

## The Role of the Principal in Improving the Quality of Education

Lubabatus Sa'diyah<sup>1</sup>, Mujahidah Mutiara Wahid<sup>2</sup>, Zuhda Ruchama Khoiruna<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Islamic Education Manajement, UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

DOI:

[10.30595/pssh.v24i.1658](https://doi.org/10.30595/pssh.v24i.1658)

Submitted:

June 14, 2025

Accepted:

July 06, 2025

Published:

July 23, 2025

#### Keywords:

Principal, Educational  
Leadership, Quality of  
Learning

### ABSTRACT

*The quality of education in Indonesia is still a major concern in national development. One of the key factors influencing the quality of education at the educational unit level is the role of the principal. The principal not only carries out administrative functions, but is also required to be an instructional leader who is able to create positive changes in the school environment. This study aims to conceptually examine the role of the principal in improving the quality of education, with a focus on leadership, school management, and coaching of educators. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach based on literature studies. Data sources were obtained from relevant literature, either in the form of books, scientific articles, or previous research results that discuss the topic of educational leadership and school quality management. The results of the study show that principals who apply a transformative and participatory leadership style are able to increase teacher work motivation, encourage learning innovation, and create a school culture that supports quality improvement. In addition, the principal's ability to supervise academics, formulate a strategic vision, and build partnerships with various stakeholders also determines the success of the education quality improvement program. The conclusion of this study confirms that the success of schools in achieving quality standards is highly dependent on the effectiveness of the principal's role. Therefore, strengthening the capacity of principals through ongoing training and policies that support school autonomy is an urgent need. This research is expected to be a reference in designing strategies to improve the quality of education based on school leadership.*

*This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).*



#### Corresponding Author:

**Lubabatus Sa'diyah**

UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto

Jl. A. Yani No.40A, Karanganjing, Purwanegara, Purwokerto Utara, Banyumas Jawa Tengah 53126

Email:

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Leadership is an important aspect that greatly determines the success of an institution. A leader has a central role in managing planning, organizing, implementing, supervising, and evaluating, so that all aspects of management can run well. In the context of educational institutions such as schools, the principal is the main figure who leads and influences the quality of education. Good leadership from the principal will have a significant impact on improving the quality of the school.

One of the important roles of the principal is to be a mentor for teachers, helping them improve aspects of learning that are not yet optimal and maintaining things that are already going well. In addition, in important activities such as school accreditation, the principal holds the main responsibility from the planning stage to

implementation. Thus, the success of an educational institution cannot be separated from the effectiveness of the principal's leadership in carrying out his duties and responsibilities comprehensively and professionally (Yadi Sutikno, Hosan, 2022).

As a professional official in a school organization, the principal is not only responsible for managing organizational resources, but is also required to work harmoniously with teachers in supporting the achievement of academic goals. In a quality-oriented education system, the role of the principal includes developing input, managing the process, and supervising educational output. Input includes human resources, materials, and organizational structures that must be managed efficiently to support the learning process.

An effective education process depends on leadership that is able to create a conducive work climate, motivate teachers, and develop innovative learning practices. For this reason, the principal needs to adopt a transformational leadership style that empowers and inspires all components of the school. By being a good role model and facilitating the participation of all school residents, the principal plays an important role in creating an adaptive, responsive, and quality education system (Alya Junisa Khasana, Epita, Mifta alhazemi, 2025).

## **2. LITERATUR REVIEW**

### **2.1 The Principal as the Main Driver of the School**

The principal has a strategic role in driving the entire school elements towards achieving educational goals. As an institutional leader, the principal is not only responsible for administrative aspects, but also has a moral and professional responsibility in fostering, guiding, and directing teachers and students to create an optimal learning environment. The success of schools in improving the quality of education is largely determined by the leadership demonstrated by the principal in decision-making, resource management, and development of teaching staff.

Effective principal leadership is not only determined by skills in administrative management, but also by their ability to foster a student-centered learning culture that is oriented towards improving the quality of education as a whole. In the context of national education policy, principals are required to master four areas of learning leadership, namely developing a safe and inclusive learning environment, planning and implementing student-centered learning, reflecting on the learning process, and actively involving parents as strategic partners in education.

These four dimensions are part of the principal competency model in the School Mover Program which explicitly positions the principal as a leader of learning transformation, not just an institutional administrator (Rahayuningsih Suesthi, 2022). In line with that, the role of the principal as a motivator has proven to be crucial in improving teacher performance. Research shows that principals who are able to build emotional relationships, give appreciation, and create a conducive and supportive work atmosphere significantly influence teacher enthusiasm, discipline, and productivity in supporting the learning process (M. Ayi Abdul Majid, 2024).

This kind of leadership is rooted in transformational principles that emphasize the importance of a shared vision, encouragement of innovation, teacher empowerment, and open and participatory communication. Principals who implement this approach not only become decision makers, but also become source of inspiration and agent of change who is able to build a progressive and competitive school environment (Cettra Shandilia Latunusa Ambawani, Irwan Saputra, Thitha Meista Mulya Kusuma Bambang Sumardjoko, 2024).

### **2.2 Effective Educational Leadership**

Educational leadership is the ability to direct, influence, and motivate school members to achieve learning goals collectively. Effective leadership styles, such as transformational and instructional leadership, have been shown to improve teacher performance and encourage a positive academic culture. Principals who have effective leadership will be better able to create a conducive work climate, increase teacher participation in learning development, and foster a collaborative spirit in the school environment.

Leadership plays an important role in education because it greatly influences the creation of an effective learning process in schools. A principal must not only be able to influence his subordinates, but also be fully responsible for the direction and goals of the educational institution. Effective, strategic, and sustainable leadership is needed to drive positive change. In carrying out their roles, educational leaders function as direction makers, who set strategic goals by considering external conditions and the future of the school.

He also acts as an agent of change, who is able to anticipate global developments and encourage innovation through the participation of school residents. In addition, leaders act as spokespersons, build external networks and communicate the vision clearly. Finally, leaders become coaches who guide school members to understand current conditions, direction of goals, and how to achieve them in a real and focused manner (Sinaga et al., 2022). Improving the Quality of Learning through the Role of the Principal.

The quality of learning is an important indicator in assessing the success of the educational process in schools. The principal has a central role in ensuring that learning activities take place effectively and efficiently through academic supervision, support for teacher competency development, and provision of facilities that support the teaching and learning process. Principals who carry out supervision and evaluation functions

optimally can create a conducive learning environment that is oriented towards achieving maximum learning outcomes.

The quality of education produced cannot be separated from the active role of the principal in guiding, directing, and empowering all elements of the school in an integrated manner. On the other hand, various aspects such as curriculum, learning methods, leadership, management, administration, assessment, evaluation, and certification are part of the ever-evolving education reform. Globalization encourages not only the birth of a national mindset, but also the demand to prepare competent human resources who are able to compete at the global level.

This reform includes a shift from centralized to decentralized management, increased government involvement, a focus on efficiency and accountability, and the emergence of education as a commodity influenced by school competition. This change requires the principal to have an adaptive and visionary leadership style, with high standards in facing external challenges, strengthening internal consolidation, and managing resources optimally.

In this context, the principal plays a strategic role in preparing a plan to improve the quality of education through identifying the needs and potential of the school, as well as involving the community based on the vision, mission, and institutional values (Purnomo & Anshory, 2020). The principal has a significant role in efforts to improve the quality of education through the implementation of various strategic policies.

Some of these include providing motivation to teachers to take part in training through the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (PMM), implementing regular supervision, and providing facilities and infrastructure that can support the creation of more innovative and effective learning. To support this role, there are five types of assessments that can be used as a reference in assessing and improving the quality of education in schools.

- a. Evaluation of student achievement that takes into account conformity with national norms and religious values using a value scale-based assessment system.
- b. Assessment of individual student abilities.
- c. Evaluation of the quality of the learning process in schools.
- d. Assessment of the quality of the teaching materials provided.
- e. Evaluation of the overall performance of the school as a single educational institution (Fauzizah et al., 2025).

### 3. METHOD

This article was written using a literature review method with a focus on the analysis of scientific journal articles. All information in the article was obtained from national and international journals relevant to the topic of the principal's role in improving the quality of education. Data collection was conducted by searching for journal articles through scientific sites such as Google Scholar and other educational journal portals. The selected articles were articles that were in accordance with the topic, published in the last 5-10 years, and discussed principal leadership and the quality of learning in schools. The data from the journals were then analyzed descriptively-qualitatively. This means that the author read, understood, and concluded the contents of the journals to explain how principals can play a role in improving the quality of education in schools.

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The literature review conducted in this article shows that the role of the principal is one of the most vital factors in improving the quality of education at the elementary and secondary education levels. In this context, the principal is no longer seen as merely an administrative manager, but as a learning leader who has a broad influence on the entire educational process in the school. The visionary, transformative, and strategic leadership of the principal greatly determines the direction of school development as a whole. An ideal principal is able to manage human resources effectively, develop learning strategies that are relevant and adaptive to the needs of the times, and create a conducive learning environment that supports student success.

This task requires a deep understanding of the vision and mission of education, as well as the ability to translate them into real programs that can be implemented in the field. The principal is also expected to be the main driver in building a positive work culture in the school. Through his leadership, the principal facilitates the creation of harmonious cooperation between teachers, education personnel, students, and parents. In this situation, the principal acts as a driving force for change who is able to inspire, empower, and provide clear direction for all members of the school community.

Transformative leadership is one of the most relevant approaches in responding to today's educational challenges. Through this approach, the principal is required to encourage positive changes in the mindset and behavior of teachers and students. For example, in a public school in Sleman Regency, the principal initiated a program lesson study based on teacher collaboration. This program not only encourages teachers to work together in designing learning, but also to practice reflection and evaluation of learning that has been carried out.

Teachers become more open to input, dare to experiment with new methods, and become more

competent in developing active learning strategies. The results are clearly visible in the increase in student engagement in class, as well as better learning outcomes overall. In addition, academic supervision is an inseparable part of the principal's role. Supervision is not only carried out to monitor teacher performance, but also as an ongoing coaching effort to improve the quality of teaching.

Principals who carry out the supervisory function with a dialogic and coaching approach are able to create productive professional relationships with teachers. Through classroom observation activities, post-teaching discussions, and constructive feedback, principals can help teachers overcome obstacles in the learning process and encourage innovation that is in accordance with the characteristics of students. Not only supervision, the evaluation carried out by the principal also includes various aspects.

Important aspects in the education system. Evaluation of student achievement is not only done quantitatively, but must also consider broader values, including national norms and religious values held by the community. In addition, the principal must be able to measure the development of individual student abilities, assess the quality of the teaching and learning process, evaluate the suitability of teaching materials, and conduct a comprehensive assessment of the school's performance as an institution.

For example, at SMA Negeri 1 Jember, the principal uses digital platforms such as Google Classroom to monitor teacher and student activities in real time. Data obtained from the platform is then analyzed to identify learning obstacles and develop more targeted intervention strategies. This approach increases the effectiveness of supervision and accelerates the decision-making process, and shows that the principal plays an active role in utilizing technology to improve quality.

In relation to improving teacher competency, the principal has the responsibility to ensure that teachers get adequate opportunities to develop themselves professionally. Support for training, workshops, seminars, and the use of digital platforms such as the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (PMM) is a concrete form of the principal's commitment to improving the quality of teaching staff. At SD IT Al-Hidayah, for example, the principal made a policy that requires every teacher to take part in training at least once a semester.

Training results then shared through internal discussion forums, creating a vibrant learning culture in the school environment. Teachers not only gain knowledge, but are also motivated to continue to develop and apply innovations in their teaching practices. On the other hand, the principal's responsibility also includes the management of educational resources and facilities. The availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure is an important factor in creating a quality learning process.

The principal must be able to identify facility needs through data-based planning and establish good communication with related parties, including local government and the community. For example, at SMP Negeri 3 Semarang, the principal together with the school management team conducted a survey of teachers and students to find out the most urgent facility needs. The results of this survey were used to design the allocation of the BOS budget appropriately.

This step succeeded in presenting a digital library, strengthening the science laboratory, and building technology-based classrooms. These new facilities have a significant impact on students' enthusiasm for learning and increase the effectiveness of learning overall. Changes in education policy in the era of globalization also require school principals to have high adaptability. Education reforms that lead to decentralization provide space for schools to be more autonomous in managing activities. And its resources.

However, this autonomy must be balanced with increased accountability and transparency in decision-making. Principals must develop strategic planning based on an analysis of real needs in schools and involve various stakeholders in the planning and implementation process. At SMK Negeri 2 Tangerang, for example, the principal collaborates with local industries in designing a curriculum based on the needs of the world of work. Through the teaching factory program, students not only learn theory, but are also directly involved in industrial production and services.

This approach makes schools more relevant to the needs of the times and at the same time strengthens the relationship between educational institutions and the world of work. No less important, the principal must also be able to build a participatory and collaborative culture in the school. The success of a school does not only depend on one leader, but on the involvement of all parties.

A principal who successfully creates an inclusive and open environment will encourage the birth of initiatives from teachers, students, and even parents. At SD Negeri 1 Banjarnegara, the principal involves parents through the "Parents' Class" program which aims to support children's learning at home. This program strengthens cooperation between schools and families, while fostering a sense of shared responsibility in shaping student character and achievement.

Based on the description, it is clear that the role of the principal is very important in realizing quality education. Principals who carry out leadership with a transformative, adaptive, and collaborative approach can bring real change to the school environment. They are not just administrative managers, but true leaders who shape the direction of education and open up space for all school residents to grow together to achieve common goals.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The principal plays a very strategic role in efforts to improve the quality of education in Indonesia. In a dynamic and ever-evolving education system, the principal no longer only plays the role of an institutional administrator, but also as a transformational leader who is able to create real change in the school environment. The success of educational institutions in achieving quality standards is closely related to the effectiveness of the principal's leadership in managing resources, developing strategies, and building a quality-oriented organizational culture.

Principal leadership encompasses complex and interrelated dimensions. He/she must be able to determine the strategic direction of the school through the formulation of a clear vision and mission, and align it with the long-term goals of the educational institution. In his/her capacity as an agent of change, the principal is required to be sensitive to global changes and developments in the education system, and be able to manage innovation and adaptation through targeted strategies.

Successful leadership will be reflected in the increasing enthusiasm of teachers, the active involvement of students in learning, and the formation of a healthy and progressive school culture. The principal also has an important responsibility in carrying out the function of academic supervision and evaluation. Through planned and coaching supervision, the principal can help teachers develop their professional and pedagogical competencies.

Learning evaluations that include dimensions of student achievement, quality of teaching materials, and effectiveness of the teaching and learning process are important indicators for measuring the success of the education system in schools. When this function is carried out with a humanistic and data-based approach, the principal can formulate concrete and measurable quality improvement policies. In addition, teacher professional development is a priority that cannot be ignored.

Principals need to provide space and facilities for teachers to continue learning, developing, and implementing innovative learning approaches. The use of technology and support for government programs such as the Merdeka Mengajar Platform are part of a strategy that can encourage the birth of a learning ecosystem that is relevant to the challenges of the times. In the context of resource management, the principal must be able to read the real needs of the school and respond to them through participatory and transparent budget planning. Supportive facilities, both physical and digital, are the foundation for creating a fun and meaningful learning environment.

Furthermore, the principal is required to have adaptive and visionary leadership in responding to changes in national education policy, including in terms of decentralization, increased accountability, and competition between schools. Finally, the involvement of the school community in the educational process is a key factor in the success of the principal's leadership. A collaborative culture between teachers, students, parents, and the wider community is a reflection of inclusive and participatory leadership. Principals who succeed in building a strong partnership network will be better able to create a relevant, responsive, and sustainable education system.

Thus, the principal is a key element in improving the quality of education holistically. Strengthening the capacity of principals through continuous training, providing autonomy in decision-making, and recognizing their strategic role in the education system are important steps that must be encouraged in national education policies.

## REFERENCES

- Alya Junisa Khasana, Epita, Mifta alhazemi, A. (2025). THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS. 5(1), 18-27.
- Implementation of Transformational Leadership of Principals as Movers in Kindergarten. 5(4), 4810-4823.
- Fauzizah, I., Rahma, T., Pratama, A., Setiawati, M., & Hayati, N. (2025). Journal of Management and Education Science The Role of Principal Leadership in Improving the Quality of Education Through Independent Curriculum Journal of Management and Education Science. 02(01), 227-231.
- M. Ayi Abdul Majid. (2024). Principal Leadership as a Motivator: Efforts to Improve Teacher Performance. Andragogy Journal of Education and Learning, 4(2), 138-152. <https://doi.org/10.62288/creativity.vli1.5>
- Purnomo, W. S. A., & Anshory, I. (2020). The Role of the Principal in Improving the Quality of Education at Muhammadiyah Elementary School 4 Malang. Journal of Educational Policy and Development, 7(1). <https://doi.org/10.22219/jkpp.v7i1.12036>
- Rahayuningsih Suesthi, A. R. (2022). Efforts to Improve the Competence of School Principals as Learning Leaders in the School Mover Program in Nganjuk. 2(02), 208.



- Sinaga, R. S., Turnip, H., Parded, R., & Hutagalung, T. 1.. (2022). The Role and Function of Leadership in Effective and Excellent Education. *Journal of Social and Humanities Education*, 1(4), 161.
- Suryadi, I., Pamungkas, R. W. P., Wahyudi, F. S., & Setiawan. T. (2023). The role of effective leadership in improving the quality of educational management. *Journal of International Multidisciplinary Research*, 1(2).
- Yadi Sutikno, Hosan, and I. (2022). The Role of the Principal in Improving the Quality of Education. 3(2), 17. Burhanuddin, A. (2021). Improving Students' Oral Communication Skills in Public Speaking Through Individual Presentation Task. *Jurnal Lingua Idea*, 12(2), 159. <https://doi.org/10.20884/1.jli.2021.12.2.4002>