

PRINCIPAL STRATEGY FOR OPTIMIZING SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT IN A FOUNDATION-RUN HIGH SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

School-based management (SBM) requires school-level autonomy to be supported by participation, accountability, role clarity, and the capacity to use limited resources. This qualitative single-case study examines how a principal described and enacted SBM in a foundation-run high school in Nabire, Papua. The principal was the sole primary informant. The available research record indicates that data were collected through an in-depth interview, observation, and document review, although the fieldwork period and detailed collection procedures were not documented. A framework-guided thematic analysis organized the account around planning, resource organization, program implementation, monitoring and evaluation, enabling and constraining conditions, and proposed responses. The principal reported an annual work program, formal task allocation, supervision and teacher-development activities, and periodic evaluation meetings. Implementation was constrained by uneven participation, limited resources, overlapping duties, weak program indicators, and uneven understanding of SBM. Because the research record did not include verbatim quotations or traceable observation and document identifiers, the findings are interpreted as a descriptive managerial account rather than verified evidence of school-wide effectiveness. The study proposes that formal routines become more participatory and learning-oriented when shared understanding, decision rights, role clarity, measurable indicators, and foundation-school accountability are aligned. The findings are analytically transferable to comparable settings but are not statistically generalizable.

Keywords: foundation-run school, principal strategy, qualitative case study, school-based management, stakeholder participation

INTRODUCTION

School-based management (SBM) decentralizes selected decisions to the school level so that programs, resources, and stakeholder participation can respond to local needs. International experience indicates that autonomy alone is insufficient: its value depends on accountability, local capacity, transparent authority, and meaningful participation (Bandur, 2012a; De Grauwe, 2005; Gertler et al., 2012; Hanushek et al., 2013). In Indonesia, SBM has been associated with school councils, participatory planning, partnership, and the redistribution of managerial responsibility, while implementation continues to vary across institutional and regional contexts (Bandur, 2012a, 2012b, 2018; Andriyan & Yoenanto, 2022; Setiawan et al., 2022).

The principal occupies a central coordinating position within this governance arrangement, but contemporary leadership research cautions against treating leadership as the actions of one individual. School improvement is shaped by the interaction of instructional, transformational, collaborative, and distributed practices, as well as by the organizational conditions through which those practices influence teachers and learning (Bush & Glover, 2014; Day et al., 2016; Hallinger, 2011; Kilinc et al., 2024; Leithwood et al., 2020; Spillane et al., 2004). Evidence further suggests that leadership affects outcomes indirectly through professional community, teacher capacity, program coherence, and attention to teaching and learning (Grissom et al., 2013; Louis et al., 2010; Robinson et al., 2008).

Indonesian studies similarly emphasize the principal's role in connecting leadership, school culture, teacher responsibility, resource management, and community participation (Abdullah, 2018; Anjarrini & Rindaningsih, 2022; Ginanjar & Herman, 2019; Ilham, 2021; Nur et al.,

2022). Research in coastal, island, and other resource-constrained contexts also shows that coordination, communication, supervision, infrastructure, and stakeholder engagement are recurring implementation concerns (Arjanto & Telussa, 2024; Lestari et al., 2024; Sedubun et al., 2024). However, evidence from international and Indonesian studies indicates that the effects of autonomy and participation are context dependent and require adequate institutional capacity rather than simple administrative devolution (Bandur, 2018; De Grauwe, 2005; Hanushek et al., 2013).

Conceptual and Analytic Framework

The study uses a managerial-process framework in which the principal's strategy is examined through planning, organizing, program implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. Three cross-cutting conditions—stakeholder participation, resource availability, and foundation governance—are used to interpret why formal arrangements may or may not become participatory, coordinated, and learning-oriented. This framing is consistent with research that locates leadership practice in interactions among leaders, followers, organizational routines, and situational conditions rather than in formal position alone (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Spillane et al., 2004). It also recognizes that teacher collaboration can support improvement only when structures, purposes, and conditions enable substantive joint work (Meyer et al., 2022; Vangrieken et al., 2015).

Within this study, optimization does not mean empirically demonstrated improvement in student outcomes. It refers to the extent to which formal managerial routines exhibit five observable qualities: meaningful participation, clear roles, feasible resource allocation, measurable program indicators, and documented feedback and follow-up. The framework is an analytic organizer rather than a tested causal model. It generates four interpretive propositions: formal consultation requires shared understanding and decision rights; organizational structures require role clarity and workload alignment; programs require indicators and evidence-based follow-up; and principal discretion depends on clear authority, accountability, and resource commitments within the foundation-school relationship.

The literature reviewed provides limited explanation of how these conditions interact in a foundation-run private high school in Papua. Such a setting may involve dual accountability to the school community and the foundation, restricted financial and infrastructural capacity, and uneven participation among school actors. Preliminary observations indicated uneven teacher involvement in decision-making, constrained resource management, limited coordination, and monitoring that remained largely administrative. These concerns establish a practical and scholarly problem concerning the transition from formal managerial routines to participatory and learning-oriented SBM, but they do not establish the effectiveness of the principal's strategy or improvement in educational quality.

Accordingly, the study aims to describe how the principal enacts SBM through planning, organizing, program implementation, and monitoring and evaluation; identify the enabling and constraining conditions that shape these strategies; and derive context-sensitive actions for strengthening participation, role clarity, resource use, and monitoring. The analysis is explicitly exploratory and descriptive, and its contribution is a context-rich account and a set of propositions for comparable resource-constrained, foundation-run settings rather than a claim of broad generalizability or causal impact.

METHOD

Research Design and Case Boundaries

This study employed a qualitative single-case design with a descriptive orientation. The institutional boundary was one foundation-run high school in Nabire, Papua. The institution is

referred to as the case school because the available research record does not document consent for institutional identification. The unit of analysis was the principal's strategy within the school's SBM process, rather than the effectiveness of SBM across all stakeholders or measured changes in educational quality. The temporal boundary was the period in which the interview, observation, and document review were conducted, although the exact dates were not reported in the available record.

The available record does not specify the school size, staffing profile, detailed foundation-school governance arrangement, resource baseline, or relevant community and geographic characteristics. These omissions constrain thick description, reproducibility, and assessment of transferability. No contextual values are inferred; the missing details should be verified against the original field records before publication.

Participant and Research Instruments

The principal was purposively selected as the sole primary informant because of the formal responsibility for planning, resource allocation, program implementation, supervision, and evaluation. This sampling decision provides access to a managerial perspective but does not directly represent the views of teachers, administrative staff, foundation representatives, the school committee, students, or community members. Findings concerning those actors are therefore attributed to the principal unless a supplementary source is explicitly identified. The researcher served as the primary instrument and used an interview guide organized around six domains: planning, organizing, program implementation, monitoring and evaluation, enabling and constraining conditions, and proposed responses. The research record identifies three data-collection techniques—an in-depth interview with the principal, observation, and document review—intended to provide complementary information about the same managerial processes.

Data Collection and Analysis

The record does not report the number or duration of interview sessions, setting and mode, language, recording and transcription procedures, interview-guide development or review, number and duration of observations, observation focus and field-note procedure, or the categories, dates, and selection criteria of documents reviewed. Consequently, the data-collection process cannot be fully appraised or replicated from the manuscript alone.

Data analysis followed the broad activities described by Miles et al. (2014): data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The available record states that material was selected, simplified, and grouped according to the six predetermined domains. The analysis is therefore characterized as primarily deductive and framework-guided. The six domains functioned as provisional categories; reported patterns were summarized, compared with the conceptual framework, and interpreted in relation to relevant literature. No claim of theoretical saturation is made because the study reports only one primary informant. The record does not identify who performed the coding, whether a codebook was used, how raw excerpts were assigned to categories, how alternative interpretations or negative cases were handled, or what audit-trail materials were retained.

Trustworthiness, Reflexivity, and Ethics

The research record states that interview, observation, and documentation were compared, that data were collected at different times, and that member checking was conducted with the principal. Triangulation is treated as source comparison rather than automatic proof of validity. Credibility would require evidence showing whether sources converged, diverged, or added distinct information; transferability depends on contextual description; and dependability and

confirmability require an audit trail linking claims to source material and analytic decisions. The record does not state when repeated collection occurred, what material was returned during member checking, whether the informant requested changes, the researcher's prior relationship with the school, or whether reflexive memoing or peer debriefing was used.

A single-case study involving a principal and a potentially identifiable institution requires explicit reporting of ethical review or exemption, institutional permission, voluntary informed consent, confidentiality, and secure data handling. To reduce identifiability, the school is anonymized in this manuscript. The available record does not state whether ethical approval or exemption was obtained, how school and foundation permission was secured, whether informed consent was documented, or how recordings, transcripts, field notes, and documents were stored, accessed, de-identified, retained, and disposed of. These details must be resolved from the original study records before publication.

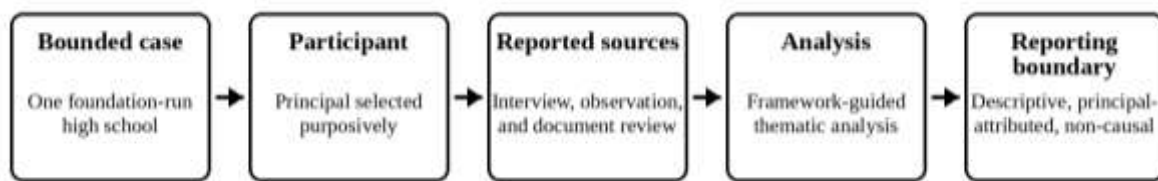


Figure 1. Methodological sequence and evidentiary boundary of the study

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Evidence Basis and Reporting Convention

The principal was the only primary informant. Observation and document review were reported as supplementary techniques, but the available manuscript does not contain verbatim interview quotations, observation excerpts, document titles or dates, or source identifiers. The results are therefore attributed to the principal and presented as descriptive and provisional. Statements about teachers, foundation governance, coordination, or school-wide implementation should not be read as verified multi-actor findings.

Planning: Formal Programming with Uneven Participation

According to the principal, SBM planning was organized through an annual work program aligned with the school's vision and mission. Selected teachers participated in work meetings, and the principal attempted to align school priorities with foundation policies when preparing strategic plans. Routine coordination and program prioritization were described as mechanisms for improving planning. The same account indicated that participation was uneven because not all teachers were actively involved and some staff members had limited understanding of SBM. Resource constraints also affected the range and quality of planned activities.

The finding suggests a gap between formal consultation and substantive participation. International and Indonesian SBM research indicates that participatory decision-making depends on access to information, decision rights, local capacity, and sustained stakeholder involvement rather than attendance at meetings alone (Bandur, 2012a, 2018; Gertler et al., 2012). Research on collaborative leadership and teacher collaboration similarly shows that joint work becomes consequential when participants share purposes, influence decisions, and assume responsibility for implementation (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Vangrieken et al., 2015). The available evidence nevertheless does not demonstrate that planning was fully participatory or that the work program improved educational outcomes.

Organizing: Formal Task Allocation with Coordination Gaps

The principal reported that the school had an organizational structure and assigned responsibilities for curriculum, student affairs, facilities, infrastructure, administration, and other functions. Task allocation was intended to reflect staff competencies, and routine coordination was used to review implementation. However, the principal also described overlapping duties, insufficient coordination across functional areas, and limited facilities and infrastructure. Formal structure therefore did not consistently translate into role clarity or operational capacity.

This pattern supports a distributed view of leadership in which organizational charts are less important than the actual interactions through which work is coordinated (Spillane et al., 2004). It is also consistent with leadership research emphasizing that no single model is sufficient across contexts and that effective practice requires alignment between structures, roles, resources, and organizational purpose (Bush & Glover, 2014; Leithwood et al., 2020). In this case, claims about workload overlap and coordination remain the principal's managerial assessment because task descriptions, organizational records, and other stakeholder accounts were not supplied.

Program Implementation: Multiple Activities but Weak Success Indicators

The principal identified academic supervision, teacher training, disciplinary reinforcement, motivation, and coaching as the main strategies used to implement school programs. These activities were intended to support teachers and maintain program continuity. Implementation was reportedly constrained by limited budgets and uneven teacher participation. The principal further acknowledged that some programs did not have clear success indicators, making objective review difficult.

The distinction between completing activities and demonstrating improvement is important. Leadership research indicates that principals influence teaching and learning through coherent combinations of goal setting, strategic resourcing, teacher development, instructional support, and organizational culture rather than through isolated events (Day et al., 2016; Hallinger, 2011; Robinson et al., 2008). Observational evidence also suggests that principal time devoted to coaching, evaluation, and educational program development can be more consequential than routine administrative work (Grissom et al., 2013). Adaptive and innovation-oriented leadership studies likewise stress the need to connect managerial initiatives to organizational capacity and coherent improvement processes (Akhyar et al., 2025; Elmanisar et al., 2024). The present evidence supports the existence of managerial activities but not their effectiveness, causal contribution to teacher performance, or impact on student learning.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Predominantly Administrative Supervision

The principal reported routine supervision of teaching activities and teacher administration, periodic evaluation meetings, and feedback. These practices indicate that monitoring was embedded in school management. At the same time, the principal characterized supervision as largely administrative and not consistently focused on improving the quality of learning. Evaluation was also described as insufficiently systematic and continuous.

Research on leadership for learning suggests that monitoring contributes to improvement when it is connected to instructional evidence, teacher learning, feedback, and follow-up rather than compliance alone (Hallinger, 2011; Louis et al., 2010; Robinson et al., 2008). School culture and professional-development studies likewise emphasize collaboration, sustained feedback, and conditions that support teacher learning (Herliani et al., 2025; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Permatasari et al., 2023; Ridho, 2019). The case documents the reported existence of

monitoring activities but provides no outcome indicators showing that monitoring improved instruction or school performance.

Enabling and Constraining Conditions

The principal identified leadership commitment, a defined work program, and support from some teachers as enabling conditions. Constraining conditions included limited resources, low or uneven stakeholder participation, overlapping roles, and incomplete understanding of SBM. These conditions appeared interdependent: limited shared understanding weakened participation, role overlap reduced coordination, and resource constraints limited the feasibility of planned programs. Foundation policy also formed part of the planning context because the principal sought to align school needs with foundation direction.

International evidence cautions that school autonomy produces different effects depending on institutional capacity, accountability, and system conditions (De Grauwe, 2005; Hanushek et al., 2013). Research on governing bodies and financial accountability further indicates that delegated authority must be accompanied by collaborative oversight and transparent responsibility (Basson & Mestry, 2019; Dwangu & Mahlangu, 2021). Indonesian research similarly identifies capacity building, stakeholder partnership, and clarity of devolved authority as central to SBM implementation (Bandur, 2012b, 2018; Hardiansyah, 2022; Palah et al., 2022). The present study adds the provisional proposition that foundation governance may shape the principal's discretion and access to resources, but the available evidence does not show whether the foundation primarily enabled, constrained, or balanced school autonomy.

Analytic Propositions and Scholarly Contribution

Four propositions are derived from the case rather than tested as causal hypotheses. First, routine invitations and coordination meetings are insufficient for participatory SBM when teachers lack shared understanding or clearly defined opportunities to influence decisions. Second, formal organizational structures do not ensure coordinated implementation when duties overlap, reporting lines are unclear, and workload is not periodically reviewed. Third, managerial activities remain difficult to evaluate when programs are not linked to needs, responsible actors, resources, observable indicators, data sources, and scheduled follow-up. Finally, in a foundation-run school, the principal's discretion and capacity to mobilize resources depend on explicit delegation, transparent approval processes, and reciprocal accountability between the school and foundation.

The study's contribution is contextual rather than universal. It identifies a configuration in which formal planning and organizational structures coexist with uneven participation, overlapping duties, resource scarcity, weak indicators, and monitoring that remains administrative. This configuration extends prior Indonesian SBM research by drawing attention to foundation governance as an underexamined layer between school-level autonomy and external accountability (Bandur, 2012a, 2018; Lestari et al., 2024). Transferability remains limited because the study lacks thick contextual description, traceable multi-source evidence, and additional stakeholder perspectives.

Table 1. Summary of reported findings and interpretive boundaries

Domain	Principal-reported finding	Evidence available	Interpretive boundary
Planning	Annual programming and coordination were reported, while teacher participation and SBM understanding were uneven.	Principal account; observation and document review were reported but not identified.	Participation and effects cannot be independently verified.

Domain	Principal-reported finding	Evidence available	Interpretive boundary
Organizing	A formal structure and task allocation existed, but overlapping duties and coordination gaps were reported.	No organizational-chart identifier, task document, meeting record, or observation excerpt.	Role clarity and workload overlap remain a managerial assessment.
Implementation	Supervision, training, discipline, motivation, and coaching were reported, with budget, participation, and indicator constraints.	No schedule, training record, program file, budget record, quotation, or observation excerpt.	Activities are described; effectiveness and outcomes are not established.
Monitoring and evaluation	Supervision and evaluation meetings occurred, but monitoring remained mainly administrative.	No instrument, minutes, feedback record, quotation, or observation excerpt.	Instructional effects and follow-up are unverified.
Contextual conditions	Commitment and a work program enabled implementation; resources, participation, role overlap, and SBM understanding constrained it.	No traceable foundation policy, resource record, or source comparison.	Governance-resource-participation relationships remain propositions.

Practical and Policy Implications

The findings support differentiated actions rather than a generic recommendation for greater collaboration. As shown in Table 2, the principal should institutionalize a documented participatory-planning cycle; teachers and unit coordinators should clarify roles and workload; program teams should establish indicators and evidence sources; foundation management should clarify delegated authority and approval timelines; and the school committee, community, and education authorities should support consultation, resources, and learning-oriented supervision. These actions and indicators are prospective guidance derived from the reported constraints; they were not tested in the present study.

Table 2. Proposed action matrix for strengthening school-based management

Responsible actor	Priority action	Minimum support and priority	Observable progress indicator
Principal	Use a documented participatory-planning cycle with agendas, attendance, decisions, responsibilities, deadlines, and follow-up.	Meeting templates and decision log; immediate.	Units represented and decisions completed by the named deadline.
Teachers and unit coordinators	Develop a role and workload matrix and conduct cross-unit coordination reviews.	Job descriptions, workload data, and coordination time; immediate.	Reduced unresolved role overlaps and timely completion of unit responsibilities.
Principal and program teams	Specify need, output, indicator, data source, target, and review date for each major program.	Simple monitoring template and program records; high.	Major programs with complete indicators and documented review evidence.

Responsible actor	Priority action	Minimum support and priority	Observable progress indicator
Foundation management	Clarify delegated authority, approval timelines, and resource-prioritization criteria.	Written delegation framework and approval workflow; high.	Documented authority, shorter approval time, and priority needs addressed.
School committee and community	Establish scheduled consultation and transparent support mechanisms.	Consultation calendar and disclosure records; medium.	Consultations, documented agreements, and completed community-supported actions.
Education authorities or development providers	Provide targeted SBM and learning-oriented supervision development with follow-up coaching.	Facilitators, materials, coaching schedule, and supervision instruments; medium.	Training completion, improved supervision plans, and documented coaching follow-up.

Limitations and Future Research

The study has substantive evidentiary and reporting limitations. It examines one school and uses the principal as the sole primary informant, creating risks of self-report, social-desirability, and managerial-perspective bias. The absence of teacher, staff, foundation, committee, student, and community perspectives prevents a multi-actor assessment of participation, coordination, and governance. Although observation and document review were reported, the manuscript does not provide verbatim quotations, traceable source identifiers, or a source-comparison record. The fieldwork period, data-collection procedures, coding process, reflexive safeguards, audit trail, and ethics and data-governance procedures are also not documented. In addition, the study includes no longitudinal design, comparison case, pre-post evidence, management-performance indicators, or student-learning outcomes and therefore cannot establish effectiveness or causal improvement.

Before publication, the missing procedural and ethical details should be verified against the original field records and traceable evidence should be provided for each theme. Future research should use multi-informant sampling, explicit coding and audit-trail procedures, and a source-by-theme matrix that records convergence and divergence. Comparative case studies could examine how different foundation governance arrangements shape principal discretion and stakeholder participation, while longitudinal studies could test whether participatory planning, role clarification, learning-oriented supervision, and indicator-based monitoring lead to observable changes in program implementation, teacher practice, and student learning.

CONCLUSION

This qualitative case describes the principal's reported strategy for SBM through planning, organizing, program implementation, and monitoring and evaluation in a foundation-run high school. Optimization was defined as the extent to which formal routines were participatory, coordinated, indicator-based, accountable, and learning-oriented rather than as measured improvement in educational outcomes. The principal reported an annual work program, task allocation, supervision, teacher-development activities, and periodic evaluation, while also identifying uneven participation, limited resources, overlapping duties, incomplete

understanding of SBM, weak program indicators, and predominantly administrative monitoring. The evidence therefore supports a descriptive conclusion that managerial routines were present but does not demonstrate school-wide effectiveness or causal improvement in educational quality. The contextual contribution is expressed through four propositions: participation requires shared understanding and decision rights; formal structures require role clarity and workload alignment; program management requires measurable indicators and evidence-based follow-up; and principal discretion in a foundation-run school depends on clear delegation, accountability, and resource commitments. These propositions and the proposed practical actions require verification through traceable multi-source evidence and future multi-informant and longitudinal research.

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