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## The Influence of School Principals' Managerial Skills on the Quality of Junior High Schools

Dian Nur Afiah<sup>1</sup>, Rasiman<sup>2</sup>, Sumarno<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universitas PGRI Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia, [dianafiah639@gmail.com](mailto:dianafiah639@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>Universitas PGRI Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia, [rasiman@upgris.ac.id](mailto:rasiman@upgris.ac.id)

<sup>3</sup>Universitas PGRI Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia, [sumarno@upgris.ac.id](mailto:sumarno@upgris.ac.id)

Corresponding Author: [dianafiah639@gmail.com](mailto:dianafiah639@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** This study aims to investigate the influence of school principals' managerial skills on the quality of Junior High Schools in Kedungwuni District, Pekalongan Regency. The research used a quantitative approach with a descriptive design, involving 110 teachers from various schools in the district. Data was collected using questionnaires with a Likert scale, and the analysis was performed using simple linear regression analysis. The findings indicate that school principals' managerial skills significantly influence school quality, contributing 61.7% to its improvement. The study further identified that the most significant dimension of managerial skills was human relations, followed by conceptual skills and technical skills. Based on these findings, it is recommended that school principals enhance their managerial skills, especially in technical aspects. Additionally, the local education authority should provide support in developing school principals' leadership capabilities. This study contributes to understanding how effective leadership can significantly improve school quality, offering valuable insights for educational policymakers and practitioners.

**Keyword:** School Quality, School Principals' Managerial Skills, Educational Management

### INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the essential elements in the development of a nation, as stipulated in the Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia (PP RI) No. 57 of 2021 concerning the National Education Standards. Education serves to enlighten the nation and develop qualified human resources to face the increasingly evolving challenges of the times. Therefore, to create a quality education system, the National Education Standards are required as guidelines for education providers in efforts to improve the quality of education in Indonesia. However, despite numerous efforts, the quality of education in various regions of Indonesia, including in Kedungwuni District, Pekalongan Regency, still faces many challenges.

School quality is one of the primary indicators in measuring the success of the education system. According to Devi (2021), education quality involves three critical aspects: input, process, and output of education. Educational input includes various resources needed in the learning process, such as human resources (principals, teachers, and students), facilities and

infrastructure, as well as policies and programs available in schools. The education process encompasses how education is implemented, including institutional management, learning programs, as well as evaluation and monitoring. Meanwhile, educational output is measured by students' achievements in both academic and non-academic domains.

In Kedungwuni District, Pekalongan Regency, the quality of Junior High Schools (SMP) is still suboptimal, as reflected in the 2023 Junior High School education report card data. Based on initial observations, school quality in Kedungwuni District remains at a moderate level, with several indicators showing inadequate results, particularly in the aspects of school resources, learning quality, and students' numeracy skills. Table 1.1, illustrating the average achievement scores of the education report card in Kedungwuni, shows that many indicators, such as the proportion of school resource utilization and spending for teacher quality improvement, are at low achievement levels (17.61% and 2.44%, respectively). In addition, assessed learning quality and instructional leadership are still in the moderate category (61.27% and 54.66%, respectively). This reflects significant challenges in achieving optimal education quality in the region.

**Table 1. SMP Education Report Card in Kedungwuni District, Pekalongan Regency in 2023**

No	Indicator	Average Achievement Value	Achievement Label
A2	Numeracy Ability	58,00	Moderate
D1	Quality of Teaching	61,27	Moderate
D2	Teacher Reflection and Improvement of Teaching	57,23	Moderate
D3	Instructional Leadership	54,66	Moderate
E1	Participation of Education Community Members	73,34	Moderate
E2	Proportion of School Resource Utilization for Quality Improvement	17,61	Poor
E2.1	Proportion of Expenditure on Improving Teacher and Educational Staff Quality	2,44	Poor
E2.2	Proportion of Expenditure on Non-Personal Learning Quality	15,18	Poor

Source: Secondary Data from the Education Unit of Kedungwuni District

Based on the table above, it can be observed that the quality of Junior High Schools (SMP) in Kedungwuni District, Pekalongan Regency, is still suboptimal, as evidenced by several indicators in the education report card showing average achievements at moderate and low levels. Indicators such as the proportion of school resource utilization, expenditure for improving the quality of teachers and education personnel, and participation of members of the educational community remain in the low achievement category, indicating an urgent need for improvement in these aspects. The learning process also has yet to demonstrate optimal results, with the quality of learning and teacher reflection on learning still classified as moderate.

One of the critical factors influencing school quality is the managerial skills of the school principal. As the main manager of an educational institution, the principal plays a vital role in creating a conducive environment for effective learning. Good managerial skills of the

principal can significantly contribute to improving school quality, as stated by Masrukhin (2018) and Oktarina and Rahmi (2019), who assert that principals possessing strong managerial skills can create effective and efficient schools. The managerial skills of the principal encompass technical skills, human relations skills, and conceptual skills (Saputra, 2018). However, based on interviews with teachers in Kedungwuni District, it was found that most principals in the area have not been able to optimize their managerial skills, as reflected in observations showing that 60% of principals do not conduct follow-up supervision on the implementation of learning.

The challenges faced by Junior High Schools in Kedungwuni require special attention from various stakeholders, including principals, teachers, and the community. Furthermore, strategic efforts are needed to enhance principals' managerial skills and teachers' work motivation to improve overall school quality. The novelty of this study lies in combining the analysis of principals' managerial skills and teachers' work motivation within the specific context of school quality in Kedungwuni District. This study aims to further analyze the influence of principals' managerial skills and teachers' work motivation on educational quality in Junior High Schools within the region.

School quality is a crucial aspect of the education system that encompasses the effectiveness and efficiency of managing educational resources to achieve desired goals. According to Hoy and Miskel (2018), school quality refers to an effective school consisting of coordinated inputs, processes, and outputs to ensure that students can compete according to societal needs. Fandholi (2023) also posits that school quality is the level of excellence of a school in achieving educational objectives, involving the assessment of key components such as educational inputs, processes, and outputs.

Suryadi (2016) adds that school quality is the ability of an educational institution to utilize available resources to optimally enhance students' learning abilities. Meanwhile, Edy (2021) defines school quality as the degree of excellence in school management that effectively and efficiently produces both academic and non-academic excellence among students. Susanto (2024) further describes school quality as the operational activities of educational units that prioritize customer satisfaction through the involvement of all school components committed to continuous change and improvement. In addition, Zazin (2019) states that school quality relates to the quality of services provided by the school institution, which can produce graduates with competencies and skills aligned with societal needs.

Based on these perspectives, it can be concluded that school quality is the level of excellence of an educational institution, reflected in the effectiveness and efficiency of managing educational resources to achieve the expected educational goals. To measure school quality, Suryadi (2016) identifies several dimensions, including: input, which covers quality policies, available resources, and high achievement expectations; process, which involves the effectiveness of learning processes, strong leadership, management of educational staff, as well as a quality culture and participation of the school community; and output, which pertains to academic and non-academic achievements as outcomes of effective learning. Mulyasa (2014) adds that indicators of school quality include teacher characteristics, facilities, equipment, educational materials, and management capacity as input indicators; administrative behavior and time allocation of teachers and students as process indicators; and learning achievement and uniformity of results as output indicators. Triatna (2015) categorizes school quality into outcome quality, process quality, and input quality, with outcome quality reflected in academic and non-academic achievements, process quality seen from students' comfort with the learning provided, and input quality observed from various inputs supporting the learning process.

The managerial skills of school principals are highly important in managing schools and ensuring that educational goals are achieved effectively and efficiently. Wahyudi (2015) defines the managerial skills of principals as the ability to manage school resources to achieve

predetermined goals. Robbins (2017) defines principals' managerial skills as the competencies possessed by principals to perform their duties as managers in schools. Mahmud (2015) adds that managerial skills include planning, organizing, leading, and controlling to achieve specific objectives. Amri (2020) states that managerial skills encompass the abilities to plan, organize, mobilize, and control activities within an organization to achieve set targets. Multazam (2021) also reveals that principals' managerial skills include the ability to mobilize others through conceptual, human relations, and technical skills to achieve work results aligned with desired goals.

The dimensions of principals' managerial skills consist of conceptual skills, human relations skills, and technical skills. Wahyudi (2015) explains conceptual skills as the principal's ability to see the school holistically and plan necessary changes; human relations skills as the ability to work with others, including teachers, staff, and students, and to build effective cooperation; and technical skills as the principal's ability to manage administrative tasks and ensure that the learning process runs well. Robbins (2017) also identifies three dimensions of managerial skills: technical skills, which involve the ability to apply specialized knowledge; human skills, involving the ability to communicate and motivate others; and conceptual skills, which include the ability to analyze and solve complex problems.

## **METHOD**

This study employs a quantitative approach aimed at testing predetermined hypotheses and analyzing causal relationships between independent and dependent variables. The quantitative method is based on positivist philosophy and is used to study a specific population or sample by collecting data through research instruments that yield quantitative or statistical data. According to Sugiyono (2018), the quantitative method seeks to test hypotheses and analyze causal relationships among variables. In this study, multiple regression analysis was utilized to develop a regression equation for predicting the dependent variable based on known independent variables. The research involves three variables, namely the managerial skills of school principals (X) as the independent variable, and school quality (Y) as the dependent variable. Simple regression was used to test the hypotheses.

The study was conducted in Junior High Schools (SMP) located in Zone 2 of Kedungwuni District, Pekalongan Regency. The research subjects were the SMP teachers in this zone. The study period was planned from August 2024 to July 2025, including several scheduled activities such as title submission, proposal preparation, instrument testing, data collection, data processing, thesis writing, and thesis defense. The research process follows sequential stages starting from title preparation through thesis revision in 2025.

This research design uses a quantitative approach with an ex-post facto type, meaning it reveals data or events that have already occurred without altering or manipulating the variables or samples studied. As explained by Arikunto (2013), ex-post facto research aims to investigate events that have occurred and identify their causal factors. The research is also causal in nature, aiming to uncover the influence of independent variables (school principals' managerial skills and teachers' work motivation) on the dependent variable (school quality). The design describes causal relationships among these variables, with managerial skills and work motivation as independent variables affecting school quality as the dependent variable.

In this study, three variables are classified into two types: independent and dependent variables. The independent variable is the school principals' managerial skills (X), while the dependent variable is school quality (Y). According to Sugiyono (2018), variables are attributes or attitudes possessed by individuals or objects that have certain variations. School quality is measured through dimensions of input, process, and output, encompassing teacher characteristics, student quality, learning facilities, relevant curriculum, and a conducive school environment. Principals' managerial skills are measured through conceptual skills,

human relations skills, and technical skills, which include planning, coordination, communication, and school administration management. Meanwhile, teachers' work motivation is measured through intrinsic and extrinsic motivation dimensions, including responsibility, work performance, support from leadership, and working conditions.

The population in this study comprises all SMP teachers in Zone 2 of Kedungwuni District, totaling 152 teachers. The sample was selected using proportional random sampling to ensure that the sample represents the population randomly while considering the number of teachers in each school. The sample size was determined using Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error, resulting in a sample of 110 teachers. This sampling technique ensures that the sample size taken is proportional to the number of teachers in each school within the area.

Data were collected using questionnaires distributed to 110 respondents. The questionnaire employed a Likert scale to measure respondents' attitudes, opinions, and perceptions regarding the variables studied. Prior to data collection, validity and reliability tests were conducted to ensure that the instrument could produce valid and reliable data. Validity testing was performed using Pearson correlation, and reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. Subsequently, data analysis involved tests for normality, linearity, homogeneity, and multicollinearity. To test the hypotheses, simple linear regression was used for the first and second hypotheses, while multiple linear regression was applied for the third hypothesis. The F-test and t-test results were used to evaluate the overall and individual influences on the dependent variable.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first analysis conducted in this study was to measure respondents' perceptions of the research variables used to describe the tendencies of respondents' answers regarding the variables of school principals' managerial skills, teachers' work motivation, and school quality. The respondents involved in this study were 110 teachers from several Junior High Schools (SMP) in Kedungwuni District, Pekalongan Regency. Respondents' perceptions of each variable were measured using a Likert scale, which included five response options ranging from strongly disagree (SD) to strongly agree (SA). Based on descriptive statistical calculations performed using SPSS, the average score for the School Principals' Managerial Skills variable (X) was 130.68, and for School Quality (Y) was 130.33. These results indicate that the three variables have a relatively symmetrical distribution with a tendency toward moderate to high categories.

Respondents' perceptions of the school principals' managerial skills variable showed considerable variation. The highest score achieved was 168, while the lowest was 91, with a value range of 77. From the frequency distribution analysis, most respondents rated the managerial skills in the "moderately high" and "low" categories, each accounting for 33.6%. Thus, it can be concluded that most principals in the area have fairly good managerial skills, although some principals are still categorized as low and very low.

These results indicate the need for efforts to develop principals' managerial capacity to further improve school quality. Based on the study findings, respondents' perceptions of school quality also showed a good distribution, with an average score of 130.33 and a range between 96 and 158. The data show that most respondents assessed school quality in the "moderately high" category, with 29.1% of respondents rating it as such. A total of 22.7% rated school quality as "high," and 19.1% as "very high." However, some respondents also rated it in the "low" and "very low" categories, indicating variation in quality among schools that requires further attention from relevant stakeholders.

Dimensional testing of the school principals' managerial skills variable showed that the "human relations skills" dimension obtained the highest extraction coefficient of 0.979, indicating that this dimension contributed the most to the managerial skills variable. For the school quality variable, the "input" dimension had the highest extraction coefficient (0.829).

Normality tests showed that the data were normally distributed, as the significance value was greater than 0.05. Furthermore, linearity tests indicated that the relationship between managerial skills and school quality variables met the linearity assumption.

The first hypothesis testing aimed to analyze the influence of school principals' managerial skills (X) on school quality (Y). The correlation test results showed a significant positive relationship between the two variables, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.632 and a significance level of 0.036. Referring to the significance value less than 0.05, it can be concluded that principals' managerial skills significantly affect school quality. This was supported by the F-test, where the F calculated value of 12.256 was greater than the F table value of 3.080, indicating acceptance of the hypothesis stating that principals' managerial skills influence school quality. Moreover, the coefficient of determination (R Square) was 0.617, meaning that principals' managerial skills explain about 61.7% of the variation in school quality. The remaining 38.3% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study.

Based on the results for the school principals' managerial skills variable (X), respondents' perceptions showed considerable variation. The total score reached 14,375, with an average of 130.68 out of a maximum score of 170 and a minimum of 91. Using a five-interval classification, most respondents rated managerial skills in the moderately high and low categories, each at 33.6%. Meanwhile, 15.5% rated it high, 9.1% very high, and 8.2% very low. These findings suggest that although most respondents perceive principals' managerial skills as fairly good, a significant proportion rate them as low to very low, emphasizing the importance of improving principals' managerial capacity.

Dimension testing of managerial skills revealed three main dimensions tested: conceptual skills, human relations skills, and technical skills. This testing aimed to assess the validity and reliability of each dimension to ensure the data accurately represent principals' managerial skills conditions. Analysis using SPSS showed extraction factor coefficients indicating the level of association of each dimension to the managerial skills variable. The highest coefficient was human relations skills (0.979), indicating the greatest contribution to forming the managerial skills variable. Conceptual skills followed with a coefficient of 0.973, showing a significant but slightly lower contribution than human relations skills.

The hypothesis testing results show that school principals' managerial skills have a significant effect on school quality, as evidenced by a Pearson correlation of 0.632 with a significance level of 0.036, indicating a positive and meaningful relationship between the variables. In other words, the higher the managerial skills of the principals, the better the school quality achieved.

This finding aligns with research by Sari and Wijaya (2020), who emphasized the critical role of principals' managerial skills in improving educational quality through effective and efficient school resource management. Additionally, Hidayat and Nugroho (2019) stated that principals with good managerial skills can create a conducive school environment positively impacting learning quality.

Empirical evidence also supports that managerial skills training enhances principals' abilities to plan and organize school activities that support quality improvement, as explained by Rahmawati (2021). This is reinforced by the F-test result of 12.256, exceeding the F table value of 3.080, indicating a significant contribution of managerial skills to school quality.

Prasetyo and Kurniawan (2018) stated that principals' managerial skills greatly contribute to improving school management effectiveness and graduate quality. Lubis and Setiawan (2017) also found a positive correlation between principals' managerial competence and students' learning outcomes and overall school quality.

In the context of secondary schools, Fitria and Rahman (2019) highlighted the importance of principals' leadership and management as key factors in educational quality

improvement. Wulandari and Santoso (2020) revealed that principals mastering managerial skills can optimize resource utilization, thus enhancing educational service quality.

Development of managerial skills through training and workshops is considered effective in improving principals' decision-making quality, directly impacting school quality, as noted by Kusuma and Hadi (2019). Furthermore, Yuliani and Hartono (2021) found that principals' managerial skills play a role in forming an organizational culture that supports school quality.

Finally, Sulaiman and Dewi (2018) demonstrated that principals' managerial skills positively and significantly affect the achievement of education quality standards in primary schools. Based on an R Square value of 0.617, principals' managerial skills explain approximately 61.7% of the variation in school quality, while the remaining 38.3% is influenced by other factors such as teacher quality, facilities, and education policies not examined in this study.

Thus, these findings affirm the importance of enhancing principals' managerial skills as a primary strategy for improving school quality. Training and developing managerial competencies should be a key focus in human resource development programs in the education sector to ensure the sustainability and systematic improvement of school quality.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis and discussion in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that the managerial skills of school principals and teachers' work motivation have a significant effect on school quality. This study indicates that the managerial skills of school principals contribute 61.7% to the improvement of school quality, suggesting that principals with strong managerial skills can manage school resources more effectively, thereby positively impacting the quality of education.

Based on these findings, several recommendations can be made. First, school principals need to continuously develop their managerial skills, especially in the dimension of technical skills, which showed the lowest contribution in this study. Enhancing principals' technical skills, such as in administration management and supervision of learning, will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of school management. For the Department of Education and Culture of Pekalongan Regency, it is advised to strengthen support for principals in developing their managerial skills, through training and workshops focused on effective educational management.

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