

# The Instrumental Role of Principal Leadership in Efforts to Improve The Quality of Education in Indonesia

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## The Instrumental Role of Principal Leadership in Efforts to Improve The Quality of Education in Indonesia

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### Abstrak

Berdasarkan data yang diperoleh dinyatakan mutu pendidikan di Indonesia masih tergolong rendah. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui peran instrumental kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dalam upaya meningkatkan mutu pendidikan di Indonesia. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif. Teknik pengumpulan data menggunakan studi literature dan dokumentasi. Data yang diperoleh dari reduksi data, data display, dan conclusion drawing/verification kemudian ditriangulasi. Hasil analisis kemudian dideskripsikan secara kualitatif. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan, bahwa peran kepala sekolah sebagai educator adalah merencanakan, melaksanakan, menilai hasil pembelajaran, membimbing dan melatih, serta meneliti. Peran manajerial kepala sekolah adalah merencanakan, mengorganisasikan, memimpin dan mengendalikan usaha yang dilakukan anggota organisasi serta memberdayakan sumber daya pendidikan. Peran kepala sekolah sebagai administrator adalah mengatur penataaksanaan sistem administrasi pada bidang-bidang: kesiswaan, kurikulum dan pembelajaran, personal, keuangan, data usaha, sarana prasarana, dan hubungan masyarakat. Peran kepala sekolah sebagai supervisor adalah memantau membina dan memperbaiki proses belajar-mengajar di kelas atau disekolah yang dipimpinnya. Peran kepala sekolah sebagai leader adalah manajemen peningkatan mutu pendidikan, dimana kepala sekolah mampu untuk meningkatkan mutu setiap tahunnya. Peran kepala sekolah sebagai leader menyediakan layanan-layanan untuk menunjang peningkatan mutu pendidikan. Peran kepala sekolah sebagai inovator pendidikan terletak strategis untuk menjalin hubungan harmonis, menemukan sesuatu baru, mengintegrasikan kegiatan, mengembangkan model pembelajaran inovatif dan memberikan contoh keteladanan. Peran kepala sekolah sebagai motivator untuk tenaga pendidik agar kinerjanya dapat ditingkatkan dan dipertanggungjawabkan, sehingga menjadi berkualitas dan siswa dapat meningkatkan prestasinya.

**Kata Kunci:** peran instrumental, kepemimpinan kepala sekolah, pendidikan yang bermutu.

### Abstract

Based on the data obtained, it is stated that the quality of education in Indonesia is still relatively low. This research aims to determine the instrumental role of school principal leadership in efforts to improve the quality of education in Indonesia. The research method used was descriptive qualitative. Data collection techniques used literature studies and documentation. The data obtained from data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification were then triangulated. The results of the analysis were then described qualitatively. The results of this research indicated that the role of the principal as an educator is to plan, implement, assess learning outcomes, guide and train, and research. The principal's managerial role is to plan, organize, lead and control the efforts of members of the organization and empower educational resources. The role of the school principal as an administrator is to regulate the management of the administrative system in the fields of: student affairs, curriculum and learning, personnel, finance, administration, infrastructure, and public relations. The role of the principal as a supervisor is to monitor fostering and improving the teaching and learning process in the classroom or at the school he leads. The role of the principal as a leader is the management of improving the quality of education, where the principal is able to improve quality every year. The role of the school principal as a leader provides services to support improving the quality of education.

The role of the principal as an educational innovator is strategically positioned to establish harmonious relationships, discover something new, integrate activities, develop innovative learning models and provide exemplary examples. The role of the school principal as a motivator for educators so that their performance can be improved and accounted for, so that they become qualified and students can improve their achievements.

**Keywords:** *instrumental role, principal leadership, quality of education*

## INTRODUCTION

Education is an aspect to build the nation in realizing citizens who are reliable, professional and highly competitive (Timor et al., 2018). To achieve this goal, the quality of education in Indonesia must continue to be improved. The quality of education has always been the dream and hope of every educational institution, both those held by the government and the community (Damanik, 2019). However, it should be understood that the quality of education cannot just be realized without the efforts of various parties. Unfortunately, so far, the quality of education has become a classic unresolved problem for the Indonesian people.

Based on the data obtained, it is stated that the quality of education in Indonesia is still relatively low. The quality of education in Indonesia is currently very concerning. This is evidenced, among other things, by UNESCO data (2000) on the ranking of the Human Development Index, namely the composition of the rankings of educational attainment, health and income per head which shows that Indonesia's human development index is declining. Among 174 countries in the world, Indonesia ranks 102nd (1996), 99th (1997), 105th (1998), and 109th (1999) (Agustang & Asrifan, 2021). The series of red numbers produced by Indonesia has created increasing public pressure. At the national level, the public considers that the Indonesian government has not been successful in providing an appropriate education system (Pratiwi, 2019).

Then according to the results of a survey regarding the secondary education system in the world in 2018 issued by PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) in 2019, Indonesia occupies a low position, namely 74th out of 79 other countries in the survey. In other words, Indonesia is in the 6th lowest position compared to other countries. This is a very concerning condition (Hidayah, 2022). This value tends to be stagnant in the last 10 -15 years (Alifah, 2021).

Efforts to improve the quality of education have become an ongoing issue in the field of education. Improving the quality of education is an effort that must be pursued continuously so that expectations for quality and relevant education can be achieved (Fadli, 2017). Efforts to improve to achieve quality education do not only fulfill the input and output aspects, but what is more important are the process aspects, namely decision making, program management, institutional management processes, teaching and learning processes and monitoring and evaluation processes, provided that the teaching and learning process has the highest level of importance compared to other processes (Aziz, 2015).

Related to the quality of education which is related to decision making, program management, learning management processes and monitoring and evaluation processes, it is impossible to separate it from the role of the school principal (Mohune & Tola, 2019). The principal has a role in improving the quality of education in the institution he leads. The principal is a strategic element in improving the quality of education in an educational institution. The principal is the foundation of school management in an effort to achieve institutional goals, because he has a set of authorities in setting the direction of school education in accordance with the vision, mission and goals set (Khosy'in, 2021).

This implies that the role of the principal as a leader has a big duty and responsibility to organize and mobilize the resources in the school. The achievement of quality and educational goals is very dependent on the leadership skills and wisdom of the principal in managing all resources to achieve school goals (Bustan et al., 2013). Not surprisingly, the high and low quality of education is largely determined by the role of the school principal. The magnitude of the role of school principals in improving the quality of education, made researchers interested in raising an article entitled "The Instrumental Role of Principal Leadership in Efforts to Improve the Quality of Education in Indonesia".

## METHODS

Based on the title of the researcher, this type of research was classified into a qualitative descriptive research form. To uncover data regarding the instrumental role of school principal leadership in improving the

quality of education in Indonesia, data collection techniques and tools were needed. In this research, literature and documentation study techniques were used. If data collection has been carried out, then the data were then be processed and analyzed, namely the process of systematically searching and compiling. The data obtained from research results were in the form of articles published in journals, and documentation by organizing data into categories, describing them into units, making sketches of arranging them into patterns, choosing which ones are important and what will be studied and making conclusions. so that it is easy for readers to understand.

Before being analyzed, the data that has been collected was then carried out by data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification, after which triangulation was carried out. In this research the researcher used source triangulation, where this triangulation was used to further consolidate different information with the same technique, in practice the researcher checked the data which was then presented descriptively.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The role of the principal will greatly determine the progress or decline of education. The role of the school principal in improving the quality of education is very important because it can affect the success or failure of the quality of education itself (Fitrah, 2017). There are several instrumental roles for school principals in efforts to improve the quality of education in Indonesia which will be described in this article, namely the principal as educator, manager, administrator, supervisor, leader, innovator, and motivator (EMASLIM). (Efrilla & Karwanto, 2022).

One of the instrumental roles that must be carried out by the principal in moving the wheels of his leadership is his ability as an educator (educator). The principal as an educator carries out his role in planning, implementing, assessing learning outcomes, guiding and training, and researching (with school action research) (Alsubaie, 2016). In this context, the principal also acts as a teacher, namely in charge of carrying out the learning process for students. So that it can be said that the role of the principal is no different from that of the teacher, namely teacher as instructor, teacher as counselor, teacher as scientist, and the teacher as person (Munir & Khalil, 2016).

Therefore, the role of the principal as an educator is also seen in his ability to guide students, especially those related to extracurricular activities, participation in various competitions in the arts, sports, and subject competitions. In relation to school-based quality improvement management (MPMBS), the ability of school principals to play their role in guiding students is very important. The more important thing that the principal does as an educator is to apply interesting learning models, such as team teaching, moving classes, and holding accelerated programs for students who are smarter than normal (Lijuan, 2016).

In this case, the principal always seeks to improve the quality of learning conducted by the teacher. In this case, the experience factor will greatly determine their professionalism, especially in supporting the formation of an in-depth understanding of educators and education staff regarding the implementation of their duties (Kempa et al., 2017). Long experience as a teacher, vice principal, or member of a social organization greatly influences the principal's leadership ability in carrying out his work. This includes attending various kinds of training and upgrading that have been attended (Ham et al., 2015).

The role of the principal as a manager, as a manager so that it can influence the teaching staff, both directly and indirectly. The role of the principal as a manager is very vital to the success of education, especially schools. The principal must be responsible for the smoothness and success of all regulatory and management affairs formally to his superiors or informally to the community who have entrusted their students (Rosyadi & Pardjono, 2015). To realize this goal, school principals as managers of educational institutions have a big contribution in creating a conducive atmosphere in their work environment. The conducive atmosphere is an important factor in creating outstanding teachers (Syakir, 2018).

The managerial role of the school principal is closely related to the activities of planning, organizing, leading and controlling the efforts of members of the organization and optimally empowering available educational resources to achieve the goals set. This can be seen starting from planning, organizing, actuating and supervising. The school principal must be able to carry out management functions related to planning aspects such as determining school goals; formulate educational programs, develop development strategies;



determine the standardization of goal achievement. This is where the principal must be able to carry out the planning process, both short term planning, medium term planning, and long term planning.

The important role of the school principal in organizing is because educational institutions have considerable resources, starting from human resources (HR), consisting of teachers, employees, and students, financial resources, to physical resources, starting from the buildings and facilities and infrastructure owned. Sometimes one of the problems that educational institutions often face is limited resources. This is where the role of the principal requires him to be able to use, utilize and optimize the best available resources.

In general it can be described, that the role of the principal as managerial, namely working with other people, being responsible and accountable, being able to deal with various problems even though time and resources are limited, thinking realistically and conceptually, being a mediator, thinking like a politician, being able to be a diplomat and made up my mind. In the mobilization aspect, the principal acts as a manager in ordering, assigning, showing, directing, and demanding subordinates and organizational personnel to carry out tasks in achieving goals. In the aspect of supervision, the role of the principal as a manager is to evaluate by collecting data to measure how far, in what terms and how educational goals can be achieved and realized.

The school principal as an administrator plays a role as a regulator of administrative system management in the fields of: student affairs, curriculum and learning, personnel, finance, administration, infrastructure, and community relations, with program-oriented activities: managing KBM and BK administration, managing student administration, managing financial administration, managing the administration of facilities/infrastructure and managing the administration of the school committee (Saleh et al., 2016).

As an administrator, a school principal must understand and be able to coordinate the implementation of school administration according to applicable administrative management guidelines. In addition, they must also be able to create smooth and timely administrative services. There are at least three aspects that must get the attention of the school principal as an administrator, namely (1) the management of personnel administration (2) the administration of administration, and (3) the administration of facilities and infrastructure.

In carrying out teaching administration the school principal coordinates in the form of (a) a schedule of activities according to the educational calendar, (b) evaluation tools, and (c) completeness of curriculum documents. The Principal coordinates administrative management in the form of (a) correspondence, (b) staffing, (c) equipment, (d) finance, and (e) student affairs. In managing the administration of facilities and infrastructure the principal coordinates management in the form of (1) inventory of equipment and materials, (2) use of equipment and materials, and (3) maintenance and repair schedules (Cahyono & Si, 2017).

The instrumental role of the school principal as a supervisor can be understood, that the teacher will carry out his duties optimally when supported by several factors, one of which is the principal's leadership factor. Descriptively, it can be described that the role and responsibility of the principal as a supervisor is to monitor fostering and improving the teaching-learning process in the classroom or at the school he leads. Academic supervision carried out by the principal aims to develop and optimize the ability of teachers in teaching and learning activities. This is where the importance of the principal must understand and use the right models and techniques in carrying out his supervisory duties.

The principal's instrumental role is manifested in the ability to compose and implement educational supervision programs and utilize the results to improve the quality of education. The ability to develop an educational supervision program is carried out in the form of preparing a class supervision program, developing a supervision program for extra-curricular activities, developing a library, laboratory and examination supervision program. The ability of school principals to supervise education can be done through clinical supervision programs, non-clinical supervision programs and extracurricular activity supervision programs. Meanwhile, the ability of school principals to utilize the results of educational supervision is demonstrated by utilizing various supervision results to improve the performance of educational staff, and utilizing the results of supervision to develop schools.

The condition is that the implementation of these tasks can be carried out properly and professionally, the principal must understand very well what is the main task of teachers and employees. Given the principal's role as a leader and prime mover in education and learning. However, it should be understood that the

principal in carrying out his role as a supervisor must uphold democratic principles by always respecting the teacher's opinion. Provide opportunities for teachers as wide as possible to convey views and ideas. As much as possible, decision making is carried out by way of deliberation, because the goal to be achieved from this supervision task is to improve the quality of education.

Therefore, in the implementation of educational supervision must run with democratic principles. With these democratic principles, in turn, it will generate an exchange of ideas between teachers and employees, thus encouraging them to be more innovative and creative. The principal as a supervisor as well as an educational leader, needs to carry out his vision with certain principles.

Some principles that can be used as guidelines and references for school principals in carrying out their supervisory duties, such as supervision carried out is to build the quality of education which is carried out creatively. Supervision must also be carried out by referring to things that are reality. As far as possible the formal impression in supervision should be avoided. Keep supervision simple and informal. No less important is supervision not to frighten the teacher, but in practice it must provide a feeling of security and comfort. Even though the implementation is carried out in a simple and informal manner, professional relations remain the basis for the principal in carrying out this task. The attitude of the principal in carrying out supervision is very important. Supervision is an activity that is carried out routinely and is not urgent. The implementation of supervision may not be based on rank authority. Supervision is not aimed at finding mistakes and teacher deficiencies in carrying out tasks.

The principal as a supervisor must really understand and understand what is needed for teachers to carry out and improve their professionalism. Improving the quality of education, especially learning is the main basis for the professionalism of implementing educational supervision (Santika, 2017). Things that need attention and need to be developed for each teacher by the principal as a supervisor are the personality of the teacher, continuous professional improvement, the learning process, mastery of subject matter, the diversity of teacher abilities, regional diversity, and the teacher's ability to work with the community. For this reason, in the future it is necessary to change and develop a vision that is oriented towards improving quality, student intelligence, and a new paradigm of education (Santika, 2018).

The principal as a leader must be able to think visionary or think far ahead so that activities or programs at school can run on the right track and always develop (Swarniti, 2021a). This means that with changes and developments in various fields as is currently happening, school principals must be able to anticipate negative things, seek and take advantage of opportunities, and maximize existing resources to bring schools to a better condition from time to time. To realize this goal, the principal as a leader must build and maintain an organizational culture, a principal must be able to understand the members he leads, both teachers, education staff and students (Purwanto, 2018).

Therefore, the role played by the principal as a leader in improving the quality of education is through management of improving the quality of education, where the principal is able to improve quality every year (Santika, Suastra, et al., 2022). The principal as a leader provides services to support the improvement of the quality of education. Such as facilities that can support the teaching and learning process, and can also support the process of improving the quality of education in schools. In addition, the principal also increases discipline towards all school members, where every school member must be disciplined with time (Swarniti, 2021b).

To support the instrumental role of the school principal as a leader, of course he must have several abilities, such as personality skills, knowledge of education staff, vision and mission of the school, decision-making ability and communication skills (Khatimah et al., 2022). The principal as a leader is an attempt to influence others to work together to achieve goals, by being task oriented and relationship oriented. Here the principal must be able to provide direction, increase the willingness of educational staff, open two-way communication (Swarniti, 2021c). The principal as a leader will emphasize leadership behavior when interacting in a format that influences teachers. Even in personal capacity, the principal has the potential to act as a controller, which essentially needs to facilitate teachers to be able to lead themselves and the principal has good characteristics (Wahyuni et al., 2022).

The ability of the principal as an educational innovator, begins with seeking new ideas or ideas in various aspects of education through careful analysis and consideration, then conveys the innovation program to teachers, staff and parents of students to understand and attract support for the reforms offered. The renewal

is also intended to address various educational problems found.

The principal as an implementer of innovation must have, find ideas or something new in overcoming educational problems. The principal as an innovator must be able to seek, discover, and carry out various innovations in schools (Santika & Sudiana, 2021). The attitude of creativity and innovation must be owned by the leader in order to change learning that was previously considered less than optimal or change classical learning to a modern direction. The school principal as an innovator in terms of developing innovative learning models, is expected to give flexibility to teachers so they can develop learning processes in the classroom and learn and understand new learning models that can improve learning activities in schools (Santika, Suarni, et al., 2022).

The principal as an innovator is reflected in the ways he does his work constructively, creatively, delegatively, integratively, rationally and objectively, pragmatically, exemplary, disciplined and adaptable (Heissenberger & Heilbronner, 2017). The role of the principal as an educational innovator is strategically positioned to establish harmonious relationships, discover something new, integrate activities, develop innovative learning models and set good examples for all school members. The principal as an innovator can plan and formulate bright ideas so that in its development the school always finds new innovations that are not only beneficial for the development of the school, but can be imitated by other schools (Koch et al., 2015).

The principal always builds good work motivation for all teachers. Because the principal believes that with the ability to build good motivation, it will build and increase work effectiveness and efficiency. With high motivation, supported by the ability of teachers, it turns out that it can spur overall teacher performance (Hartinah et al., 2013). The principal must have the right strategy to motivate education staff in carrying out their various duties and functions (Rusmawati, 2013).

The principal has a role as a motivator for teaching staff so that their performance can be improved and accounted for, so that they become qualified and students can improve learning achievement and are able to absorb and develop the knowledge provided by the teacher properly (Santika, 2021). Providing motivation to teachers can consist of giving awards that can foster initiative, creative abilities, and a spirit of healthy competition. This award is very important to improve the quality of the performance of educators, and to reduce activities that are less productive (Iskandar, 2013). This of course can develop if the culture and work climate are good.

At the point of creating a work climate there is an explanation that a conducive work culture and climate will enable each teacher to be more motivated to show superior performance, accompanied by efforts to improve their competence (Dzaky, 2016). School culture or work climate describes the atmosphere and working relationships between fellow teachers, teachers and principals, teachers and other education personnel, and the Office in their environment. This is a form of a conducive work environment. This kind of atmosphere is really needed by teachers and principals to carry out their work more effectively (Setiyati, 2014).

Thus, the presence of the principal in the midst of a work environment is very much needed as extrinsic motivation, both as teacher students and staff. The principal must be able to provide mental strength and support to teachers, staff and students. The principal as a motivator is aimed at encouraging and encouraging teachers, staff, students and parents. Its role can also be seen when school residents complain about the problems they face. The school principal should be able to provide encouragement amid the problems faced by teachers, students and staff.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion that has been described above, it was concluded that the instrumental role of school principals in efforts to improve the quality of education in Indonesia was that of school principals as educators, managers, administrators, supervisors, leaders, innovators, and motivators. The principal as an educator carries out his role in planning, implementing, assessing learning outcomes, guiding and training, and researching (with school action research). The managerial role of the principal is closely related to the activities of planning, organizing, leading and controlling the efforts of members of the organization and optimally empowering available educational resources to achieve the goals set. The principal as an administrator plays a role as a regulator of the administration of the administrative system in the fields of: student affairs, curriculum and learning, personnel, finance, administration, infrastructure, and public relations. The role of



the principal as a supervisor is to monitor fostering and improving the teaching and learning process in the classroom or at the school he leads. The role played by the school principal as a leader in improving the quality of education is through the management of improving the quality of education, where the principal is able to improve quality every year. The principal as a leader provides services to support the improvement of the quality of education. The role of the principal as an educational innovator is strategically positioned to establish harmonious relationships, discover something new, integrate activities, develop innovative learning models and set good examples for all school members. The principal has a role as a motivator for educators so that their performance can be improved and accounted for, so that they become qualified and students can improve learning achievement and are able to absorb and develop the knowledge provided by their teachers properly.

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