

Research Article

Principal Leadership Strategies to Improve Education Report Outcomes: A Case Study of SD Inpres Sanrangan

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the principal's strategy in utilizing Education Report Card data as a basis for planning school quality improvement at the Sanrangan Elementary School Technical Implementation Unit (UPT SD Inpres), Pallangga District, Gowa Regency, and to describe the principal's strategy in implementing academic supervision and teacher mentoring to improve the achievement of Education Report Card indicators at the UPT SD Inpres Sanrangan, Pallangga District, Gowa Regency. This study uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. The research subjects include the principal, 3 lower grade teachers, and 3 upper grade teachers. Data collection techniques are carried out through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation studies. Data analysis is carried out systematically through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions with data validity tests using source and technique triangulation. The results of the study indicate that the principal's strategy in utilizing Education Report Card data is carried out through collaborative analysis of school achievement indicators with teachers, setting improvement priorities based on the school's real needs, and integrating the analysis results into school quality improvement program planning. In addition, the principal's strategy in implementing academic supervision and teacher mentoring is implemented in a planned and sustainable manner by referring to Education Report Card indicators that still need to be improved. Coaching-based supervision, providing constructive feedback, and mentoring in improving learning planning and implementation have been proven to contribute positively to improving teacher competency and have an impact on improving the achievement of Education Report Card indicators at the UPT SD Inpres Sanrangan, Pallangga District, Gowa Regency.

Keywords: Academic Supervision; Education Report; Principal Strategy; School Quality Improvement; Teacher Mentoring.

Received: 11 September 2025

Revised: 18 October 2025

Accepted: 26 November 2025

Published: 30 November 2025

Curr. Ver.: 30 November 2025



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1. Introduction

Improving educational quality has become a central agenda in many countries, particularly in the context of accountability-based education systems that rely on standardized performance indicators. One such instrument is the Education Report (*Rapor Pendidikan*), which functions as a comprehensive tool for assessing school quality based on multiple dimensions, including literacy, numeracy, and school climate. In Indonesia, the Education Report is designed not merely as an administrative output but as a data-driven mechanism to support continuous school improvement and evidence-based decision-making at the school leadership level. However, the effectiveness of this instrument largely depends on how school leaders interpret, utilize, and integrate the data into strategic planning and instructional management processes.

At the local level, preliminary observations conducted in July 2025 at SD Inpres Sanrangan, Pallangga District, Gowa Regency, revealed that several key indicators of the Education Report particularly reading literacy, numeracy, and school safety climate had not yet reached the expected standards set by the Ministry of Education. Despite various improvement efforts reported by the school leadership, the Education Report outcomes did not demonstrate a significant and consistent upward trend. This condition indicates a potential misalignment between the strategies implemented by the school principal and their actual impact on improving educational quality. Such a gap highlights the need for a deeper and more systematic analysis of principal leadership strategies in relation to Education Report outcomes within the real context of primary schools.

In elementary education settings, the principal plays a pivotal role as an instructional leader responsible for mobilizing school resources toward improving student learning outcomes. Initial discussions with the principal of SD Inpres Sanrangan indicated that existing strategies tended to prioritize administrative compliance and reporting requirements, while academic supervision and sustained teacher mentoring were not yet implemented systematically. This orientation contrasts with the view that effective school principals are those who strategically strengthen learning processes through continuous academic supervision and professional teacher development. The imbalance between administrative focus and instructional leadership is therefore suspected to be one of the contributing factors affecting the school's Education Report performance.

Leadership strategies in schools extend beyond internal policy formulation and encompass the principal's capacity to engage teachers and educational staff in a shared commitment to improving learning outcomes. Effective principal leadership is characterized by the ability to formulate a data-informed vision of school quality and translate it into measurable and sustainable programs. Nevertheless, observations at SD Inpres Sanrangan suggest that Education Report data have primarily been treated as administrative documentation rather than as reflective tools for instructional improvement. As a result, the potential of Education Report data to guide targeted interventions and enhance key performance indicators remains underutilized, limiting its contribution to meaningful school improvement.

Conceptually, the Education Report was developed as a reflective and planning instrument to support data-based school improvement. The Ministry of Education emphasizes that Education Report data should inform school planning, strategic decision-making, and program evaluation processes. However, preliminary interviews conducted in July 2025 revealed that limited teacher understanding of Education Report indicators, coupled with the absence of structured reflection forums, hindered its effective use. This situation suggests that the principal's strategy in integrating Education Report data into school management practices requires further strengthening to ensure its function as a driver of instructional quality improvement rather than a mere reporting obligation.

Principal leadership strategies aimed at improving Education Report outcomes are closely linked to managerial functions and academic supervision practices. Academic supervision that is well-planned and continuously implemented is widely recognized as a key strategy for enhancing instructional quality and student learning outcomes. Nevertheless, empirical findings at SD Inpres Sanrangan indicate that supervision activities remain incidental and are not grounded in systematic analyses of teacher needs or Education Report evaluation results. This condition has implications for the limited development of teacher competencies in implementing literacy- and numeracy-oriented instruction, which are central indicators in the Education Report framework.

Elementary schools in Gowa Regency face complex challenges, including limited learning resources, diverse teacher competencies, and varying student socio-economic backgrounds. In such contexts, principals are required to adopt adaptive and contextual leadership strategies to manage schools effectively and innovatively. Without a thorough analysis of how leadership strategies are formulated, implemented, and evaluated, efforts to improve Education Report outcomes risk being misdirected and ineffective. Leadership strategies that are not aligned with school needs and contextual realities are unlikely to produce sustainable improvements in educational quality.

Previous studies have emphasized that data-driven principal leadership can foster positive changes in school culture and instructional quality. Similarly, the success of educational quality improvement initiatives is highly dependent on leadership strategies that integrate planning, implementation, and evaluation based on educational quality data. However, empirical evidence examining how principals strategically utilize Education Report data, particularly in the context of academic supervision and teacher mentoring at the elementary school

level, remains limited. This empirical gap underscores the need for context-specific studies that explore principal leadership strategies in relation to Education Report outcomes.

Responding to this gap, the present study aims to analyze the strategies employed by the principal of SD Inpres Sanrangan in utilizing Education Report data as a foundation for school quality improvement planning and in implementing academic supervision and teacher mentoring to enhance key Education Report indicators. By examining leadership strategies within a real school context, this study seeks to contribute empirically to the discourse on data-driven school leadership and provide practical insights for principals, teachers, and education policymakers in strengthening the use of Education Report data for sustainable educational improvement.

2. Literature review

The school principal is widely recognized as the central figure responsible for integrating administrative governance, instructional leadership, and school quality improvement. In contemporary educational contexts, principals are no longer positioned solely as administrative managers, but as leaders who shape teaching practices and learning outcomes. This expanded role emphasizes the principal's responsibility for creating a conducive learning environment and strengthening instructional quality through systematic supervision and professional development. From a managerial perspective, principals are also expected to perform core management functions planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation to ensure that school programs operate coherently and sustainably. As schools operate within increasingly complex policy and social environments, leadership effectiveness is further associated with visionary, collaborative, and adaptive capacities (Suyanto & Jihad, 2021). More recent discussions highlight a shift toward data-informed leadership, positioning principals as strategic actors who rely on educational quality data, including the *Rapor Pendidikan*, to guide decision-making and continuous improvement processes.

Within the school management system, the principal occupies a strategic position as the highest formal authority at the school level. This position entails responsibility for translating institutional vision and policy into operational programs that reflect school needs. Managerial authority alone, however, is insufficient to drive meaningful improvement. Instructional leadership becomes critical when principals engage directly in monitoring teaching practices, supporting teacher development, and aligning instructional efforts with school goals. In addition, principals function as intermediaries between national education policies and school-level implementation, ensuring that policy directives are contextualized and practically enacted. Ultimately, principals are held accountable for school quality outcomes, including compliance with standards and sustained improvement in student learning.

The multifaceted nature of principal leadership is reflected in the wide range of roles attached to the position. Principals are expected to act as educators who strengthen teacher professionalism, managers who ensure organizational effectiveness, and supervisors who guide instructional improvement through structured academic supervision. Beyond these technical roles, principals also shape school culture through leadership and motivation, fostering shared commitment to quality improvement. Innovation further becomes a key leadership dimension as schools are required to adapt to policy changes and evolving student needs. These interconnected roles suggest that leadership effectiveness depends on the principal's ability to balance administrative responsibilities with instructional priorities, as an excessive focus on administration may weaken the impact of leadership on learning improvement.

Principal Leadership Strategies in School Management

Principal leadership strategies are commonly understood as deliberate and systematic approaches used to guide schools toward achieving educational quality objectives. Effective strategies begin with the formulation of a clear vision and are operationalized through planned programs and actions. Such strategies require alignment between vision, resource mobilization, and implementation processes to ensure that improvement efforts are coherent and sustainable. Leadership strategies that prioritize learning improvement place strong emphasis on academic supervision, teacher professional development, and the creation of a supportive school climate. In this sense, strategy is not merely a statement of intent, but a practical framework that integrates managerial functions with instructional leadership.

The effectiveness of leadership strategies is determined less by the quantity of programs and more by the quality of execution and adaptability. Clear goals, systematic planning based on school needs, and teacher empowerment are essential elements of effective strategies.

Continuous monitoring and evaluation enable principals to assess progress and adjust actions in response to emerging challenges. Flexibility and adaptability further allow leadership strategies to remain relevant in changing policy and contextual environments. Without these characteristics, leadership strategies risk becoming procedural rather than transformative.

Leadership strategies may also be viewed as an integrated management cycle encompassing planning, organizing, implementation, evaluation, and innovation processes. Planning establishes direction, organizing ensures appropriate role allocation, implementation mobilizes human and material resources, and evaluation provides feedback for improvement. Innovation sustains long-term relevance by enabling schools to respond proactively to new demands. This integrated perspective highlights that leadership strategies must be examined holistically, as weaknesses at any stage can undermine overall effectiveness.

Rapor Pendidikan as a School Quality Instrument

The *Rapor Pendidikan* is conceptualized as a data-based instrument designed to support accountability and continuous school improvement. Rather than serving as a static reporting mechanism, the report is intended to function as a reflective tool that informs planning and improvement efforts. It provides objective information on school performance, including student learning outcomes, instructional quality, and school climate. From an accountability perspective, the *Rapor Pendidikan* enables schools to demonstrate performance transparently and to identify areas requiring improvement. Its indicator-based structure supports data-driven planning and strategic decision-making aimed at enhancing educational quality.

The functions of the *Rapor Pendidikan* extend beyond evaluation to include reflection, planning, and strategic decision-making processes. Through systematic analysis of report data, schools can identify strengths and weaknesses and formulate targeted improvement strategies. The report also informs school work plans and resource allocation decisions, ensuring alignment between identified needs and improvement initiatives. By communicating performance data to stakeholders, the *Rapor Pendidikan* further promotes shared responsibility for school quality improvement. The indicator framework of the *Rapor Pendidikan* reflects a multidimensional conception of educational quality. Literacy and numeracy indicators emphasize reasoning and problem-solving skills, while instructional process indicators focus on the quality of teaching and learning practices. Indicators related to school safety, diversity, and inclusivity highlight the importance of a supportive and equitable learning environment. Management quality indicators assess leadership effectiveness, data-based planning, and stakeholder involvement. This comprehensive structure implies that leadership strategies aimed at improving the *Rapor Pendidikan* must address instructional, organizational, and cultural dimensions simultaneously.

Principal Strategies in Utilizing Rapor Pendidikan

Effective utilization of the *Rapor Pendidikan* requires leadership strategies that transform data into actionable improvement initiatives. The process begins with comprehensive analysis of report data to identify priority areas for improvement. Data-based planning then translates analysis results into targeted programs and interventions. Given limited school resources, effective leadership requires prioritization of indicators that have the greatest impact on overall quality. Improvement efforts ultimately depend on teachers' instructional practices; therefore, report data must inform academic supervision, reflective dialogue, and professional development activities. Continuous monitoring and evaluation support evidence-based adjustments, while stakeholder engagement strengthens collective commitment to improvement initiatives.

Constraints and Efforts in Implementing Principal Strategies

Despite the potential of data-based leadership, schools often face constraints that limit effective utilization of the *Rapor Pendidikan*. Common challenges include limited understanding of educational quality data, weak cultures of data-based reflection, and insufficient teacher capacity to translate indicators into instructional practice (Minsih, 2023). Administrative workload further constrains principals' ability to focus on instructional leadership, while limited resources and stakeholder collaboration reduce the effectiveness of improvement efforts. To address these challenges, leadership efforts must focus on strengthening data literacy, enhancing academic supervision, and reducing excessive administrative burdens. Continuous teacher professional development aligned with report findings supports instructional improvement, while collaborative engagement with stakeholders fosters shared responsibility for school quality. Regular monitoring and evaluation ensure that improvement strategies remain responsive and sustainable over time.

3. Proposed Method

This study adopted a qualitative research approach using a case study design to explore in depth the strategies employed by a school principal to improve Education Report (*Rapor Pendidikan*) outcomes. The research was conducted at SD Inpres Sanrangan, Pallangga District, Gowa Regency, South Sulawesi, Indonesia, over a three-month period from October to December 2025. Participants were selected purposively and consisted of seven individuals, including the school principal as the main informant, three lower-grade teachers, and three upper-grade teachers. Data were collected through non-participant observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis, allowing the researcher to capture leadership practices, instructional supervision processes, and school improvement efforts within their natural context. The researcher served as the primary instrument, supported by interview guides, observation sheets, and document review protocols to ensure systematic data collection.

Data analysis was conducted concurrently with data collection following an interactive qualitative analysis process involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing with continuous verification. Trustworthiness was ensured through source triangulation by comparing information from principals, teachers, and documents, method triangulation across interviews, observations, and documentation, and time triangulation through data collection at different stages of the study. Member checking was also employed to validate interpretations and confirm the accuracy of findings with participants. Ethical considerations were addressed by obtaining research permission, securing informed consent, maintaining participant confidentiality, and ensuring that all research activities were conducted respectfully and without disrupting school routines.

4. Results and Discussion

Results

This study found that the school principal's strategy in using the *Rapor Pendidikan* (Education Report) as a basis for improving school quality unfolded through systematic data analysis, participatory planning, prioritized interventions, collaborative teacher involvement, and iterative program evaluation. The principal initiated improvement efforts by conducting comprehensive analysis of Education Report data across multiple dimensions, including literacy, numeracy, character attributes, school climate, and inclusivity. This data analysis was not limited to numerical interpretation; it was consistently linked to classroom observations and teacher reports, providing a more grounded understanding of school strengths and areas requiring targeted action.

The principal's communication of report analysis to teachers was characterized by clarity, contextual explanation, and dialogic engagement, with teachers reporting that discussions were conducted in regular meetings where data interpretation was made accessible and linked directly to instructional practice. Teachers described these discussions as reflective and inclusive, indicating that data was presented not merely as evaluative figures but as shared information to support collective understanding and improvement. Based on these data-driven discussions, the principal and teaching staff developed annual and phased programs focusing on enhancing teacher competencies, instructional materials, classroom supervision, and school-level support activities. Prioritization was determined collectively, emphasizing indicators that were both low-performing and highly impactful on day-to-day instruction.

Teacher involvement emerged as a consistent theme. Teachers reported active engagement from initial data presentation through to contribution of their classroom experience, which informed planning and refinement of school programs. This participatory approach was understood to nurture ownership and shared accountability, reducing resistance and enhancing alignment between school policies and classroom realities. Evaluation of improvement programs was conducted both at year-end and iteratively through follow-up discussions, where report indicators before and after program implementation were compared and reflections were used to inform further cycles of planning and adjustment.

The second major strategy axis involved academic supervision and follow-up teacher mentoring. Supervision was planned based on Education Report evidence and tailored to individual teacher needs, identifying areas such as lesson design, instructional strategies, and classroom management as focal points. Teaching practice was observed in real time, and post-observation reflective discussions were used to provide constructive feedback that emphasized professional growth rather than judgment. Follow-up mentoring sessions built on initial supervisory input, incorporating teacher reflection, collaborative problem-solving, and ongoing monitoring of instructional adjustments. Teachers consistently described this sequence as

supportive and formative, highlighting that supervision evolved into personalized professional guidance rather than hierarchical evaluation. Evaluation of supervision and mentoring utilized both classroom behavioral indicators and changes in Education Report outcomes, with ongoing reflection sessions enabling the school leadership team and teachers to trace the link between practice adjustments and improvement indicators.

Discussion

Data-Informed Leadership and Instructional Improvement

The principal's use of *Rapor Pendidikan* data aligns with the broader literature on data-driven decision-making in education. Effective principals interpret performance data not as static targets but as dynamic indicators that inform instructional priorities and resource allocation. Research suggests that leaders who use data systematically tend to develop more coherent improvement plans and promote stronger organizational learning. In this study, the principal's practice of grounding planning and supervisory focus in detailed data analysis reflects this paradigm, fostering shared understanding and collective ownership among teachers. This approach corroborates findings that instructional leadership is most effective when grounded in evidence that school actors interpret collaboratively, rather than being imposed top-down.

Participatory Planning and Teacher Engagement

Participatory planning involving teachers at every stage from data interpretation to program formulation is consistent with distributed leadership models, which emphasize the role of shared responsibility in educational improvement. Teachers in this study reported that their involvement in planning enhanced relevance and feasibility of programs because their classroom insights directly shaped program design. This echoes research showing that teacher involvement in decision-making increases program fidelity and instructional alignment. By linking *Rapor Pendidikan* indicators with classroom experiences, the principal bridged macro-micro divides, enabling plans that were both data-informed and practice-grounded.

Prioritization and Strategic Focus

The prioritization process observed in this research selecting only a subset of indicators for targeted action resonates with literature emphasizing strategic focus over proliferation of initiatives. Strategic focus is identified as a critical aspect of instructional leadership, enabling schools to concentrate efforts on areas that yield the greatest impact on student learning. Teachers' narrative accounts suggest that when priorities were communicated clearly and connected to their daily work, there was less ambiguity regarding expectations and more alignment in implementation. Such focused leadership has been empirically linked to improvements in both teacher practices and student outcomes.

Supervision and Professional Growth

Academic supervision in this context functioned as reflective support rather than evaluative judgment. Research on effective supervision highlights the importance of post-observation conferences that engage teachers in self-assessment and problem-solving a practice known to promote professional agency and instructional refinement. The principal's strategy of pairing observation with reflective dialogue prepared teachers not only to recognize areas of strength and need but also to experiment with instructional adjustments. This supervisory model parallels contemporary frameworks that view supervision as a vehicle for professional learning communities rather than hierarchical inspection.

Mentoring and Sustained Practice Change

The follow-up mentoring described by teachers in this study underscores the importance of sustained professional support beyond initial evaluation. Professional development literature emphasizes that one-off training or supervisory feedback without continued coaching yields limited changes in practice. In contrast, the model observed here reflective supervision followed by mentoring and monitoring facilitated incremental improvements in teachers' instructional practice. Teachers' positive descriptions of mentoring echo findings that sustained coaching accelerates skill development and enhances curriculum implementation.

Integrated Evaluation for Continuous Improvement

Finally, the use of Education Report data as a tool not only for planning but also for evaluating program and supervision effects reflects principles of continuous improvement. Improvement science in education advocates iterative cycles of hypothesis, implementation, measurement, and revision. The principal's practice of comparing indicator changes before and after interventions, and using these reflections to adjust subsequent actions, embodies this iterative logic. This approach strengthens organizational feedback loops and supports a culture of learning that extends beyond individual classrooms to encompass the entire school.

5. Conclusions

This study concludes that the principal's strategy in utilizing Education Report (*Rapor Pendidikan*) data plays a significant role in improving school quality when implemented collaboratively, systematically, and in response to actual instructional needs. The principal did not treat the Education Report merely as an administrative evaluation tool, but integrated it substantively into decision-making processes, priority setting, and school improvement planning. Furthermore, the implementation of academic supervision and continuous teacher mentoring based on Education Report indicators supported sustained improvements in instructional practices, strengthened teachers' professional competence, and contributed to better school performance outcomes. These findings highlight the strategic importance of data-informed and developmental school leadership in enhancing instructional quality and educational services.

From a theoretical perspective, this study reinforces instructional leadership and data-driven leadership frameworks by demonstrating how education quality data can be operationalized contextually through collaboration, developmental supervision, and sustained teacher mentoring. From a managerial standpoint, the findings offer practical implications for school leaders and education policymakers to position the Education Report as a central instrument in school planning, implementation, and evaluation processes. Integrating quality data into academic supervision and teacher professional development enables more focused, realistic, and impactful school improvement strategies that directly influence classroom teaching and learning.

Despite these contributions, this study is subject to certain limitations. The case study was conducted in a single school context, which limits the generalizability of the findings. In addition, the qualitative design and limited number of participants did not allow for a quantitative assessment of the magnitude of the principal's strategies on improvements in Education Report indicators. Future research is therefore recommended to involve multiple schools with diverse characteristics and to employ mixed-methods approaches to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of data-driven school leadership in improving educational quality.

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