



Implementation of School Leadership in Improving Management Standards: A Case Study at SMP Negeri 1 Kotaagung

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Abstract: This study aims to describe and analyze the implementation of school leadership in improving management standards at SMP Negeri 1 Kotaagung. The research focuses on planning, implementation, supervision, and evaluation carried out by the principal in meeting school management standards. This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis. The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, with validity ensured through source and technique triangulation. The findings indicate that school leadership implementation is carried out through work program planning aligned with the school's vision and mission, strengthening coordination with teachers and administrative staff, and systematic supervision of school administration and management. Participatory and communicative leadership has contributed significantly to enhancing the effectiveness of school management, particularly in planning, organizing, and evaluating programs. In conclusion, visionary, collaborative, and consistent school leadership plays a significant role in improving school management standards. The implication of this study highlights the importance of strengthening principals' managerial competencies and fostering a collaborative work culture to achieve effective and sustainable school governance.

Keywords: School Leadership, Management Standards, Educational Management,

Introduction

Education plays a strategic role in developing high-quality and competitive human resources. In the era of globalization and digital transformation, schools are required to manage all resources effectively to achieve established quality standards. One of the key factors in achieving these standards is the leadership of the principal. The principal functions not only as an administrator but also as a transformational leader who integrates planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision functions synergistically to improve school management standards. Empowering teachers' competencies is a strategic aspect because teachers are the primary actors in the learning process and in achieving educational quality. Previous studies have shown that transformational leadership of principals influences teacher performance, school culture, and learning quality. School-based management studies also emphasize the importance of cross-sector collaboration in supporting effective educational management. However, most studies examine leadership partially and have not comprehensively integrated the principal's managerial functions with teacher competency development as a basis for improving school management standards.

The scientific novelty of this study lies in analyzing the implementation of school leadership based on teacher competency through managerial functions—planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising—in the context of improving school management standards. This study also provides contextual empirical contributions at the junior secondary school level. Factually, the implementation of leadership at SMP Negeri 1 Kotaagung has not been fully optimal. Several aspects such as teacher competency development, curriculum management, utilization of facilities and infrastructure, administrative services, and guidance and counseling still face constraints, resulting in management standards not being achieved maximally. This condition indicates a gap between expected standards and actual practices. Based on this context, the research problem is how school leadership is implemented in improving management standards at SMP Negeri 1 Kotaagung, including planning, organizing, implementation, supervision functions, and the supporting and inhibiting factors.

Literature Review

1. School Leadership

School leadership is conceptually defined as the principal's ability to influence, direct, and empower school members to achieve educational goals (Nuranita, 2019). Leadership is a process of influencing others to understand and agree on what needs to be done to accomplish shared objectives (Bulhadi et al., 2024).

Leadership also has moral and relational dimensions. Effective leadership is rooted in moral values and integrity (Purnomo, 2019) and represents a reciprocal relationship oriented toward quality improvement (Cahyono, 2021). Modern school leadership focuses on student learning outcomes and teacher professional development (Rosmini et al., 2024). Transformational leadership builds teacher commitment to the educational vision and promotes positive school culture (Marliansyah & Suwadi, 2024). Visionary and collaborative leadership enhances service quality through open communication and teamwork (Fadhli et al., 2025), while digital instructional leadership addresses 21st-century learning challenges (Susanti, 2024). Thus, school leadership includes shared vision, instructional focus, moral integrity, managerial and social competencies, and transformational, participatory, and adaptive approaches.

2. Management Standards

Management standards are part of the National Education Standards governing effective and efficient school governance, including planning, implementation, supervision, and evaluation (Sutriyati et al., 2023). Good governance is characterized by visionary leadership, stakeholder participation, transparency, and accountability (Yosi Sisri Nengsi et al., 2024a). School-based management emphasizes decentralization and participation (Surdiati, 2024). Strategic decision-making should be participatory and aligned with the school vision (Zahria, 2024) and based on data (Nurzen, 2022). Therefore, management standards emphasize effective planning, transparency, stakeholder participation, data-based decision-making, and continuous quality improvement.

3. Leadership Implementation in School Management

Leadership implementation in school management involves applying leadership functions throughout the management cycle. Leadership is based on influence rather than authority (Maharani, 2024), grounded in moral values (Setiabudi, 2024), and oriented toward shared goals (Gunawan et al., 2026). Managerially, leadership is reflected in planning (vision, mission, strategic plans), organizing (resource management), implementation (curriculum, human resources, facilities), and supervision (monitoring and evaluation). Instructional leadership ensures learning quality (As'ad et al., 2019). Transparency and accountability build public trust (Sormin, 2024) and require clear reporting systems (Risandini et al., 2024). School-based management provides autonomy aligned with national policy (Husamah et al., 2024).

4. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

Leadership effectiveness is influenced by internal and external factors (Endaryono & Djuhartono, 2023). Supporting factors include human resource quality (Ririn et al., 2025), positive school culture (Putri, 2024), stakeholder participation (Khurniawan, 2021; Lestari & Sirozi, 2025), transparency (Fitrianti, 2025), and visionary leadership. Inhibiting factors include limited facilities and administrative workload.

Method

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore leadership implementation based on teacher competency in improving management standards. The research subjects were selected through purposive sampling, including the principal, vice principals, counseling coordinator, head of library, head of laboratory, and administrative staff. The research object was the implementation of school leadership in improving management standards, covering leadership style, communication, decision-making, human resource empowerment, planning, organizing, implementation, supervision, evaluation, and influencing factors.

The study was conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Kotaagung, Tanggamus Regency, from October to December 2025. Primary data were obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation, while secondary data included school documents such as strategic plans, supervision programs, and activity reports. Data were collected using in-depth interviews, participatory observation, documentation, and questionnaires. Data validity was ensured through triangulation and credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability testing. Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing conducted simultaneously throughout the research process.

Results and Discussion

1. Leadership Indicators

The principal demonstrated visionary, participatory, and collaborative leadership. The vision and mission were consistently communicated and used as the basis for program

planning. Open communication through meetings and cross-unit coordination strengthened a collaborative work culture. Decision-making was participatory, aligning with school-based management principles. Teacher empowerment was conducted through training, workshops, and academic supervision, reflecting instructional leadership. Supervision and evaluation were carried out systematically to improve program effectiveness.

2. Management Standards

Planning was systematic, integrated, and quality-oriented, serving as the foundation for improving management standards. Organizing involved a clear structure, competency-based task delegation, and strong coordination. Implementation showed transformational leadership through motivation, facilitation, and responsive decision-making. Supervision used a reflective and developmental approach, supporting continuous improvement. Supporting factors included leadership commitment, teamwork, and a positive school culture, while inhibiting factors involved limited facilities and administrative workload. Leadership quality and effective work systems were more decisive than resource availability alone.

Research Findings

The study found that leadership implementation was visionary, participatory, and quality-oriented. The vision guided program development, decision-making was collaborative, teachers were empowered through professional development, management cycles were systematic, and transparency strengthened trust and cooperation.

Discussion

Effective leadership was reflected in strategic planning, participatory decision-making, human resource empowerment, and continuous supervision. Vision-based programs ensured long-term direction, collaborative management strengthened commitment, instructional leadership improved learning quality, and systematic evaluation supported continuous improvement. Transparency and accountability fostered organizational trust. Overall, the integration of visionary, participatory, and instructional leadership with structured management systems was key to achieving effective and sustainable school governance.

Conclusion

School leadership plays a strategic role in improving management standards. The principal functions as a driving force integrating planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision systematically and sustainably. Planning shifted toward data-based approaches, organizing improved coordination and accountability, implementation fostered collaborative work climates, and supervision supported continuous improvement. Despite resource limitations, strong leadership and effective work systems enabled the achievement of professional, transparent, accountable, and sustainable school governance.



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