INDONESIAN JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY SCIENCE
P-ISSN: 2808-5957
E-ISSN: 2808-6724

The Role of School Principal in Improving Education Quality at Smp Negeri 1 Manado

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to comprehensively describe the role of school principals in improving the quality of education at SMP Negeri 1 Manado, which includes their functions as educators, administrators, supervisors, leaders, innovators, and motivators. The research approach used is qualitative descriptive, with data collection techniques including in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation involving school principals, vice principals, teachers, and administrative staff. Data analysis is conducted through three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results of the study show that school principals play an active role in improving the quality of education through various aspects of leadership. As educators, school principals provide examples, facilitate teacher training, and encourage the use of technology in learning. As administrators, principals effectively design, organize, direct, and evaluate school programs through the digitization of administration. In their role as supervisors, principals conduct regular academic supervision to ensure an effective learning process. As leaders, principals demonstrate transformational leadership by fostering a collaborative culture and open communication. In their role as innovators, principals develop various technology-based innovations, such as student discipline applications and the use of digital media in learning, which have been shown to significantly reduce disciplinary violations. Meanwhile, as motivators, principals enhance the work spirit of teachers and students through awards, appreciation, and continuous support.

Keywords:

The Role of the Principal, Quality of Education

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a need that cannot be separated from human life in nurturing the nation's future and forming skilled individuals in their fields. Efforts to improve the quality of education are constantly carried out both conventionally and innovatively. Schools that are well managed in terms of learning and human resources, specifically educators and management, will produce quality outputs (students) who are able to compete in increasingly challenging and complex environments (Arifudin, 2022). Meanwhile, poorly managed schools will not produce good-quality graduates. Many schools lack proper management of their learning systems, resulting in stagnation and an inability to compete in the current education industry (Rusdiana et al., 2025).

As a person capable of bringing change, the duties and responsibilities of the principal include preparing students who have insight and skills to face future problems and responsibilities (Karim et al., 2025). Schools have commitments that must be implemented to foster better development, allowing them to provide services to students at every level of education (Hidayat & Rugaiyah, 2023). Schools have a function in organizing education through their programs, which are mandatory to meet the expectations of students at the elementary, secondary, and tertiary levels (Rizkita et al., 2020). School principals have an

obligation to carry out educational activities that influence individuals within the school environment, enabling them to perform their various tasks responsibly to realize the school's goals (Angga et al., 2022). In implementing their role, the principal is committed to managing the quality of human resources within the school (Rahayuningsih et al., 2022). The leadership role of school principals is highly influential in education, serving as a critical condition for the success of the institution they lead (Radhiah et al., 2022).

To realize a dream school that meets community needs in education, schools or educational institutions require professional human resources that contribute effectively to education. The principal's leadership must be able to mobilize school resources related to planning and evaluating programs, curriculum development, learning, personnel management, facilities and infrastructure, financial resources, student services, school-community relations, and the creation of a positive school climate (Apiyani, 2022).

Several previous studies have examined the role of school principals in improving education quality. For example, research by Anshar (2022) emphasizes the role of school principals as administrators, while Handayani (2022) highlights the importance of their role as motivators. Afrilia Susanti's research (2022) also identified principals' strategies for improving education quality in vocational schools. However, studies that comprehensively combine the six roles of school principals—as educators, administrators, supervisors, leaders, innovators, and motivators—within the context of junior high schools remain limited. This gap is addressed by the present study.

The quality of education involves both the quality of graduates and the provision of services that satisfy stakeholders in education. Graduate quality relates to students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor achievements at satisfactory levels upon completing their education, coupled with a positive personality and readiness to continue higher education. Service quality pertains to meeting the needs of students, teachers, staff, and the community appropriately, ensuring satisfaction for all who receive school services (Marwan, 2022). The role of school principals in managing teacher performance greatly influences the success and sustainability of delivering quality education. Noprika et al. (2020) explained that strategies to improve education include enhancing educator quality through seminars and training, improving students' academic and non-academic achievements, and upgrading school facilities. In this context, principals must facilitate cooperation with relevant parties to formulate long-term plans addressing existing challenges.

School principals play the roles of educators, administrators, supervisors, leaders, innovators, and motivators in enhancing education quality. They hold a strategic position in leading and directing policies and programs aimed at improving education quality. The role of the principal in improving education quality at SMP Negeri 1 Manado is crucial because the principal is responsible for creating a clear educational vision and mission, building quality education, managing relationships with teachers, students, parents, and the community, and ensuring school policies align with educational improvement goals. Principals also strengthen school cultures that promote active, creative, and innovative learning, while ensuring the appropriate application of technology in teaching and learning processes.

Based on initial observations and interviews at SMP Negeri 1 Manado with several teachers, the school is recognized as an educational institution dedicated to producing quality youth and educating the nation's children for national development. The school is a state institution collaborating with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. SMP Negeri 1 Manado is one of the public schools in Manado City, North Sulawesi, playing an important role in fostering quality young generations. It frequently wins championships in academics, sports, and arts in activities organized at local, provincial, and national levels, demonstrating the success of the principal and teachers in achieving school goals.

On the other hand, SMP Negeri 1 Manado faces challenges such as limited resources. Observations show that the school has relatively complete and adequate facilities and infrastructure, including learning spaces, the Principal's Office, Administration Office, Science and Computer Laboratories, UKS, prayer room, BK Room, Religious Room, Student Council Room, Student Cooperative, and Canteen. However, the school lacks a dedicated field, though it has access to public fields located some distance away. Additionally, the computer laboratory is not fully optimized since some devices are nonfunctional and network connectivity is unstable. Regarding teaching quality, some teachers are unfamiliar with digital learning applications like Google Classroom and Canva; the principal has organized training to improve this. Human resource management includes 84 educators (23 males and 61 females) and 6 educational staff (2 males and 4 females). Both groups have varied socio-cultural and educational backgrounds aligned with their primary roles, but some teachers have yet to meet professional certification standards. Moreover, administrative staff numbers are limited relative to over 2,000 students, increasing teachers' administrative workload. The school also faces challenges in curriculum relevance, teacher competence, and continuous assessment of student performance.

Despite these challenges, the principal at SMP Negeri 1 Manado aims to optimize existing resources, improve teacher professionalism, and create a conducive learning environment. Achieving this requires effective policies and strong leadership skills to significantly enhance education quality at SMP Negeri 1 Manado.

Based on the background outlined, the author is interested in conducting research titled: The Role of the Principal in Improving the Quality of Education at SMP Negeri 1 Manado. This study aims to comprehensively describe and analyze the role of school principals as educators, administrators, supervisors, leaders, innovators, and motivators in efforts to improve education quality at SMP Negeri 1 Manado. The results are expected to provide practical benefits for principals and education stakeholders in formulating improvement strategies, as well as academic contributions to education management science, especially regarding effective school leadership.

RESEARCH METHOD

Primary data were obtained directly from informants through observations, interviews, and documentation involving the Principal, Vice Principal, and educators at SMP Negeri 1 Manado. This aimed to understand the principal's role as educator, administrator, supervisor, leader, innovator, and motivator. Secondary data consisted of relevant documents, archives, notes, photographs, and written materials related to the principal's role.

Data collection techniques included observation by directly observing the principal performing duties in these six roles to improve education quality; interviews by asking questions to explore understanding of the principal's roles in education quality improvement; and documentation by gathering and reviewing evidence, records, or reports from archives provided by school officials and educators.

Data analysis involved three qualitative techniques: data reduction by summarizing and categorizing important information relevant to the research problems; data presentation by organizing the information to facilitate drawing conclusions; and conclusion drawing by interpreting the reduced and presented data to make inferences (Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, 2014).

Data validity was ensured through triangulation methods to verify the credibility of findings (Martono, 2016:323-325). Source triangulation involved checking data credibility by comparing information from multiple sources. Technique triangulation validated data by

applying different data collection methods to the same source. Time triangulation tested data credibility by collecting information from the same sources at different times or situations.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

General Description

School Vision

The vision of SMP Negeri 1 Manado is the realization of a generation of faith, noble character, intelligent with technology and caring for the environment.

School Mission

a. Instilling the values of faith and spirituality through religious learning and religious activities that strengthen students' relationship with God
b. Develop noble character through value-based education, positive discipline and consistent role models in the school environment
c. Implement 21st Century learning and learning guidance effectively.
d. Encourage the wise use of technology by integrating digital literacy in learning and guiding students to become responsible users of technology.
e. Integrating project-based learning (PJBL) to develop 21st century skills and increase students' concern for social and environmental issues.
f. Forming an environmentally friendly school culture by implementing energy-saving policies, waste reduction and the involvement of all school residents in maintaining cleanliness.
g. Encourage collaboration between schools, families and communities to create a learning environment that supports student development holistically.

School Objectives

Short-Term Goals

a. To form students who believe, fear God Almighty and have noble character
b. The implementation of teaching and learning activities develops, instills and develops the values of Pancasila student profile
c. The implementation of teaching and learning activities by integrating literacy and numeracy with the wise use of information technology for all subjects

Medium-Term Goals

a. Forming students who have character, achievement and have a person of faith, diligence and obedience in worship and respect each other's differences and love the environment and the nation;
b. Producing graduates who are able to implement the Pancasila Student Profile in real life;
c. Mastering skills in social communication and having a creative and independent spirit that still upholds local culture
d. Making schools a place to develop the process of intellectual, emotional, social, skills development and growth and development of students according to the level of ability and condition of each student who prioritizes the value of mutual cooperation.
e. Have life skills that are able to be obtained with the development of the times.
f. The realization of graduates who are able to contribute to the life of society, nation, and state in world civilization

Description of Research Data

a. The Role of the Principal as an Educator

The role of the principal as an educator in improving the quality of education at SMP Negeri 1 Manado is that the principal provides guidance to educators by supervising the process of monitoring and evaluating learning activities in the classroom and providing constructive feedback to improve the quality of teaching. The principal provides a good example to educators and students in terms of providing good things such as examples of being present on time, controlling and ensuring teachers in the implementation of teaching and learning activities in the classroom. The principal facilitates the training as seen in the principal's efforts to provide space and time for teachers to follow technical guidance on curriculum implementation, training in the use of digital media, and improve competence in project-based assessment. Principals motivate the performance of teachers and students where various forms of motivation, ranging from verbal appreciation to the provision of facilities, have an impact on improving teacher performance and student learning outcomes.

b. The Role of the Principal as an Administrator

The role of the principal as an administrator in improving the quality of education at SMP Negeri 1 Manado is the principal Preparing short, medium, and long-term plans that include academic and non-academic activities in administering all needs in SMP Negeri 1 Manado, as well as the principal Determining the structure of the work organization, division of duties, and responsibilities of staff and teachers in the implementation of the program. In the administration of the principal, provide instructions, motivation, and supervision so that all elements of the school work according to the program that has been prepared. The Principal supervises the implementation of the program and evaluates the results for continuous improvement. The principal and administrative staff and educators at SMP Negeri 1 Manado cooperate related to the administration in the school related to correspondence carried out by administrative staff and other data collection related to assessments used in schools in the curriculum section. Then the administration of the assets in the school is carried out by the deputy principal for facilities and infrastructure. And also related to reports of extracurricular activities carried out in schools.

c. The Role of the Principal as a Supervisor

The role of the principal as a supervisor in improving the quality of education at SMP Negeri 1 Manado, namely the implementation of education at SMP Negeri 1 Manado, makes observations focusing on three main aspects, namely planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning. The principal conducts identification, which is the identification process carried out by the principal, which includes determining the problems, needs, and potentials that exist in the school. The principal provides instructions or explanations regarding learning quality standards, curriculum implementation, active learning strategies, and effective classroom management both in classroom supervision and teachers' meetings. And the principal also provides constructive feedback after conducting class observations or assessments of the lesson plan (RPP). The principal conducts an evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the learning that has been carried out by the teacher. The implementation of education at SMP Negeri 1 Manado has been running very well, but it is necessary to carry out supervision to see, observe the extent of the process of teaching and learning activities, the educational process is ensured to run according to what is planned by the teacher. In this

case, learning supervision is often carried out with the help and cooperation of the deputy principal because the number of educators at SMP Negeri 1 Manado is very large. Supervision at SMP Negeri 1 Manado is supervised in the learning process and supervision is clinical when there are problems found when providing learning.

d. The Role of the Principal as a Leader

The role of the principal as a Leader in improving the quality of education at SMP Negeri 1 Manado is that the principal applies a transformational leadership style where the principal can provide inspiration related to his leadership style in the form of example and responsibility from a school principal, as well as the principal provides motivation and direction at every teacher council meeting to have a positive impact on educators at SMP N 1 Manado. The principal builds positive changes both in terms of the work process and a positive culture.

e. The Role of School Principals as Innovators

The role of the principal as an innovator in improving the quality of education at SMP Negeri 1 Manado, namely at SMP Negeri 1 Manado, continues to innovate with the spirit of collaboration, the spirit of cooperation with educators in the school to create a varied and creative educational process for students, such as for example increasing discipline for students by innovating to issue student discipline applications, this is one of the innovations carried out by junior high school Negeri 1 Manado to reduce the number of violations for students. And also innovations in the learning and teaching process, for example using several applications such as google forms in the implementation of exams, the Canva application when presenting learning materials to students.

f. The Role of the Principal as a Motivator

The role of the principal as a motivator in improving the quality of education at SMP Negeri 1 Manado, namely the principal has a very important role in creating a comfortable and productive educational environment. One of their main tasks is to be a motivator, which is a figure who encourages, inspires, and encourages all school members to achieve their educational goals as well as possible. This task is not just symbolic, but also involves leadership skills that can move human resources in schools towards change and progress.

Data Analysis

a. The Role of the Principal as an Educator

The role of the principal as an educator at SMP Negeri 1 Manado is very significant in improving the quality of education. By running various programs, bringing examples, facilitating teachers, providing supervision, and motivating school principals have a positive impact on the teaching and learning process. Despite the challenges related to the adoption of technology and educational paradigms, collaboration between young and senior teachers is expected to create a better academic environment. School principals as important figures in education must continue to innovate and provide examples to encourage progress in education in the institution.

b. The Role of the Principal as an Administrator

The role of the principal as an administrator in SMP Negeri 1 Manado very influential in improving the quality of education. Through the design, organize, direct, and evaluate**,** The principal is able to create an administration system that is orderly, efficient, and supports the learning process. Efforts to digitize administration and good cooperation between school

principals, teachers, and staff have also accelerated educational services. Although there are still obstacles in the speed of administration, innovations such as the implementation of electronic signatures show the commitment of school principals to improve the effectiveness of management and the quality of education in a sustainable manner.

c. The Role of the Principal as a Supervisor

The role of the principal as a supervisor at SMP Negeri 1 Manado It is very important in improving the quality of education through activities observe, identify, and evaluate learning process. The principal ensures the fit of learning with the curriculum, identifies teachers' needs and weaknesses, and provides direction for continuous improvement. Through the application Academic and clinical supervision Supported by technology, school principals are able to monitor teacher performance objectively and effectively. Despite the challenges in supervising timing, this effort has been proven to improve teacher professionalism and student learning outcomes, thus having a positive impact on the overall quality of education.

d. The Role of the Principal as a Leader

The role of the principal as a leader at SMP Negeri 1 Manado very influential in improving the quality of education through the implementation of Transformational Leadership and Effective communication. The principal is a role model, inspirer, and motivator for teachers and staff to continue to innovate and collaborate. By building open communication and a positive work culture, school principals are able to create a harmonious, professional, and education-oriented learning environment. This participatory and collaborative leadership has proven to contribute greatly to the achievement of superior and competitive educational goals.

e. The Role of the Principal as an Innovator

The role of the principal as a innovator at SMP Negeri 1 Manado is very influential in improving the quality of education through Digital Transformation and Empowering the creativity of teachers and staff**.** Principals encourage the use of technology such as learning monitoring barcodes, apps *Canva*, and the application of discipline that has been proven to significantly reduce student violations. With visionary, collaborative, and humanist leadership, the principal is able to create an innovative culture in the school environment, making technology and creativity the main keys in creating effective, modern, and quality learning.

f. The Role of the Principal as a Motivator

The role of the principal as a motivator at SMP Negeri 1 Manado is very important in improving the quality of education through Appreciation of teacher performance, awarding, and creating a supportive work climate**.** The principal not only gives praise and awards, but also creates a positive and inspiring learning environment for teachers and students alike. With leadership that is oriented towards passion, example, and emotional support, the principal is able to foster the intrinsic motivation of all school residents. This has a direct impact on improving teacher performance, student enthusiasm for learning, and creating a productive and quality school atmosphere.

Discussion

a. **The role of the principal as an educator in improving the quality of education at SMP Negeri 1 Manado**

The role of school principals as educators is very important in improving the quality of education. Bring examples, facilitate training, supervise, evaluate learning implementation and provide motivation. The implementation of these responsibilities, despite facing various challenges, can result in strong collaboration among teachers and improve the overall quality of education. The active involvement of the principal in all these aspects is key to creating a quality and competitive educational institution.

b. **The role of the principal as an administrator in improving the quality of education at SMP Negeri 1 Manado.**

The principal at SMP Negeri 1 Manado has carried out his role as an administrator well, which is ushered in by a deep understanding of his role and responsibilities. Effective coordination with staff and teachers, as well as transparent administrative management, contribute directly to improving the quality of education in schools. However, the existing challenges need to be overcome with better strategies to maintain a more sustainable quality of education. The integration of theory with practice in this context shows the relevance of this research and strengthens the position of school principals as leaders who are able to advance the quality of education.

c. The role of the principal as a supervisor in improving the quality of education at SMP Negeri 1 Manado.

The role of the principal as a supervisor is very influential in improving the quality of education at SMP Negeri 1 Manado. Through effective supervision, both clinical and academic, the principal is able to provide direction, feedback, and create a positive quality culture in the school environment. To overcome the existing challenges, good collaboration between principals, teachers, and the supervision team is needed to support the optimal learning process. The recommendation for schools is to continue to improve the implementation of supervision, involve teachers in the evaluation process, and use technology to monitor performance more effectively.

d. The role of the principal as a leader in improving the quality of education at SMP Negeri 1 Manado.

The role of the principal as a leader is not only in charge of managing, but also inspiring, empowering, and creating a positive work environment. By applying a transformational leadership style, focusing on collaboration, and utilizing evaluation, the principal at SMP Negeri 1 Manado plays a role as an effective agent of change in improving the quality of education. This success is closely related to the ability of the principal to create a conducive work atmosphere and empower all team members in the school.

e. The role of the principal as an innovator in improving the quality of education at SMP Negeri 1 Manado.

The role of school principals as innovators is very important in improving the quality of education. The innovations carried out at SMP Negeri 1 Manado reflect a deep understanding of the needs of the times, proactivity in finding solutions, and the use of technology. In line with the views of Mulyasa, Sagala, and Kurniawan, these findings

confirm that school principals are not only managers but agents of change who are able to create a better learning environment for students.

f. The role of the principal as a motivator in improving the quality of education at SMP Negeri 1 Manado.

The principal plays a vital role as a motivator who is able to influence the educational environment. By applying the right form of motivation, based on existing motivation theory, school principals make a significant contribution to improving the quality of education. A supportive work environment and commitment to the achievement of educational goals are not only driven by formal policies, but also by a collaborative culture built through effective and inspirational leadership.

CONCLUSION

The principal of SMP Negeri 1 Manado played a multifaceted and essential role in enhancing education quality by effectively fulfilling six key functions: as an educator, they planned and supervised academics to foster teaching excellence and collaboration; as an administrator, they managed operations with transparency despite ongoing challenges; as a supervisor, they provided clinical and academic oversight to promote a positive quality culture while integrating technology; as a transformational leader, they inspired and empowered staff to create a supportive work environment; as an innovator, they adopted proactive and technological approaches to improve learning; and as a motivator, they applied motivational strategies to cultivate a collaborative and goal-oriented culture. The integration of these roles was critical to establishing the school as a quality and competitive institution. Future research could explore how technology adoption within these roles evolves over time and its specific impact on sustainable educational improvement in similar school contexts.

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