

Principal Management in Men Improving the Quality of Learning at SMA Negeri 1 Tanjung Raja

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze and describe the principal's managerial skills in improving the quality of learning at SMA Negeri 1 Tanjung Raja. The study uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. Data collection techniques were carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation, with informants consisting of the principal, vice principal, teachers, and students. The focus of the study covers four managerial functions of the principal, namely planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising. The results of the study indicate that the principal has carried out managerial functions effectively. In the planning aspect, the learning program is arranged systematically and based on school needs. In the organizing aspect, the division of tasks and coordination runs well so as to support the smooth learning process. In the implementation aspect, the principal is able to motivate and motivate teachers through academic supervision activities, training, and professional development. The study involved nine purposively selected informants consisting of one principal, three vice principals, three teachers, and two students. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana involving data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Meanwhile, in the supervision aspect, the principal consistently conducts evaluations and follow-ups for continuous improvement. The findings of this study indicate that the principal's managerial skills play a significant role in improving the quality of learning, which is characterized by increased teacher performance, the effectiveness of the learning process, and student achievement. Therefore, strengthening the principal's managerial competence is an important factor in efforts to continuously improve the quality of education.

Keywords: *Principal Management, Learning Quality, Management Functions*

A. INTRODUCTION

Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 20 of 2016 concerning National Education Standards (SNP) emphasizes that quality education is education that meets process standards, management standards, assessment standards, and provides an effective learning environment. Process Standards require that learning be designed and implemented in an interactive, inspiring, enjoyable, challenging manner, and motivate students to actively participate so that their potential can develop optimally. Effective learning must be able to provide meaningful learning experiences, encourage creativity, and provide space for students to develop their competencies comprehensively. According

to Kuntoro (2019), the quality of education is one of the pillars of human resource (HR) development that is crucial for building a nation. Efforts to improve the quality of education are the main way to create a quality and globally competitive society.

Although numerous studies have examined principal leadership and educational quality, most have focused on leadership styles, teacher performance, or school effectiveness separately. Limited studies have comprehensively analyzed principal managerial practices using George R. Terry's POAC management framework in improving learning quality, particularly in high-performing public senior high schools located in regional areas. Therefore, this study fills this gap by examining the integration of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling functions in improving learning quality at SMA Negeri 1 Tanjung Raja.

The quality of education is influenced by various interrelated and mutually supportive factors, including the curriculum, the quality of teaching staff, facilities and infrastructure, and government policies in managing the education system (Adien et al., 2025). Tilaar (2004) stated that improving the quality of education can only be achieved if the learning process takes place effectively, is directed, and is supported by a good school management system. This statement is in line with the view of Sallis (2012) who stated that the quality of education is the result of integrated school organizational management through planning, control, resource development, and continuous evaluation. Furthermore, Bush (2011) emphasized that the effectiveness of learning is greatly influenced by the leadership and management of the principal, because the principal plays a role in directing the vision, managing academic programs, and creating an environment that supports the improvement of teacher performance. Mulyasa (2007) emphasized that the principal as an educational manager is required to be able to carry out comprehensive managerial functions that include planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising.

Tanjung Raja 1 State Senior High School is one of the senior high schools that demonstrates good educational quality in Ogan Ilir Regency. This is evident from the Education Report Card scores that are consistently in the good category, reflecting the implementation of learning according to standards and a conducive school climate. In addition to having various academic achievements from the district to provincial levels, this school's graduates each year successfully continue their education to various renowned state universities such as Sriwijaya University (UNSRI), Sriwijaya State Polytechnic (POLSRI), and Lampung State University (UNILA). Based on this, this study aims to examine in depth the managerial role of the principal at Tanjung Raja 1 State Senior High School using the George R. Terry management function framework (POAC).

B. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive phenomenological method to dissect, analyze, and narrate the phenomenon of principal management in improving the quality of learning at SMA Negeri 1 Tanjung Raja. The qualitative approach was chosen deliberately because it was considered the most representative and capable of capturing and describing in depth. (*thick description*) natural social reality (*naturalistic*), complex, and dynamic in the field, without any intervention or statistical manipulation from the

researcher. The main focus of the research is directed at exploring in depth the series of managerial actions of school principals which include four fundamental functions, namely planning, organizing, implementing, and monitoring and evaluating learning quality programs.

This research was conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Tanjung Raja, Ogan Ilir Regency, South Sumatra, with intensive field data collection taking place from January to March 2025. The selection of research locations was based on careful purposive considerations (*purposive sampling*), considering that this school has unique characteristics, namely as a favorite school with a wealth of achievements but still faces regional geographic challenges and the demands of meeting high quality standards in the Independent Curriculum era. The research subjects or informants in this qualitative study were determined using purposive sampling techniques (*purposive sampling*), to ensure that the information gathered comes from actors who truly understand, experience, and are directly involved in the school's managerial policy cycle. The main informant in this study is the Principal of SMA Negeri 1 Tanjung Raja as the holder of the highest managerial authority, accompanied by Supporting Informants consisting of the Vice Principal for Curriculum, Vice Principal for Student Affairs, Vice Principal for Facilities and Infrastructure, three representatives of senior and junior Subject Teachers, as well as representatives of the OSIS Management and active Students.

Before data condensation, interview transcripts were coded using open coding to identify initial concepts, followed by axial coding to establish relationships among categories and selective coding to generate overarching themes related to the POAC managerial functions. Throughout the analysis, researcher reflexivity was maintained by documenting analytical decisions in reflective field notes to minimize personal bias.

Data collection techniques in the field were carried out carefully by combining three main methods in qualitative research, namely: (1) In-depth interviews (*in-depth interview*), which is carried out face to face directly with the guidance of a semi-structured interview instrument to collect narrative data regarding managerial thinking, strategies, policies and constraints; (2) Passive participant observation (*observation*), namely conducting direct, objective observations of the principal's managerial activities, the implementation of coordination meetings, class supervision activities, the condition of facilities and infrastructure, and the atmosphere of the teaching and learning process in the classroom; (3) Documentation study (*documentation review*), namely collecting and reviewing various relevant and authentic official school documents, such as the Medium Term Work Plan (RKJM), Annual Work Plan (RKT), School Activity and Budget Plan (RKAS), Education Report Card documents, accreditation instruments, Decrees (SK) on the division of teacher tasks, teacher teaching administration documents (RPP/Teaching Modules), as well as visual photos of school quality assurance activities.

To ensure the degree of validity, reliability and scientific accountability of the qualitative data that has been collected, researchers apply data validity checking techniques through credibility tests (*credibility*) and transferability (*transferability*). The credibility test was realized through the application of source triangulation techniques (comparing the suitability of interview data between informants at different job levels) and method

triangulation (cross-checking and re-checking the accuracy of information obtained from interviews with facts seen in field observations and data stated in official documents). In addition, a member check activity was also carried out, where draft transcripts of interview results were returned to informants to be re-checked for their suitability to avoid misinterpretation by the researcher. Meanwhile, the transferability test was attempted by compiling a report of research results in a very detailed, clear, systematic, and contextual manner, so that all readers and educational practitioners elsewhere can easily grasp the essence of this research and can assess the possibility of implementing (replicating) this managerial model in other educational units with similar characteristics.

The qualitative data analysis procedure in this study adopts an interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, which runs simultaneously and circularly through four main stages, namely: First, Data Collection (*Data Collection*), where all data from interviews, field notes from observations, and copies of documents are collected in a structured manner. Second, Data Condensation (*Data Condensation*), namely the process of selecting, sorting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming raw data that emerges from field notes into more meaningful clusters of information according to the research sub-focus (POAC function). Third, Data Presentation (Data Display), namely assembling and organizing information that has been condensed into a matrix, flowing narrative text, or structured diagram so that it is easy to read and understand the relationships between aspects. Fourth, Drawing Conclusions and Verification (*Conclusion Drawing/Verification*), where researchers begin to interpret data, look for relationship patterns, formulate propositions, and draw valid conclusions which are then re-verified by referring to field notes and established supporting theories until they produce solid research findings.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present finding supports Bush (2011), who argued that systematic planning enables principals to align school resources with instructional goals. However, unlike previous studies that primarily focused on strategic planning, this study demonstrates that integrating Education Report Card data into school planning enhances evidence-based decision making. This finding extends previous literature by illustrating how data-driven planning contributes directly to learning quality improvement.

Based on the results of field data analysis, research findings regarding the principal's managerial skills in improving the quality of learning at SMA Negeri 1 Tanjung Raja are grouped into four main management functions according to George R. Terry's theory (2019):

1. Planning (*Planning*) Principal: Research shows that the learning quality improvement program at SMA Negeri 1 Tanjung Raja was developed in a participatory and data-driven manner. The principal involved the vice principal, teachers, school committee, and supervisors in an annual work meeting. The primary data used as references were the School Self-Evaluation (EDS) and the Education Report Card. This planning was outlined in the Medium-Term Work Plan (RKJM) and the School Activity and Budget Plan (RKAS). The planning program included curriculum completion targets, procurement of digital learning

media, workshops to improve teachers' pedagogical competencies, and strategies to intensify student graduation to higher education through the SNBP and UTBK-SNBT pathways. This aligns with Pratiwi and Lestari (2021) who stated that structured planning provides clear direction for teacher effectiveness.

2. Organizing School Resources: The principal's organization is realized through a formal division of tasks, authority, and responsibilities, which is authorized through a Decree (SK) on the Division of Teaching Duties and Additional Duties at the beginning of each semester. The principal places teaching staff based on *prinsip the right man on the right place*, which refers to the educational background, linearity, and competency of teachers. Furthermore, the principal establishes supporting internal organizational structures such as the Curriculum Development Team, the School Literacy Team, laboratory management, and the school's internal Subject Teacher Forum (MGMP). This organization ensures smooth coordination between staff, minimizes overlapping tasks, and enhances the efficiency of learning facility management (Wulandari, 2021).

3. Implementation Learning Management: In its implementation function, the principal acts as a motivator and instructional leader, motivating the entire school community to achieve the vision of quality learning. The principal consistently provides direction in monthly service meetings, awards high-achieving teachers, and facilitates teacher participation in external training programs such as the "Teacher Leader" program and the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. Real-world activities include implementing morning literacy hours, optimizing intra-school learning communities (Kombel), and activating internal MGMPs as a forum for peer discussion to resolve instructional challenges in the classroom. This motivational and instructional leadership approach has been shown to improve teacher discipline, teaching creativity, and work ethic (Septa, 2022; Bush, 2021).

4. Supervision (*Controlling*) and Follow-up: The supervisory function at SMA Negeri 1 Tanjung Raja is implemented systematically through the Academic Supervision program. The principal prepares a supervision schedule that includes three main stages: supervision planning (administration/teaching equipment review), supervision implementation (observation of the teaching process in the classroom), and post-supervision (evaluation and feedback). Supervision results are used as a basis for corrective action and follow-up. Teachers with a record of weaknesses in class mastery or the use of learning media are directed to participate in peer tutoring or special workshops. Conversely, good supervision results are maintained as a report card for teacher professional performance (Khotimah, 2023)

Furthermore, the research results indicate that a principal's success in improving the quality of learning is determined not only by the ability to carry out individual management functions, but also by the integration between these management functions. Good planning forms the basis for effective organization, targeted implementation, and supervision that can provide feedback for program improvement. This finding aligns with Bush's (2011) opinion, which states that the effectiveness of educational leadership is reflected in the leader's ability to integrate all managerial processes into a school's work system oriented toward quality improvement.

Furthermore, this study found that the collaborative culture fostered by the principal is a crucial factor in improving the quality of learning. Teacher involvement in decision-making, community learning activities, and internal MGMP forums creates a conducive work environment for teacher professional development. This supports the findings of Adien et al. (2025) who stated that educational quality is influenced by school leadership capable of fostering collaboration, participation, and a sustainable learning culture. Therefore, the principal's managerial success at SMA Negeri 1 Tanjung Raja can be viewed as the result of a synergy between effective leadership, optimal resource management, and the involvement of all school members in efforts to improve the quality of learning.

D. CONCLUSIONS

The principal's managerial skills at SMA Negeri 1 Tanjung Raja, manifested in the effective implementation of the planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising (POAC) functions, have significantly contributed to improving the quality of learning. Planning is data-driven and participatory; organizing emphasizes competence and a clear division of authority; implementation is supported by collaborative learning leadership; and supervision is carried out through continuous academic supervision. The synergy of these four managerial functions has proven effective in maintaining superior accreditation status, improving the quality of the teaching process, and boosting academic achievement and graduate absorption at state universities. Theoretically, this study enriches educational management literature by demonstrating the effectiveness of integrating George R. Terry's POAC framework into school management practices. Practically, the findings provide guidance for school principals seeking to improve learning quality through systematic managerial functions.

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