

The Role of the Principal as an Educational Manager in Improving the Quality of SMA Negeri 1 Dukun

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to analyze the ontology and epistemology of revelation in the Qur'an through a critical study of classical and contemporary theological thought while integrating it with modern socio-religious perspectives. The research focuses on how revelation is understood as a source of absolute divine authority as well as an object of rational inquiry within the Islamic intellectual tradition. The study begins with the epistemological tension between the normative-theological approach, which emphasizes the sacredness of the text, and the academic-contextual approach that situates revelation within historical and social frameworks. In the era of globalization and digital transformation, shifts in religious authority and the emergence of new interpretive discourses make this discussion increasingly relevant for reaffirming the role of revelation in the lives of contemporary Muslims. This study employs a library research method by combining theological, philosophical, and sociological analyses. The primary data sources include works of classical and contemporary Muslim thinkers and literature related to the living Qur'an studies. The findings indicate that ontologically revelation continues to be understood as a transcendent divine kalam, while epistemologically it remains open to rational and contextual approaches without losing its sacred authority. The integration of revelation and reason reflects the dynamic nature of Islamic intellectual tradition that remains adaptive to social change. The study concludes by emphasizing the importance of a multidimensional approach in the study of revelation and recommends the development of integrative Islamic education.

Introduction

Education is one of the important factors that contributes to improving the quality of life in society. Schools as formal educational institutions have the responsibility to organize effective teaching and learning processes and produce graduates who possess both academic competence and good character. In managing education within schools, the principal plays a very important role because they act as leaders and educational managers who are responsible for organizing all educational activities in the school (Mulyasa, 2013).

As an educational manager, the principal is responsible for carrying out the overall functions of educational management, including planning, organizing, implementing, and

supervising all programs implemented in the school. The managerial ability of the principal is very important in determining whether the school can achieve the educational goals that have been established (Wahyudi., 2012). Therefore, principals must have strong managerial competencies in order to manage various educational resources effectively and efficiently, as stated by (Syifaul Sagala, 2013).

Improving school quality does not only depend on educational facilities and infrastructure, but is also largely determined by how the principal leads and manages various aspects of education within the school. Principals who are able to perform their managerial roles effectively can create a conducive working environment and improve teachers' abilities in the teaching and learning process (Bush, 2015). Therefore, the leadership role of the principal has a significant impact on improving the quality of education in schools.

Several previous studies have shown that principal leadership plays a crucial role in improving the quality of education in schools. Research by (Leithwood et al., 2020) indicates that school leadership significantly influences student learning outcomes and overall school effectiveness. Similarly, (Hallinger, 2011) highlights that instructional leadership plays a crucial role in improving teaching and learning processes as well as overall school effectiveness.

In studies published in reputable journals indexed by Garuda Kemdikbud also confirm that principal leadership and managerial competence significantly affect teacher performance and school quality. Research conducted by (Syamsul Falah, 2023) shows that principals play an important role in building a culture of quality and improving teacher professionalism. Furthermore, studies by (Setyawati & Sere, 2022) and (Hotimah and Sa'diyah, 2022) demonstrate that participatory and transformational leadership styles can improve school effectiveness and create a conducive learning environment. In addition, research by (Riani & Ain, 2022) reveals that effective school management practices, including planning, organizing, and supervision, significantly contribute to improving educational quality and strengthening overall school performance.

Although numerous studies have examined principal leadership in improving educational quality, most of these studies focus on leadership styles and their general impact on teacher performance and student outcomes. Limited studies specifically analyze the role of the principal as an educational manager in implementing core management functions such as planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling (POAC) within a specific school context. In addition, previous studies predominantly use quantitative approaches, while qualitative studies that explore in-depth managerial practices in real school settings are still limited. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the role of the principal as an educational manager in improving school quality through a qualitative case study.

This study aims to analyze the role of the principal as an educational manager in improving school quality through the implementation of management functions, including planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling (POAC) at SMA Negeri 1 Dukun, as well as to explore how these managerial practices are applied in a real school context to create an effective learning environment and enhance teacher performance. This study is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions, where theoretically it contributes to the development of educational management studies, particularly regarding the managerial role of principals in improving school quality, and practically it serves as a reference for school principals, teachers, and educational policymaker in improving school management practices effectively and sustainably.

Method

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. A qualitative approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the role of the principal as an educational manager in improving school quality at SMA Negeri 1 Dukun in a contextual and natural setting (Lexy J. Moleong, 2018). The method used in this research was a case study, which focuses on a particular object in depth and detail in order to provide a comprehensive description of the phenomenon being studied (Robert K. Yin, 2014). This research focuses on the role of the principal as an educational manager in efforts to improve the quality of education within the school environment.

The research subjects consisted of the principal, vice principals, and several teachers who were involved in the implementation of educational management in the school. The subjects were selected using purposive sampling because they were considered to have relevant information related to the focus of the study. The object of this research was the role of the principal as an educational manager in improving school quality at SMA Negeri 1 Dukun.

Data collection techniques were conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was carried out to directly observe the managerial activities of the principal in managing and improving the quality of education in the school. In-depth interviews were conducted with informants to obtain information related to the role of the principal as an educational manager. Documentation was used to support the data in the form of school work programs, organizational structures, and documents related to efforts to improve the quality of education (Sugiyono, 2018).

Data analysis used an interactive analysis model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was carried out by selecting data relevant to the focus of the research. Data were presented in the form of descriptive explanations, while conclusions were drawn through a continuous verification process to ensure that the data obtained were valid and scientifically accountable (Matthew B. Miles, 2014).

Result and Discussion

1. The Role Of The Principal In Planning To Improve Educational Quality

Based on the research findings, the principal at SMA Negeri 1 Dukun performs the planning function through the formulation of the school's vision and mission, annual work plans, and educational quality improvement programs. The planning process is carried out systematically by involving various school stakeholders such as vice principals, teachers, and educational staff.

This indicates that the principal applies a participatory and strategic approach in planning, where decision-making is not centralized but involves collaboration among school members. Such an approach allows the school to formulate programs that are more relevant to actual needs and challenges faced in the educational environment. In addition, systematic planning also helps the school set clear priorities and measurable targets, which are essential for achieving educational goals effectively and sustainably.

Planning is a fundamental function in educational management because it serves as a guideline for implementing all organizational activities. According to (Mulyasa, 2018), principals as educational managers must be able to formulate strategic plans that direct all school resources toward achieving educational goals effectively. Proper planning enables schools to have a clear direction for development in improving educational quality.

The results of this study indicate that the planning process at SMA Negeri 1 Dukun is carried out through school work meetings involving various stakeholders. This shows that the principal applies participatory management principles in decision-making. This finding is consistent with (Wahyudi., 2012), who states that participatory leadership by principals

can improve the effectiveness of school management because every member of the organization has the opportunity to contribute to program planning.

This finding is also supported by Bush (2011), who explains that educational planning is a strategic process that enables school organizations to optimize available resources in order to improve educational quality. Furthermore, research conducted by (Hallinger, 2011b) shows that principals with strong planning abilities tend to create more effective learning environments and improve the quality of learning in schools.

Previous research conducted by (Muh Fitrah, 2017) also indicates that systematic school program planning can improve the quality of educational management in schools. Therefore, the findings of this study reinforce previous studies that highlight the importance of principals' planning abilities in improving educational quality.

From an analytical perspective, participatory planning not only strengthens institutional commitment but also enhances alignment between school programs and actual needs in the educational environment. According to (Riani & Ain, 2022), principals who effectively integrate stakeholder participation into planning processes are more successful in improving school quality and organizational performance.

In addition, planning carried out by the principal reflects a strategic effort to align school programs with educational goals. The involvement of teachers and staff in planning activities indicates that the principal applies a collaborative approach in decision-making. This finding is supported by Philip Hallinger who emphasizes that effective school leadership requires a clear vision and systematic planning. Schools that implement collaborative planning tend to have better program implementation and improved educational outcomes.

Furthermore, planning in educational management is not merely administrative but strategic in nature. Principals are required to anticipate changes and design adaptive programs, especially in the context of rapid technological and educational transformation. Research indicates that effective principal management significantly contributes to improving educational quality, particularly in dynamic contexts such as the Society 5.0 era.

Thus, the planning carried out by the principal does not only function as a guideline for school activities but also as a strategic effort to anticipate changes and challenges in education. Participatory and long-term oriented planning indicates that the principal has implemented adaptive management in response to current developments. This is important because the improvement of educational quality cannot be achieved instantly, but must go through a systematic and continuous planning process. Therefore, the principal's ability to design relevant programs becomes one of the key indicators of successful educational management in schools.

2. The Role of the Principal in Organizing to Improve Educational Quality

In addition to performing the planning function, the principal also carries out the organizing function in educational management. Based on the research findings, the principal at SMA Negeri 1 Dukun establishes a clear organizational structure and distributes duties and responsibilities to teachers and educational staff according to their competencies.

This shows that the principal emphasizes the importance of role clarity and professional responsibility within the school organization. By assigning tasks based on individual competencies, the principal ensures that each member can contribute optimally to the achievement of school objectives. Furthermore, a well-structured organization facilitates better coordination, communication, and teamwork among school members, which ultimately supports the effectiveness of educational program implementation.

Organizing is the process of arranging human resources and other resources so that they can work effectively to achieve organizational goals. explain that organizing

involves task division, job grouping, and the establishment of working relationships within an organization. At SMA Negeri 1 Dukun, the principal forms several working teams such as the curriculum development team, the education quality assurance team, and the extracurricular activities team. The formation of these teams aims to improve the effectiveness of school program implementation. This is consistent with (Syiful Sagala, 2013), who states that organizing in educational management aims to optimize the utilization of school resources in order to support the achievement of educational goals.

In addition, (Sondang P. Siagian, 2014) emphasizes that organizing is an essential step in management because it determines how tasks are distributed among members of the organization. With a clear distribution of tasks, each individual in the organization can understand their respective roles and responsibilities. The findings of this study are also supported by research conducted by (Andriani et al., 2018), which shows that effective organizing in school management can improve coordination among teachers and enhance the quality of educational services in schools.

Analytically, effective organizing enhances coordination, minimizes role ambiguity, and improves institutional performance. This finding is consistent with research conducted by (Suriyansyah & Aslamiah, 2015) which states that structured school organization significantly improves the effectiveness of educational management and service quality.

In addition, organizing is closely linked to leadership effectiveness. A well-structured organization facilitates communication, collaboration, and accountability among stakeholders. Research conducted by (Imansyah et al., 2020) indicates that effective principals leadership and school management practices significantly improve teacher performance and overall school quality.

The organizing function carried out by the principal also reflects effective management of human resources. By assigning tasks based on competence, the principal ensures that each teacher can perform their role optimally. Effective organizing contributes to improving coordination and communication within the school. A clear organizational structure reduces role ambiguity and enhances teamwork among teachers. This condition supports the creation of a professional working environment that positively impacts the quality of education.

In line with this, research in educational management shows that schools with well-structured organizations tend to achieve higher levels of effectiveness and performance. Therefore, organizing is a key factor in supporting the success of school programs. Therefore, the organizing practices observed in this study indicate that the principal has successfully developed a functional organizational system that supports effective educational management and continuous quality improvement.

Furthermore, effective organizing also contributes to improving the work effectiveness of teachers and educational staff. The distribution of tasks based on competencies allows each individual to perform optimally and take responsibility for their respective roles. This condition creates more structured coordination and reduces overlapping tasks. Thus, the organizing function carried out by the principal not only clarifies the organizational structure but also directly contributes to improving the quality of educational services in schools.

3. The Role of the Principal in Actuating to Improve Educational Quality

Actuating represents the implementation stage of all programs that have been previously planned. At this stage, the principal acts as a leader who mobilizes all members of the school community to carry out their duties and responsibilities optimally. The research findings show that the principal at SMA Negeri 1 Dukun actively motivates teachers to improve the quality of learning. The principal also encourages teachers to use innovative learning methods and participate in professional development activities such as training and workshops.

This stage reflects the principal's ability to translate plans into concrete actions within the school environment. The principal not only gives instructions but also actively encourages, guides, and supports teachers and staff in implementing various educational programs. Through effective communication and motivation, the principal is able to create a positive working atmosphere that fosters collaboration and commitment among school members. As a result, the implementation of programs can run more effectively and in accordance with the established objectives.

According to (Wahjosumidjo, 2013), principals as educational leaders must be able to become the main driving force in implementing school programs and creating a conducive working environment for all school members. In addition, the principal conducts academic supervision as an effort to improve the quality of classroom learning. Academic supervision is an important strategy for improving teachers' professional competence. (Mulyasa, 2018) states that academic supervision aims to assist teachers in improving the quality of the teaching and learning process in the classroom.

These findings are also consistent with research conducted by (Andriani et al., 2018), which shows that principal leadership has a significant influence on teacher performance. Effective leadership can increase teachers' work motivation, which ultimately contributes to the improvement of learning quality. Furthermore, (Lunenburg, 2010) explains that principals as instructional leaders are responsible for ensuring that the teaching and learning process in schools runs effectively and with high quality.

Furthermore, the principal's role in motivating teachers demonstrates the importance of leadership in improving educational quality. Motivation provided by the principal encourages teachers to enhance their teaching practices and adopt innovative learning methods. According to Kenneth Leithwood, transformational leadership has a significant impact on teacher performance and student achievement. Principals who actively engage with teachers and provide continuous support are more likely to create a positive and productive learning environment.

In addition, the implementation of professional development programs such as training and workshops contributes to improving teachers' competencies. This indicates that the principal not only focuses on administrative tasks but also on the professional growth of teachers. Thus, the implementation of programs carried out by the principal at SMA Negeri 1 Dukun indicates that the principal has performed the role of an educational manager in mobilizing all school components to improve educational quality.

Moreover, the principal's role in the actuating function can be seen in their ability to build a positive work culture within the school environment. A conducive work culture encourages teachers to be more creative and innovative in the learning process. In addition, the motivation provided by the principal can increase teachers' work enthusiasm, which ultimately impacts the improvement of learning quality. Therefore, the implementation function is not only focused on executing programs but also on empowering human resources in a sustainable manner.

4. The Role of the Principal in Controlling to Improve Educational Quality

The controlling function represents the final stage of the management process, which aims to ensure that all planned programs are implemented in accordance with predetermined goals. Based on the research findings, the principal at SMA Negeri 1 Dukun conducts regular supervision of learning activities and evaluates various school programs systematically.

This indicates that the principal places strong emphasis on monitoring and evaluation as essential components of educational management. Through continuous supervision, the principal is able to identify potential problems, measure program effectiveness, and ensure that all activities are aligned with the school's objectives. In addition, systematic evaluation

allows the principal to take corrective actions and make informed decisions for future improvements. Therefore, controlling not only functions as a monitoring process but also as a strategic effort to maintain and enhance the quality of education in a sustainable manner.

Supervision is carried out through classroom observation, program evaluation, and performance assessment of teachers and educational staff. This systematic supervision helps the school identify obstacles and implement corrective actions to improve the effectiveness of educational programs. According to (Wayne K. Hoy & Cegil G. Miskel, 2013), supervision in educational management is essential to ensure that educational processes meet established standards and produce high-quality outcomes.

From an analytical perspective, controlling is not only a monitoring activity but also a strategic effort to ensure continuous improvement. Without proper evaluation, school programs may not achieve optimal results. (Husaini Usman, 2013) emphasizes that evaluation provides essential information regarding the success and effectiveness of implemented programs.

Furthermore, international research by (Leithwood et al., 2004) indicates that effective school leadership, particularly through collaborative practices and organizational learning, plays a significant role in improving school performance and student achievement. This highlights the importance of leadership in ensuring accountability and quality assurance in education. In addition, recent studies show that principals with strong managerial competencies are able to improve educational quality through systematic monitoring and evaluation processes. (Iis Aisul Istianah et al., 2025) confirm that effective principal management significantly contributes to institutional performance and school quality improvement.

In addition to functioning as a supervisory tool, the controlling function also serves as a basis for decision-making in improving future programs. Continuous evaluation enables the principal to identify weaknesses and formulate appropriate solutions to enhance educational quality. With an effective control system, the success level of each implemented program can be measured. Therefore, controlling does not only function as an evaluation process but also as a strategic effort to ensure the sustainability of school quality improvement in a systematic and well-directed manner.

5. Implications of the Principal's Role in Improving Educational Quality

Based on the findings of this study, the role of the principal as an educational manager has significant implications for improving the quality of education in schools. The implementation of management functions, namely planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling (POAC), not only contributes to the effectiveness of school management but also plays a crucial role in enhancing teacher performance and the overall learning process.

The first implication can be observed in the planning function. Principals who implement participatory planning are able to develop programs that are more relevant to the actual needs of the school. The involvement of teachers and educational staff in the planning process fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility toward the implementation of school programs. As a result, programs are more likely to be executed effectively and sustainably. This finding is consistent with (Mulyasa, 2018), who emphasizes that effective planning is essential in directing school resources toward achieving educational goals.

Another important implication is related to the organizing function. Effective organizing ensures that tasks and responsibilities are distributed clearly according to the competencies of each individual. This not only minimizes role ambiguity but also enhances accountability among school members. A well-structured organizational system facilitates coordination and communication, which are essential for the successful implementation of

school programs. This result supports (Stephen P. Robbins & Marry Coulter, 2016), who state that organizing plays a key role in improving organizational effectiveness.

The implications of the actuating function are also highly significant. The principal's role in motivating teachers and providing academic supervision directly influences teacher professionalism and performance. When teachers receive continuous support and encouragement from the principal, they are more likely to adopt innovative teaching methods and improve the quality of classroom instruction. This is in line with (Wahjosumidjo, 2013), who highlights that principals act as key drivers in mobilizing school members and improving teacher performance.

Moreover, effective communication between the principal and school members plays a crucial role in the actuating function. Open and transparent communication helps build trust and mutual understanding, which are essential for achieving organizational goals. In addition, providing recognition and appreciation for teachers' achievements contributes to increased motivation and job satisfaction.

The controlling function also has important implications for improving educational quality. Through regular monitoring and evaluation, principals are able to assess the effectiveness of school programs and identify areas that require improvement. Continuous evaluation allows schools to implement corrective actions in a timely manner, thereby ensuring that educational objectives are achieved. This finding is supported by (Wayne K. Hoy & Cegil G. Miskel, 2013), who emphasize the importance of supervision in ensuring the quality of educational processes.

Furthermore, controlling supports data-based decision-making in school management. By utilizing evaluation data, principals can make informed decisions that contribute to sustainable school improvement. In addition, continuous monitoring contributes to the development of a quality assurance system within the school.

The integration of all management functions (POAC) reflects the importance of a holistic approach in educational management. The success of improving school quality does not depend on a single function, but rather on how these functions are interconnected and implemented effectively. This finding is consistent with (Tony Bush, 2011), who explains that effective educational management requires a comprehensive and integrated approach.

In addition, the findings highlight the importance of leadership in supporting managerial practices. Principals are not only required to have managerial competence but also leadership skills that enable them to inspire and motivate school members. This is supported by (Leithwood et al., 2020), who state that effective school leadership has a significant impact on teacher performance and student achievement.

Overall, this study demonstrates that the principal's role as an educational manager has a profound impact on improving school quality. Effective implementation of management functions contributes to the creation of a conducive learning environment, improved teacher professionalism, and better educational outcomes.

Furthermore, the implications of the principal's managerial role can also be observed in the development of a sustainable school improvement system that is adaptive to educational changes. In the current era of rapid transformation, particularly in the context of digitalization and globalization, schools are required to continuously innovate in order to maintain their relevance and competitiveness. The principal, as an educational manager, plays a strategic role in ensuring that school management is not only effective in the short term but also sustainable in the long term. This includes the ability to integrate technology into school management, encourage data-driven decision-making, and foster a culture of continuous improvement among teachers and staff.

Research published in high-impact journals indicates that effective school leadership significantly contributes to sustainable school improvement. (Philip Hallinger, 2011) emphasizes that principals who adopt instructional and transformational leadership practices are more successful in building school capacity and improving learning outcomes. In addition, (Leithwood et al., 2004) highlight that leadership practices that focus on collaboration, professional development, and organizational learning have a direct impact on school effectiveness and student achievement. These findings suggest that the principal's role extends beyond administrative management to include strategic leadership that shapes the direction and future of the school.

Another important implication relates to the strengthening of teacher professional development systems. The principal's ability to design and implement continuous professional development programs ensures that teachers are able to adapt to changes in curriculum, pedagogy, and technology. According to research by (Policy Institute et al., 2018), effective professional development that is supported by strong school leadership can significantly improve teacher competence and instructional quality. This indicates that the principal's managerial role has a long-term impact on the quality of human resources within the school.

Moreover, the integration of managerial functions also contributes to the establishment of a strong organizational culture. A positive school culture characterized by collaboration, trust, and shared commitment plays a crucial role in achieving educational goals. Research shows that principals who actively build organizational culture are more successful in improving school performance (Christopher Day, 2016). This implies that the principal's role is not only technical but also cultural, as they shape values, norms, and behaviors within the school environment.

In addition, the findings of this study imply that effective school management requires a balance between managerial competence and leadership skills. Principals must be able to act as planners, organizers, motivators, and evaluators while simultaneously inspiring and empowering school members. This dual role is essential in creating a dynamic and responsive educational environment. Therefore, strengthening principal competencies through training and professional development programs becomes a strategic priority in improving educational quality.

Overall, these implications reinforce the idea that the principal's role as an educational manager is multidimensional and has a significant impact on various aspects of school quality. Effective management practices not only improve current educational outcomes but also ensure the sustainability of school development in facing future challenges.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be affirmed that the principal's role as an educational manager is a determining factor in improving school quality. The successful implementation of management functions—planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling—demonstrates that effective school management requires not only technical execution but also the strategic integration of these functions.

The study reveals that the principal's ability to implement participatory planning, establish clear organizational structures, foster motivation and effective communication, and conduct continuous evaluation contributes significantly to enhancing teacher performance and creating a conducive learning environment. These findings indicate that the effectiveness of school management is closely related to the principal's capacity to integrate managerial competence with leadership practices.

Furthermore, this study highlights that improving educational quality requires a comprehensive and sustainable management approach. The integration of POAC functions reflects the importance of systematic and continuous efforts in achieving school effectiveness.

Therefore, it is recommended that school principals strengthen their managerial and leadership competencies, particularly in adapting to dynamic educational changes and technological developments. Future researchers are recommended to conduct comparative studies across different schools and educational levels, involve a wider range of stakeholders such as students and parents, and explore the role of digital leadership and technology integration in enhancing school management effectiveness.

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