalam Meningkatkan Mutu Layanan Administrasi Di SMP Negeri 1 Pengaron. *Jurnal Pahlawan*, 19(1), 23–26. <https://doi.org/10.57216/pah.v19i1.556>
- Zulkarnain, W., & Sumarsono, R. B. (2018). *Manajemen dan Etika Perkantoran* (N. NM (ed.)). PT Remaja Rosdakarya.