



## Analysis of the Effectiveness of Primary School Administrative Management in Supporting the Learning Process

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46245/ijorer.v7i3.1375>

### Sections Info

#### Article history:

Submitted: January 26, 2026

Final Revised: May 11, 2026

Accepted: May 25, 2026

Published: May 31, 2026

#### Keywords:

Administrative Management;

Primary School; Learning

Process; Qualitative Study;

Conceptual Model



### ABSTRACT

Administrative management in primary schools is often viewed as a technical support system; however, its effectiveness plays a crucial indirect role in shaping learning conditions. This study aims to reconceptualize administrative management effectiveness by examining the processes through which administrative practices support the learning process in primary schools. Employing a qualitative case study approach, this research was conducted in three public primary schools in South Tapanuli, North Sumatra. Data were collected through observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation, and analyzed using thematic and process-oriented analysis. The findings reveal that administrative effectiveness is not determined solely by formal structures or digital adoption, but emerges through interconnected processes, including the redistribution of teachers' administrative workload, coordination efficiency, and information accuracy. Principal leadership functions as a mediating mechanism that shapes administrative coordination and work culture, while digitalization operates as a conditional accelerator whose impact depends on human resource readiness. Based on these findings, this study proposes a process-based conceptual model explaining how administrative management indirectly supports classroom learning. This research contributes to the literature by shifting the discussion of school administrative effectiveness from outcome-based evaluation to a process-oriented perspective and offers empirical insights for strengthening administrative governance in primary education.

## INTRODUCTION

School administrative management is one of the fundamental elements in the education management system that functions to support the sustainability and effectiveness of the learning process. School administration is not only related to recording and archiving activities, but also includes the management of human resources, facilities and infrastructure, finance, curriculum, and academic services integrated systematically (Kaharman Kaharman, Yustari, 2025). In the context of primary education, well-organized administration plays an important role in creating an orderly, efficient, and conducive learning environment for student development.

The effectiveness of school administrative management is measured by the extent to which the administrative system is able to support the achievement of educational goals through the optimal, accurate, and sustainable use of resources. According to (Iman et al., 2024), effective educational administration is characterized by clarity of task division, timeliness of service, data accuracy, and harmonious coordination between school elements. Ineffectiveness in administrative management has the potential to cause various problems, such as delays in academic services, overlapping tasks, increasing administrative burden on teachers, and disruption of learning focus in the classroom (Deasy Yunita Siregar et al., 2023)

Various studies show that administrative management practices in primary schools still face quite complex challenges. Studies by (Indra Prasetia, 2022) and (Mega Triasya Resmana, 2022) reveal that the limited competence of administrative staff, weak planning

systems, and minimal utilization of information technology are the main factors hindering the effectiveness of school administrative services. This condition is exacerbated by the many primary schools that still rely on manual recording systems, thereby increasing the risk of data errors and slowing down the decision-making process ( Yamin, M, 2020 &Rodhiyah, R, 2024)

On the other hand, the principal has a strategic role as an education manager in coordinating all administrative activities to align with learning objectives. Permendikbud Number 6 of 2018 emphasizes that school principals are responsible for carrying out managerial, supervisory, and school entrepreneurship development functions. Principal leadership that is visionary, participatory, and responsive to change is proven to be able to encourage the creation of a professional administrative work culture oriented toward the quality of educational services (Ismanto, Hadi, 2023).

Administrative management in primary schools has been widely discussed in educational management literature, particularly in relation to service efficiency, organizational effectiveness, and school governance. Previous studies generally emphasize the importance of administrative staff competence, principal leadership, and technology utilization in improving school administrative performance (Mulyasa, 2019; Yamin, 2020; Wattimena et al., 2023). These studies consistently conclude that effective administration contributes positively to school operations and academic services.

However, most existing studies remain normative and outcome-oriented, focusing primarily on whether administrative systems function effectively rather than explaining how administrative practices influence the learning process itself. Administrative management is often treated merely as a technical support activity involving documentation, reporting, and data management. As a result, limited attention has been given to understanding administration as a dynamic process that indirectly shapes instructional conditions through workload distribution, coordination patterns, and information flow within schools.

Furthermore, previous research tends to isolate leadership, technology adoption, and administrative performance as separate variables without examining their interconnected relationships in everyday school practices. In particular, empirical studies exploring how principal leadership mediates administrative coordination and how digitalization functions conditionally depending on organizational readiness remain scarce, especially in primary schools located in developing regions with uneven technological infrastructure.

Addressing these gaps, this study adopts a process-oriented perspective to analyze the effectiveness of administrative management in supporting the learning process in primary schools. Rather than evaluating administration solely through procedural efficiency or organizational outcomes, this research examines how administrative practices operate as an indirect mechanism influencing classroom learning conditions. Using a qualitative multi-site case study approach, this study investigates how administrative workload redistribution, coordination efficiency, and information accuracy shape teachers' instructional focus and school learning environments.

The novelty of this study lies in the development of a process-based conceptual model of administrative effectiveness. Unlike previous studies that mainly evaluate administrative success through institutional outcomes, this research conceptualizes administrative management as an interconnected organizational process that indirectly supports learning through structural and coordination mechanisms. In addition, this



study positions principal leadership as a mediating mechanism and digitalization as a conditional accelerator rather than as independent determinants of effectiveness.

This study contributes theoretically by reconceptualizing school administrative effectiveness from an outcome-based framework into a process-based perspective. Methodologically, the study enriches qualitative educational management research through a multi-site case study approach grounded in contextual evidence from primary schools in developing regions. Practically, the findings provide insights for policymakers and school leaders regarding strategies to strengthen administrative governance, reduce teachers' administrative burdens, and improve the sustainability of learning quality.

### Literature Review

School administrative management is one of the essential components in supporting the effectiveness of the learning process in educational units, including at the primary school level. School administration encompasses various activities, such as managing student data, finance, facilities and infrastructure, curriculum, and school-community relations. According to (Mulyasa, 2019), good administrative management is capable of creating an efficient, orderly, and accountable work system, thereby facilitating the execution of educational duties and optimally supporting teaching and learning activities. Effectiveness in the context of educational management is understood as the system's ability to achieve established goals through the appropriate and successful use of resources (Coulter, M., 2018). Therefore, effective administrative management is characterized by timeliness, data accuracy, smooth coordination between work units, and transparency in information services.

In practice, primary school administration still faces various constraints. A study by (Harahap, A. S, 2021) shows that many primary schools still lack competent administrative staff, insufficient regular training, and weak utilization of information technology in administrative activities. These limitations lead to slow administrative services, errors in data recording, and an increased workload for teachers who often have to double as administrative staff. Conversely, administrative processes that are not effective will disrupt the stability and smooth operation of the learning process. Meanwhile, digitalization of administration is one of the solutions offered by various studies to overcome these challenges. The use of a School Management Information System (SIMS) is considered capable of increasing work efficiency, accelerating the reporting process, and providing accurate data for decision-making (Yamin, 2020).

The effectiveness of school administration is also significantly influenced by the role of the school principal as an educational manager. Visionary, collaborative, and responsive leadership to school needs is key in creating a positive work culture. Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 6 of 2018 states that school principals have managerial, supervisory, and entrepreneurial functions that must be carried out professionally to support the quality of educational services. Furthermore, a healthy organizational culture, such as open communication, strong teamwork, and clear responsibilities, further strengthens the existing administrative system (Suharsaputra, 2019).

Thus, the success of administrative management in supporting the learning process depends not only on the systems and technology used but also on human resources, leadership, and the work culture developed within the school.



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## RESEARCH METHOD

### Research Design and Approach

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at comprehensively describing and analyzing the effectiveness of administrative management in primary schools in supporting the learning process. The research was conducted between January and March 2026 in three public primary schools located in South Tapanuli Regency, North Sumatra Province. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study aimed to understand complex organizational processes, social interactions, and contextual experiences related to school administration rather than to measure variables quantitatively (Creswell, 2016).

The research was conducted between January and March 2026 in three public primary schools located in South Tapanuli Regency, North Sumatra Province, Indonesia. The schools were selected purposively based on three considerations. First, the schools represented different geographical contexts, including urban, semi-rural, and rural environments. Second, they differed in terms of student population size, administrative workload, and availability of administrative personnel. Third, preliminary observations indicated variation in the implementation of administrative systems and technology utilization across schools. These variations enabled the researcher to obtain rich and diverse contextual data regarding administrative management practices.

A multi-site case study design was employed to facilitate in-depth exploration and comparison across different school contexts. This design allowed the researcher to examine how administrative processes operated in everyday school activities and how these processes indirectly influenced instructional conditions.

### Research Setting and Participants

This research was carried out in three public primary schools located in the southern region of Tapanuli, North Sumatra Province. The sites were selected purposively by considering the diversity of school characteristics, such as student population, accreditation levels, administrative conditions, and geographical settings representing urban, semi-rural, and rural contexts. The selected schools had implemented administrative management systems independently and demonstrated active organizational governance, making them suitable for in-depth analysis., making them appropriate for an in-depth analysis related to learning effectiveness.

Participants in this study consist of principals, administrative staff, and classroom teachers who are considered relevant to the management and implementation of school administrative activities. Purposive sampling was used with the criteria that participants had a minimum of three years of work experience and were actively involved in administration and learning processes at the school. In total, nine participants were involved in the study, consisting of one principal, one administrative staff member, and one classroom teacher from each school. The involvement of multiple stakeholders was intended to obtain comprehensive perspectives on how administrative management is carried out, the challenges faced, and its impact on the learning process. Information from principals provides insight at the policy-making level; administrative staff provide technical operational data; while teachers offer perspectives on the direct impact of administrative systems on classroom teaching and learning.



## Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection was conducted using three primary techniques: observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted directly in the school environment to examine ongoing administrative practices, including the workflow of administrative staff, coordination patterns between teachers and principals, and the use of supporting tools such as technology devices and information systems. Both participatory and non-participatory observations were carried out to obtain a comprehensive picture of real world conditions.

In-depth semi structured interviews were conducted with principals, administrative staff, and teachers to explore their perspectives, experiences, and perceptions regarding the effectiveness of administrative management and its influence on the learning process. Interview questions covered administrative work systems, challenges encountered, forms of support for teachers and students, and the role of the principal in managing administration. The interviews were recorded (with participant consent) and transcribed for further analysis.

Additionally, documentation was used to complement and verify data obtained from observations and interviews. The documents collected included school organizational structures, activity schedules, student administrative archives, school activity reports, and internal policy documents. These documents provided concrete information on how administrative systems are implemented and the extent to which planning and evaluation are carried out systematically.

The collected data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's (2014) interactive qualitative analysis technique through three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. In the reduction stage, the researchers conducted Open coding, axial coding, and selective coding were employed to identify patterns and relationships among themes. to connect data from interviews and observations related to human resource competencies and technological barriers. The data presentation was systematically arranged through descriptive narratives and comparative tables of conditions between schools to facilitate the identification of effectiveness patterns. Finally, conclusions were drawn inductively through source triangulation by comparing the perspectives of principals, teachers, and administrative staff, as well as methodological triangulation to ensure the credibility of the findings. of principals, teachers, and staff and triangulating techniques to ensure the credibility of the findings before the final results were validated through member checking.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Results*

The findings of this study indicate that administrative management effectiveness in primary schools is not merely determined by the presence of administrative structures, but rather by how administrative practices operate as an interconnected process that indirectly supports the learning environment. Analysis of the data reveals three major thematic patterns that explain how administrative management influences the learning process.

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### **Theme 1: Administrative Effectiveness as a Process of Task Redistribution**

The study found that administrative management plays a significant role in redistributing teachers' workloads. In schools where administrative staff performed their duties consistently and systematically, teachers experienced reduced administrative burdens, allowing them to focus more on instructional preparation and classroom engagement. Conversely, in schools with limited administrative capacity, teachers were required to assume administrative responsibilities such as reporting, data entry, and documentation, which disrupted instructional focus and reduced teaching effectiveness. This finding suggests that administrative effectiveness should be understood not solely in terms of efficiency, but as a mechanism that either alleviates or intensifies teachers' non-instructional workload.

### **Theme 2: Principal Leadership as a Mediating Mechanism**

Data analysis shows that the principal's role is not a direct determinant of administrative effectiveness but functions as a mediating mechanism that shapes administrative coordination and work culture. Principals who actively facilitated communication, clarified task distribution, and provided regular supervision fostered more organized administrative systems. In contrast, weak leadership resulted in fragmented coordination, overlapping duties, and delays in administrative services. This indicates that leadership effectiveness emerges through its influence on administrative processes rather than through formal authority alone.

### **Theme 3: Digitalization as a Conditional Accelerator**

The findings demonstrate that digital administrative systems contribute to efficiency only when supported by adequate human resource competencies and organizational readiness. Schools that adopted digital tools without sufficient training continued to experience data inaccuracies and delays. Conversely, schools that combined digital tools with capacity-building initiatives showed improved data accuracy, faster reporting, and better administrative support for instructional activities. Thus, digitalization functions as a conditional accelerator rather than an independent determinant of administrative effectiveness.

### ***Discussion***

This study provides a deeper understanding of administrative management effectiveness by shifting the focus from normative indicators to the processes through which administration indirectly shapes learning conditions. The findings reveal that administrative management influences the learning process primarily through workload redistribution, coordination efficiency, and information accuracy rather than through direct instructional intervention.

First, the identification of task redistribution as a central mechanism expands existing literature that often treats administrative effectiveness as a technical or procedural issue. Consistent with Nasution and Harahap (2021), excessive administrative demands placed on teachers undermine instructional focus. However, this study extends prior findings by demonstrating that administrative effectiveness operates as a structural support system that determines whether teachers can concentrate on pedagogical responsibilities.

Second, the mediating role of principal leadership highlights that leadership effectiveness is embedded within administrative processes. While previous studies emphasize leadership traits (Mulyasa, 2019; Suharsaputra, 2019), this study shows that

leadership contributes to learning indirectly by enabling coordination, clarifying roles, and legitimizing administrative systems. This finding reframes leadership as a process-oriented function rather than a personal attribute.

Third, the findings regarding digitalization challenge deterministic assumptions in prior research (Yamin, 2020). The results demonstrate that technology alone does not guarantee administrative effectiveness. Instead, digital tools act as accelerators whose impact depends on human resource readiness and organizational culture. This explains why some schools experience minimal improvement despite adopting digital systems.

### **Proposed Process-Based Model of Administrative Effectiveness**

Based on the findings, this study proposes a Process Based Administrative Effectiveness Model in which administrative management influences the learning process indirectly through three interrelated mechanisms: (1) redistribution of teachers' administrative workload, (2) efficiency of coordination and communication, and (3) accuracy and timeliness of information management. In this model, principal leadership functions as a structural enabler that shapes administrative processes, while digitalization serves as a conditional accelerator that enhances effectiveness when supported by adequate competencies and organizational readiness. This model contributes to the literature by offering a conceptual explanation of how administrative management operates as an invisible but critical infrastructure supporting classroom learning.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study demonstrates that administrative management effectiveness in primary schools should not be understood merely as a technical or procedural function, but as a process-based system that indirectly shapes learning conditions. The findings indicate that effective administrative management supports the learning process through three key mechanisms: redistribution of teachers' administrative workload, efficiency of coordination and communication, and accuracy of information management. When these processes function effectively, teachers are better positioned to focus on instructional responsibilities, thereby enhancing learning quality.

The study also highlights the mediating role of principal leadership in shaping administrative effectiveness. Rather than exerting a direct influence on classroom learning, leadership contributes by enabling structured coordination, clarifying task distribution, and fostering a supportive administrative work culture. Additionally, digitalization is shown to function as a conditional accelerator; its effectiveness depends on organizational readiness and the competencies of administrative personnel rather than on technological adoption alone.

From a theoretical perspective, this research contributes a process-based conceptual model that advances understanding of how administrative management operates as an indirect but critical infrastructure supporting learning in primary schools. Practically, the findings suggest the need for policy interventions that prioritize administrative capacity building, reduction of teachers' administrative burdens, and sustainable integration of digital systems supported by continuous training. Future research is encouraged to test and refine the proposed model across diverse educational contexts and through mixed-method approaches to further strengthen its generalizability.

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