

The Principal's Leadership Role in Improving School Administrative Effectiveness: A Qualitative Study at SDN 23 Talang Kelapa

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Article History: Received on May 24, 2026, Revised on June 27, 2028, Published on June 28, 2026

Abstract: This study aims to describe the role of the principal in improving the effectiveness of administrative administration at SDN 23 Talang Kelapa. The focus of the study includes the principal's role in planning, implementing, organizing, supervising, and evaluating administrative administration programs, as well as identifying obstacles and solutions in the implementation of school administration. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach implemented at SDN 23 Talang Kelapa, Banyuasin Regency. The participants consisted of one principal, two teachers, two administrative staff members, and one school committee representative selected through purposive sampling. Data analysis uses the Miles and Huberman model through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, while data validity is tested using source and method triangulation techniques. The results of the study indicate that the principal has an important role in improving the effectiveness of administrative administration through the preparation of work programs, division of administrative tasks, supervision of administrative services, and periodic evaluation of the implementation of school administration. Unlike previous studies that primarily focused on managerial leadership and teacher performance, this study specifically examines the principal's integrated role in planning, organizing, implementing, supervising, and evaluating school administration to improve administrative effectiveness at the elementary school level. This research is beneficial in the fields of educational management, school administration, and educational leadership, particularly as a reference for principals, administrative staff, and elementary education managers in improving the quality of school administrative services. The novelty of this research lies in its comprehensive study of the principal's role in improving administrative effectiveness through integrated planning, implementation, organization, supervision, and evaluation at the elementary school level.

Keywords: *Principal's Role, Administrative Effectiveness, School Administration, Educational Management, School Administration.*

A. Introduction

Elementary education plays a crucial role in shaping the quality of a nation's human resources. Elementary schools serve not only as a venue for learning but also as institutions that shape the character, skills, and fundamental abilities of students to continue their education to the next level. Therefore, the implementation of education in elementary schools must be supported by an effective management and administration

system so that all educational activities can proceed in an orderly, focused, and high-quality manner. Good school administration is a crucial factor in supporting the success of education because it is directly related to administrative services, data management, report preparation, archiving, and coordination of school activities (Darmiatun & Nurhafizah, 2019:170).

Effective school administration is a crucial component in supporting the quality of educational services. Effective administration can help schools provide fast, precise, accurate, and systematic services to all school members and the community (Ismi et al., 2025). Managing correspondence, school archives, student data, teaching staff data, and the preparation of school reports requires an orderly administration system to ensure all educational activities run optimally. Conversely, poorly organized administration can hinder school services, slow down decision-making, and reduce the quality of educational management. (Singerin, 2022). Previous studies have highlighted the importance of principals' managerial competence in improving teacher performance, educational quality, and school management. However, limited studies have specifically examined how principals integrate planning, organizing, implementation, supervision, and evaluation to improve school administrative effectiveness in elementary schools. Most existing studies focus on instructional leadership rather than administrative leadership. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by examining the principal's comprehensive administrative leadership practices at SDN 23 Talang Kelapa.

In the context of school management, the principal holds a very strategic position in improving the effectiveness of administrative matters. The principal serves not only as a learning leader but also as an administrator and educational manager responsible for all school activities (Alhabsyi et al., 2022). The principal has the authority to plan, organize, direct, supervise and evaluate the implementation of school administration so that it runs in accordance with the established educational goals (Daud, 2023). The effectiveness of the principal's leadership can be seen from the ability to create an orderly administration system, effective service, and good work coordination in the school environment (Mazly, 2026).

The increasingly complex world of education demands that schools have professional and modern administrative systems. Parents and the community are now concerned not only with the quality of learning but also with the quality of school administrative services (Mizal & Rahayu, 2024). Schools that have good administrative services tend to be more trusted by the public because they are able to provide fast, accurate and transparent services (Ismi et al., 2025). Therefore, the principal is required to be able to build effective administrative administration as an important part of improving the quality of school education (Esza, 2024).

Previous research shows that principal leadership has a close relationship with the effectiveness of school management. Fadillah et al., (2023) explains that the principal's managerial functions such as planning, organizing, supervision, and motivation have a significant influence on improving the quality of educational services in elementary schools. (Halim & Isdaryanti, (2025) also found that the principal's managerial function was effective in improving teacher performance and overall school management. Study Suyitno, (2021) shows that the principal's managerial competence has a positive

influence on the performance of educators and the effectiveness of implementing school activities.

Selain itu, Rusmalawati et al., (2024) found that the principal's ability to carry out planning, organizing, implementing and supervising functions was able to increase the discipline and productivity of teaching staff in elementary schools. Study (Satriadi et al., 2026) also emphasized that the principal's managerial competence plays an important role in increasing the effectiveness of school organizations through program management and human resource development. Muallifah et al., (2025) stated that the principal's managerial supervision can improve the school's administrative management capabilities, thus impacting the effectiveness of daily administrative services.

Research on school administrative administration has also been conducted by several previous researchers. Ismi et al., (2025) explains that the effectiveness of administrative services is influenced by aspects of planning, service implementation, and evaluation of school administration. This research shows that good administrative management requires the active involvement of school leaders in providing guidance and supervision to administrative staff. Halawa & Daulay, (2025) also found that the application of information technology in school management has a positive effect on the performance of school principals and the effectiveness of educational administration management.

Other relevant research was conducted by (Tanjung et al., 2021) which shows that the principal has an important role in improving the quality of education through managerial functions which include planning, organizing, motivation, and supervision. Jamaludin et al., (2022) also stated that the principal is able to improve the quality of teaching staff through coaching, training, evaluation, and empowerment of the school's human resources. Besides that, (Zain et al., 2026) explains that the effectiveness of school administration and financial management is greatly influenced by the principal's ability to implement a good monitoring and control system.

Although various previous studies have discussed the managerial functions of principals and school administration, research specifically examining the role of principals in improving the effectiveness of administrative management in elementary schools is still relatively limited, especially in the aspects of planning, implementation, organization, supervision, evaluation, obstacles, and solutions to integrated school administration. Most previous studies have focused more on improving the quality of learning, teacher performance, and general educational management, while research on the effectiveness of school administrative management has not been discussed in depth.

Based on these conditions, this study was conducted to more comprehensively examine the role of the principal in improving the effectiveness of administrative matters at SDN 23 Talang Kelapa. This research is important because administrative matters are one of the main supporting elements in the smooth implementation of education in elementary schools. Furthermore, this research is expected to contribute to the development of educational management science, particularly regarding principal leadership and the effectiveness of school administration.

B. Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive qualitative method. Qualitative research was chosen because this study aims to describe in depth the role of the principal in improving the effectiveness of administrative affairs at SDN 23 Talang Kelapa. The descriptive method is used to describe phenomena, activities, behaviors, and conditions of school administration based on facts found in the field systematically and objectively. This study is not an experimental or simulation study, but rather field research that focuses on data collection through direct observation, interviews, and documentation at the research location. The participants consisted of one principal, two teachers, two administrative staff members, and one school committee representative.

The research was conducted at SDN 23 Talang Kelapa, which is administratively located in Talang Kelapa District, Banyuasin Regency, South Sumatra Province. The research location was chosen because the school has an active administrative system and directly involves the principal in managing school administration. The research was conducted in the even semester of the 2025/2026 academic year for approximately five months, starting in January 2026 and ending in May 2026. The research stages included initial needs analysis, preparation of research instruments, proposal preparation, processing of research permits, research implementation, data analysis, preparation of research reports, results seminars, thesis revision, and research publication.

Research informants were determined using purposive sampling, selecting informants deemed capable of providing accurate information in line with the research focus. The informants in this study consisted of the principal, teachers, educational staff, and school committee members of SDN 23 Talang Kelapa. The principal was chosen because of his primary role in managing school administration, while teachers, educational staff, and school committee members were selected to provide supporting information related to the effectiveness of school administrative management. Informants were selected purposively because they were directly involved in school administrative planning, implementation, supervision, and evaluation.

The data collection techniques in this study used observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted directly on school administration activities, administrative management, and the principal's managerial activities in improving the effectiveness of school administration (Halawa & Daulay, 2025). This study used an observation sheet compiled based on the research focus. Interviews were conducted in an unstructured manner using an interview guide in the form of an outline of questions according to the research focus (Jailani, 2023).

Interviews were conducted with the principal, teachers, education staff, and the school committee to obtain information regarding administrative planning, implementation of administrative services, administrative staff development, administrative evaluation, and the impact of administration on the smooth running of school activities. Documentation was conducted by collecting school work program documents, administrative archives, photos of school activities, photos of facilities and infrastructure, and other supporting documents related to school administrative matters (Sulsilawati, 2024).

The research instruments used included observation guidelines, interview guidelines, a voice recorder, a digital camera, a field notebook, and a laptop as the primary data processing device. The hardware used in this study included an ASUS VivoBook laptop, a Samsung Galaxy smartphone for documentation and interview recording, and an Epson L3210 printer for printing research documents. The software used included Microsoft Word 2021 for compiling research reports, Microsoft Excel 2021 for managing research administrative data, and Google Maps for identifying research locations. The research instruments consisted of observation sheets, interview guides, documentation checklists, field notes, and audio recordings.

The validity of the data in this study was tested using source triangulation and method triangulation techniques (Susanto & Jailani, 2023). Source triangulation was conducted by comparing data obtained from the principal, teachers, education staff, and school committee. Method triangulation was conducted by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation to obtain valid and reliable data.

The data analysis technique uses the Miles and Huberman model which consists of three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification (Qomaruddin & Sa'diyah, 2024). Data reduction involves selecting and simplifying data relevant to the research focus. Data is presented in narrative descriptions for easier understanding. Conclusions are then drawn based on data interpretations that have been repeatedly verified throughout the research process.

This research is guided by educational management and principal leadership theories that emphasize the planning, organizing, implementing, supervising, and evaluating functions of school administration. The basic assumption in this research is that the effectiveness of school administrative management is influenced by the principal's role in managing administrative resources in a planned, systematic, and sustainable manner. With these research procedures, this study is expected to be replicable by other researchers in similar school conditions and environments.

C. Results and Discussion

The research results show that the principal plays a crucial role in improving the effectiveness of administrative work at SDN 23 Talang Kelapa. This role is evident in the principal's ability to carry out the functions of planning, implementing, organizing, supervising, and evaluating school administration in a focused and sustainable manner. The principal actively develops the school's administrative program, sets administrative service targets, and coordinates with administrative staff to ensure that all administrative activities run orderly and effectively.

In terms of administrative planning, the principal develops an administrative work program at the beginning of each school year, involving administrative staff and teachers. This work program encompasses the management of correspondence, school archives, student data, teaching staff data, and the preparation of school administrative reports. Research shows that the principal's administrative planning helps improve the

orderliness of document management and clarifies the division of administrative staff duties.

This finding is in line with the opinion (Komara et al., 2023) which states that the principal as an educational manager must be able to plan all school activities systematically so that educational goals can be achieved effectively. The implementation findings demonstrate that administrative effectiveness depends not only on procedural compliance but also on leadership support through continuous supervision and staff empowerment.

In terms of administrative implementation, the principal directly supervises school administrative services. Based on observations and interviews, administrative services at SDN 23 Talang Kelapa have been running quite well, particularly in correspondence, document archiving, and school data management. The principal also provides guidance to administrative staff to ensure prompt, accurate, and orderly service delivery. However, this study identified several obstacles, such as limited administrative staff and the suboptimal use of school administrative technology. This situation results in some administrative activities still being performed manually, thus requiring longer time. Administrative staff development represents a form of capacity building that strengthens organizational performance. Continuous coaching enables staff to adapt to changing administrative demands and improve service quality.

The research also shows that the principal plays a crucial role in developing the school's administrative staff. The principal provides coaching through regular meetings, providing work direction, administrative supervision, and evaluating the performance of administrative staff. This coaching aims to improve the discipline, responsibility, and coordination of administrative staff in providing services to the school community. These findings support research (Jumali et al., 2023) which states that the guidance and supervision of the principal has an impact on increasing the discipline and effectiveness of the work of educational staff in elementary schools. Regular evaluation serves as a quality assurance mechanism that allows principals to identify administrative weaknesses and implement continuous improvements in school management.

In addition, the principal periodically evaluates the implementation of administrative matters. This evaluation involves checking the completeness of administrative documents, the accuracy of services, and the challenges faced by administrative staff. Research shows that the principal's evaluations help improve the school's administrative system, resulting in more orderly and focused services. This aligns with educational management theory, which states that evaluation is a crucial component in increasing the effectiveness of a school organization (Bahar et al., 2024).

This study also found that effective administrative management positively impacts the smooth running of school activities. Orderly administration helps expedite services to teachers, students, and the community. Teachers can more easily access learning administration data, while students receive faster and clearer administrative services. Therefore, effective administrative management contributes to improving the quality of educational services in schools. The identified constraints suggest that administrative effectiveness is influenced by organizational capacity, technological readiness, and human

resource availability. Therefore, strengthening digital administrative systems should become a strategic priority.

However, several obstacles remain in the implementation of administrative tasks at SDN 23 Talang Kelapa, such as limited administrative facilities, incomplete digital archive management, and limited human resources in the school administration sector. To address these obstacles, the principal has implemented various measures, including improving work coordination, providing guidance to administrative staff, and encouraging the use of technology in school administration.

Overall, the research results indicate that the principal's role significantly determines the effectiveness of school administration. The principal serves not only as an educational leader but also as an administrative manager responsible for the smooth running of school administrative services. These findings reinforce previous research that found that principal leadership significantly influences the effectiveness of school management and the quality of educational services (Fadillah et al., 2023).

D. Conclusions

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the principal plays a crucial role in improving the effectiveness of administrative matters at SDN 23 Talang Kelapa. This role is implemented through the functions of planning, implementing, coaching, supervising, and evaluating school administration in a focused and sustainable manner. The principal is able to develop administrative programs, coordinate administrative staff, and supervise administrative services, ensuring that school administrative activities run more orderly and effectively.

The research also shows that effective administrative management positively impacts the smooth running of school activities, particularly in providing administrative services to teachers, students, and the community. Although several obstacles remain, such as limited administrative resources and incompletely technology-based archive management, the principal has implemented various improvement efforts through administrative staff development, enhanced work coordination, and regular administrative evaluations. This study concludes that the principal plays a strategic leadership role in improving school administrative effectiveness through systematic planning, effective organization, continuous supervision, staff development, and regular evaluation.

Administrative effectiveness contributes to better educational services by improving document management, coordination, and stakeholder satisfaction. Despite limitations in technology utilization and administrative resources, adaptive leadership strategies enable continuous improvement of school administrative services. Future research should compare administrative leadership practices across multiple schools to provide broader evidence.

Thus, the research objective regarding the principal's role in improving the effectiveness of school administrative management has been achieved. This research demonstrates that principal leadership is a crucial factor in creating an effective, orderly school

administration system that supports improvements in the quality of educational services in elementary schools.

E. Acknowledgement

The author expresses praise and gratitude to God Almighty for all His grace and blessings, enabling the successful completion of this research and writing of this article. The author also expresses gratitude to the Principal of SDN 23 Talang Kelapa, along with all the teachers, educational staff, and school committee members who provided permission, support, and assistance throughout the research process.

Thanks are also extended to my supervisor, family, and all those who provided moral support, motivation, and constructive suggestions in completing this research. This research was conducted independently without any funding from any institution or party.

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