



Principal Decision Making: School Administrative Order

Herman¹, Luluk Zahrotul Hikmah², Muharrir³, Marlinda⁴

¹Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Teungku Dirundeng Meulahoh

²Universitas Negeri Malang

³Universitas Brawijaya Malang

⁴Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh

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ABSTRACT

Effective and efficient school administration is highly desired by all parties, including stakeholders and education customers. However, in reality, school principals still use their authority in decision-making, so that the decisions made do not reflect joint decisions in school administrative order. The purpose of this study is to determine how school principals make decisions in school administrative order. This study uses a qualitative method with a literature review approach to examine and analyze previous studies relevant to the topic being researched, with the following steps: first, the researcher searches for or collects data sources and information; second, the researcher assessed the sources that had been found, third, the researcher analyzed the data and information to answer the research questions, and fourth, the researcher compiled a journal manuscript concept from all the results of the analysis of the data and information that had been collected. The results of the study show that, first, the principal's decision-making process is carried out through problem identification, analysis of the existing situation, development of alternatives, analysis of alternatives, and selection of the best alternative. Second, the factors that influence the principal in decision-making are position or status, problems that arise, situation, conditions, and objectives to be achieved in decision-making. Third, the styles used by principals in making decisions regarding school administrative order are the directive style, analytical style, conceptual style, and behavioral style. Fourth, the impact of decision making is greatly influenced by the principal's ability to make decisions appropriately and contextually in accordance with the stages of an effective decision-making process. Practical contributions can help improve the principal's capacity in decision-making by providing various information related to decision-making for school administrative order. Meanwhile, theoretical contributions can help develop better and more comprehensive decision-making theories in the effort to maintain school administrative order.

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Corresponding Author:

Herman

State Islamic College Teungku Dirundeng Meulahoh, Jalan Lingkar Kampus, Alue Peunyareng, Meulahoh, Aceh, Indonesia, 23615

Email: herman@staindirundeng.ac.id

INTRODUCTION

In today's digital age, technology has had a very positive impact on education, including school administration (Fatimah et al., 2024). School administrative services can now be carried out easily, quickly, efficiently, and accurately if the principal, as the administrator, is able to utilize digital technology in organizing school administration (Sapitri et al., 2025). Then, they are able to make relevant decisions to organize school administration in accordance with applicable regulations.

The principal, as an administrator, plays a major role in the development and progress of the school in the field of school administration (Azhari et al., 2025; Permadani et al., 2018). The development and progress of the school in this area reflects the principal's good performance. Principals with high professionalism and integrity will be able to utilize educational resources well in organizing school administration.

The authority and responsibility of the principal as an administrator in making decisions to organize school administration lies entirely within the principal's authority (N. Purwanto, 2012; Saleh et al., 2016). Proper decision-making can lead to orderly school administration, because decision-making is the process of choosing from various options to determine the activities to be implemented. Errors made by the principal in decision-making constitute a failure of the principal as a school administrator, because the principal is the party responsible for determining the direction and controlling the school to achieve educational goals (Mulyasa, 2014).

Decision-making is a human process that is grounded in and encompasses individual and social phenomena, based on premises of values and facts, concluding a choice among alternatives, with the aim of moving toward something desired (Stoner, 1982). In line with this, decision making is a process of systematically selecting the best alternative from several alternatives to be followed up (used) as a way of solving problems. Decision making, as a continuation of problem solving, functions as the basis or starting point of all conscious and purposeful human activities, both individually and in groups, whether institutionally or organizationally (H. Herman et al., 2023). The principal, as an administrator, plays a very important role in managing the school's administrative activities. School administrative activities include student affairs, curriculum and learning, personnel, finance, administration, facilities and infrastructure, and public relations (Imayani et al., 2025). These activities are oriented towards programs that can improve the quality of services in Teaching and Learning Process Administration, Guidance and Counseling, Student Affairs Administration, Financial Administration Management, Facilities and Infrastructure Administration Management, and School Committee Administration Management.

As administrators, school principals have full authority to implement effective administrative services in the schools they lead. The effectiveness of school administrative services is greatly influenced by the principal's capacity to make decisions regarding the school's administrative activities (Agustina et al., 2024). The school administrative services that are established and provided can produce tangible results in accordance with the expected quality and time frame. To that end, in order for these administrative services to be effective, the principal needs to understand, master, and have the capacity to carry out the activities of school administrative services that are his or her responsibility as a school administrator (Anwar, 2014; N. Purwanto, 2012).

Nowadays, effective administrative services are a prerequisite that must be fulfilled by every educational unit. This is because effective administrative services can increase customer

satisfaction in education and improve the quality of education and teaching in schools. School administrative services encompass various administrative management activities involving planning, organizing, coordinating, supervising, staffing, student affairs, evaluation, financing, and problem solving, using or utilizing available facilities, whether personnel, spiritual, or material, to achieve educational goals at that level of education.

Based on observations in the field, the decision-making process of school principals tends to occur as follows: First, school leaders are more likely to choose alternatives that bring short-term benefits, without considering long-term benefits in terms of economic analysis of costs, ease of implementation, and speed of completion. Second, school leaders tend to use their power when choosing alternatives. Third, school leaders tend not to be open to the school community, so teachers and employees don't have many opportunities to come up with ideas and suggestions related to the school community's commitment to improving education at the school.

Previous research related to school principals' decision-making in school administrative order was first studied by Indra Purwanto (2019) in a paper titled *School Principals' Leadership in Decision-Making*. The results showed that principals' decision-making can be seen from the stages of the process, namely through initial identification, formulating objectives, alternative solutions, determining criteria for selecting solutions, and implementation of decisions. First, the stages in the decision-making process are carried out by inviting teachers and explaining the issues related to the decisions to be made. Second, the stage of providing considerations in decision-making. Third, the stage of implementing decision-making is carried out through the legalization of decisions, operational planning, supervision, and evaluation. Fourth, the stage of socializing the principal's decision is explained openly to all school stakeholders (I. Purwanto, 2019). Then, it was researched by Muh. Nasrullah, et al (2017) with the title *The Influence of Principal Decision Making on Teacher Performance*, showing that the principal's decision making was in a good position, and teacher performance was in the high category, but the influence of the principal's decision making on teacher performance was in the weak category (Nasrullah et al., 2017). Furthermore, Danang Rizky et al. (2018) conducted a study entitled "Principal Leadership in Decision Making," which showed that the principal's role in the decision-making process is regulatory, democratic, and persuasive. The process is carried out by holding workshops, identifying problems, finding alternative solutions, determining the selected alternatives, and making decisions. The supporting factors in decision making are that all parties must be open about the problems faced by the school and be given the freedom to express their opinions in decision making (Hermansyah et al., 2022; Permadani et al., 2018)

The results of this study differ from those of the articles reviewed, even though the topic discussed has been studied extensively. However, it is necessary to distinguish the novelty of this study, as seen in previous studies, such as: 1. Decision-making in school leadership is viewed from the decision-making process and stages. 2. The influence of principal decision-making on teacher performance, viewed from the categories of principal decision-making, teacher performance, and the influence of principal decision-making on teacher performance. 3. Principal leadership in decision-making viewed from the role of the principal, the decision-making process carried out by the principal, and factors that support principal leadership in decision-making.

The novelty in this study is the principal's decision-making in organizing school administration, with an emphasis on discussing several other important aspects related to the principal's decision-making and organizing school administration. First, the process of principal decision-making in organizing school administration; second, factors influencing principal

decision-making; third, the impact of principal decision-making on the organization of school administration.

This study aims to determine how principals make decisions regarding school administrative order. It is hoped that this study will make a positive contribution to the theory and practice of principal decision-making regarding school administrative order. Positive practical contributions can improve principals' capacity for decision-making by providing various information related to principals' decision-making in school administrative order. Theoretical contributions can then help develop better and more comprehensive theories of principals' decision-making in school administrative order

METHOD

This study uses the library research method with a literature review approach. A literature review is part of research that aims to examine and analyze previous studies that are relevant to the topic being studied (Creswell, 2019). The steps taken by the researcher in conducting a literature review are as follows: first, the researcher searches for or collects as much data and information as possible related to the research topic, such as books, journals, articles, and other documents (Tuginem, 2023).

The second step is for researchers to evaluate the sources they have found to ensure that they are accurate, relevant, and reliable in order to build a theoretical basis and context for the research being studied. The third step is for researchers to analyze the data and information to answer the research questions that have been formulated. The final step involves compiling a draft of the research journal article that encompasses all the results of the data and information analysis that has been collected (Tuginem, 2023).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Principal's Decision-Making Process Regarding School Administrative Order

Decision-making is one of the most interesting functions to discuss in school leadership, because school principals, as leaders, spend most of their time, attention, and thoughts on reviewing the decision-making process. The higher a person's position in leadership, the higher the level and responsibility in decision-making that must be carried out. The behavior and manner of leaders in decision-making patterns greatly influence the behavior and attitudes of their followers (Azhari et al., 2025; Silalahi, 2013).

Decision making is defined by many education experts as the selection of decisions or policies based on certain criteria. This process involves two or more alternatives to choose from, which are then narrowed down to a single decision (Dagun, 2000). In general, decision making is defined as a series of activities that must be carried out by a person in an effort to solve problems that are being faced, then determine various alternatives that are considered most rational and in accordance with the needs and environment of the organization (H.B. Siswanto, 2010: 171). Decision making is now not only used for the process of solving problems, but also for the decision-making process for every management function that will be operated in schools.

Decision making is not merely a problem-solving activity that must be resolved by deciding on a solution, but rather a decision on the course of action that will be taken (McLeod Jr & Schell, n.d.). Rue defines decision making in a narrow sense as the process of selecting and determining the feasibility of responses from a number of alternative options to solve a problem (Rue & Byars, 1992). Meanwhile, according to Shull, decision making is a process of human

awareness of social phenomena based on facts and values that include behavioral activities that become one or several alternatives as a way out of the problems faced (H. Herman et al., 2024).

Every effort made rationally by the principal as an administrator is a decision-making process to achieve common goals. The decision-making process from start to finish requires consideration, creativity, quantitative skills, and experience. The systematic sequence in the decision-making process includes: 1) determining what issues to decide on, 2) analyzing the situation in the school he leads, 3) developing alternatives to be taken in decision making, 4) analyzing the alternatives to be taken in decision making, and 5) the best alternative must be considered carefully (Nasrullah et al., 2017; Sutisna, 1983). The decision-making process is carried out rationally, takes a long time, and continuously strives to minimize errors as much as possible. Decisions can be assumed to be good if they meet the following conditions: 1) decisions are made as solutions to problems encountered; 2) as quickly and accurately as possible; 3) rational, meaning they are acceptable to common sense, especially for those who will be responsible for implementing the decisions; 4) it is practical and pragmatic, meaning that it can be implemented with existing capabilities; 5) it has minimal negative impact; 6) it benefits many parties for the sake of smooth work and the achievement of objectives; 7) the decision taken can be evaluated for the future (Anoraga, 1990; I. Purwanto, 2019).

Thus, the decision-making process in an educational organization must take the following into consideration: 1) the decision-making process must not be arbitrary, 2) decisions must be made systematically, both in terms of human resources and available labor, the philosophy adopted by the school, and the internal and external circumstances that will affect the administration and management of the school, 3) issues must be clearly understood by all members of the school community, 4) problem solving must be based on facts that have been systematically collected, and 5) a good decision is one that has been selected from various alternatives that have been thoroughly and deeply analyzed (Yendi et al., 2017) (Nurs, 2003: 159).

Decision-making that is not based on the five points above will cause various problems in schools, including: 1) Decision-making that is not timely and on target in the context of school administration, 2) decisions that have been made in the context of school administration cannot be implemented properly because they are not in line with the needs and capabilities of the organization, in terms of human resources, money, and materials, 3) Inability of technical implementers to work, because the decisions made are not synchronized between the interests of the school and the teachers and employees at the school, and 4) The emergence of resistance from various elements of the school to decisions made by the principal that are wrong (Sutisna, 1983).

The decision-making process is not easy or trivial, but requires a wide range of skills and knowledge from the principal in managing the educational unit (Imayani et al., 2025). This is because decision-making in a school carries risks. Every decision made inevitably carries risks, which must be faced by the top leadership or principal as the decision-maker.

Based on the results of research conducted at MAN Model Gorontalo, it was found that there are six stages in the decision-making process of the madrasah principal, as follows: 1) the process of formulating decisions by the madrasah principal is in the good category, with the following indicators assessed: recognizing problems through SWOT analysis, and gathering information for decision-making. 2) The process of determining the criteria for decision-making by the head of the madrasah is in the very good category, with the indicators considered including: acceptance/giving of criticism or determination of suggestions and opinions, analysis of the situation, resources, facts and data. 3) The identification of alternatives for decision-making by the head of the madrasah is in the good category with the criteria of selecting two options from several

options and making the best calculation, 4) the process of assessing alternatives for decision-making by the head of the madrasah is in the good category, with assessment indicators including: identifying the advantages, potential risks and dangers of each alternative compared to the risk assessment indicators, and 5) the process of selecting the best alternative in decision-making by the head of the madrasah is in the very good category, with assessment indicators including: determining the decision choice, and analyzing the choice compared to the indicator of checking alternative decisions, and the process of implementing the selected alternative in the principal's decision-making is in the excellent category with the indicator being the impact factor on the decision that has been made (Anwar, 2014; H. Herman & Khalaf, 2023).

The decision-making process at the school level is carried out in relation to the decision-making accuracy approach that must be considered by the principal. Whether or not a decision-making accuracy result is good or not depends heavily on the approach used. Each approach has different advantages, depending on the type of problem faced (Anwar, 2014). Therefore, the use of a particular approach is not yet effective in solving all the problems faced, but in reality, many principals use authority, intuition, and experience in the decision-making process (Agustina et al., 2024).

The principal as an administrator in decision-making is a manifestation of carrying out his/her function as an education manager who has high authority in making decisions appropriately and in accordance with the needs of the school (H. Herman, 2025). The quality of a principal's decision-making is largely determined by how the decision-making process is carried out by the principal. The school administration system will not run smoothly and orderly if the decision-making process does not take the following into account: 1) the decision-making process must be carefully planned, not left to chance, 2) decisions must be made rationally and systematically, 3) problems must be clearly identified, 4) problems must be solved based on facts, not speculation, and 5) good decisions are alternatives chosen based on careful analysis.

Factors Affecting Decision Making Regarding School Administrative Order

In fact, there are many factors that influence the principal's decision-making, as it is influenced by the situation and conditions of the school itself. These influencing factors will certainly lead to the vision, mission, goals, and objectives of achieving educational goals. Usually, there are five factors that are major forces influencing decision-making, namely: as follows:

1. Position or Status

The position or status of a principal is the duties and functions carried out by a principal at a school. The position or status can determine their role in a decision to act as a decision maker, determiner, or simply a staff member. Meanwhile, based on their position level, they can act in terms of strategic decision making, regulations, organization, operations, or other matters related to the implementation of their main duties and functions at the school.

2. Problems

The issues faced by school principals have different characteristics from other functional positions, because the factors that cause problems in schools vary, so the decisions made by school principals will be adjusted to the nature of the problem. Thus, the issues that arise in schools will influence how school principals make decisions.

3. Situation

The situation in the school environment has its own diversity that can influence individual activities at school. In other words, the situation consists of elements that are interrelated. Therefore, the principal, as the decision maker, must be observant in reading the current situation, because problems arise from the situation that is happening or ongoing.

4. Conditions

The driving force, ability to act, or capability of a principal is determined by the circumstances. Circumstances provide the power that influences a person's ability in the decision-making process. Therefore, principals, as decision-makers, must be adept at reading the circumstances created by other parties that can influence decision-making in schools.

5. Objectives

School principals must be committed to sticking to their goals, because goals can guide a person in making decisions. These goals can be personal goals, organizational goals, or predetermined goals. In other words, school principals, as decision makers, must try their best to ensure that educational goals are achieved or realized in accordance with the decisions that have been made or determined (Rochaety et al., 2006).

Furthermore, according to Dermawan, decision-making factors can be determined by several things that happen at school, which are divided into three time periods.

1. Past

The past that occurred in schools can be seen through several important aspects, including: 1) experiences and events that have been experienced in relation to school administration, 2) unfulfilled desires in the past related to school administration, 3) unresolved issues and challenges in the past related to school administration, and 4) the availability of information in the past related to school administration.

2. The Present

The current situation in schools can be seen through several important aspects, including: 1) current environmental factors, 2) the vision, mission, and goals to be achieved, 3) the results of environmental factors that have changed, 4) the occurrence of scarcity and limitations, 5) the existence of a process of acting in selecting alternative solutions, 6) various decisions from other organizations taken by the principal, 7) the quality and relevance of available information, and 8) knowledge arising from the processing of information on school administration.

3. The Future

The future of schools can be seen through several important aspects: 1) The vision, mission, and goals to be achieved in the educational unit, 2) the environment that has the potential for improvement and change in the future, 3) the emergence of risks and scarcities that need to be considered for the future, and 4) the availability of information that is expected to enable better, more mature, and accurate decision-making for the future (Dermawan, 2017).

Principal Leadership Style in Decision Making Regarding School Administrative Order

The leadership style of school principals in decision-making varies greatly when it comes to school administration. It can be grouped into four different individual approaches to decision-making. This model has been designed for use by managers with a framework that can generally be used in any individual decision-making process.

The four styles of school principals in decision-making regarding school administrative order are as follows (Sunarto, 2004: 80-81).

1. Directive Style.

Principals who use a directive style have low tolerance for ambiguity and seek rationality. They are efficient and logical, but their efficiency maintains results in decisions made with minimal information and few alternatives. Directive types make quick decisions and are short-term oriented.

2. Analytical Style.

School principals have a much greater tolerance for ambiguity than directive decision makers. This leads to a desire for more information and consideration of more alternatives rather than the correct alternative for the directive type. School principals as analytical managers are characterized as careful decision makers with the ability to adapt to new situations.

3. Conceptual Style.

Principals with a conceptual style tend to be very broad in their views and consider many alternatives. Their orientation as principals is long-term, and they are very good at finding creative solutions to problems.

4. Behavioral Style.

Principals categorized as behavioral style are characterized by decision makers who can work well with others. These principals are very attentive to colleagues and subordinates and are receptive to suggestions from others, relying heavily on meetings to communicate. This managerial style of principal tries to avoid conflict and seeks acceptance of ideas and suggestions from all elements of the school.

The principal's decision-making style greatly determines the level of conducive educational processes in schools, all of which converge on the principal when decisions are made. These situations and conditions can be conducive, counterproductive, and often even cause prolonged internal conflicts (Anwar, 2014). In this context, a principal needs to have the confidence to use the appropriate decision-making style in a decision-making forum. The principal's decision-making style has a positive and significant correlation with school effectiveness (Bakry, 2010).

School principals' decision-making is considered good and appropriate if it is participatory and democratic in nature and supported by accurate data and information so that the school's vision, mission, objectives, and programs can be achieved to the maximum extent possible in accordance with the work program targets set by the school (Bakry, 2010). In general, the principal's decision-making is not yet democratic and supported by accurate data and information, so that the implementation of the principal's decisions does not yet fully support the vision, mission, objectives, and educational programs at the school (Agustina et al., 2024). Of the various problems encountered, the capacity of the principal and teachers is still relatively low, so it is imperative that it be improved.

Based on the above description, it can be concluded that the principal's leadership style in decision making can be identified into four leadership styles in decision making. First, the directive style, which has low tolerance for ambiguity and seeks rationality. Second, the analytical style, which has much greater tolerance for ambiguity than directive decision makers. Third, the conceptual style, which tends to be very broad in its views and considers many alternatives. Fourth, the behavioral style is characterized by decision makers who can work well with others. They pay attention to colleagues and subordinates and are receptive to suggestions from others, relying heavily on meetings to communicate.

The Impact of Principal Decision-Making on School Administrative Order

In principle, all activities carried out at school are the result of various decisions made by the principal as an administrator. Of the various decisions made by the principal, can all of them achieve their objectives and targets effectively and efficiently, or is the opposite happening at the school? According to Mintzberg, a principal, as an administrator in decision-making, needs to have a sharp mind and a cautious attitude, because he or she is the one who leads the organization towards the goals that everyone wants to achieve together (Hikmat, 2009). School principals must also be able to choose the best alternatives, which requires analytical skills to select rational solutions to problems (Arneti & Gistituati, 2024; J. I. Herman et al., 2020).

The impact of decision-making is directly related to the spiritual and emotional intelligence of a leader in decision-making. Furthermore, decision-making is based on humanitarian principles to strike a balance between the implementation of decisions and their positive impact on school members and educational service products. This idea emphasizes that decisions made by leaders must refer to rational views and policies that have been discussed with all elements of the school community (Hikmat, 2009; Rohman & Jamin, 2025).

Anoraga further explained that decision-making has a significant impact on school administration, so principals are required to have a positive attitude in making decisions that can produce productive results in the following ways: 1) Decisions made by the principal are not rushed, but are studied, reviewed, and considered in advance in all possible aspects that may occur. 2) The principal has the ability to analyze the problems faced and can distinguish between primary and secondary problems, simple or complex problems, and is able to determine policies in assessing the weight of the problem and the priority of its solution. 3) They can choose the best alternative solutions, namely those that bring long-term and short-term benefits and those that can reduce costs, are easy to implement, quick to complete, light in terms of work, and efficient in terms of energy (Hikmat, 2009).

Then there are seven important variables that greatly influence the decision-making style of school principals. The leadership styles of school principals that are often practiced as managers or leaders in schools are: 1) the importance of decision quality for the success of educational institutions, 2) the degree of information possessed by different school managers, 3) the degree of structured problems in educational organizations, 4) the importance of the commitment of all elements of the school community and various skills in making educational program decisions, 5) the possibility that autocratic decisions can be accepted; 6) the strong commitment of subordinates to the goals of the educational institution; and 7) the possibility of conflict among subordinates in the final process of making the final decision (Bakry, 2010).

Based on the results of research conducted at MAN Model Gorontalo, it shows that the impact of implementing the principal's decision-making in the very good category can be seen from the alternative indicators chosen in making decisions and comparing them with the indicators of decision implementation that have been carried out. This shows that the implementation of alternatives selected in decision-making tends to be that the head of the madrasah makes decisions or implements selected alternatives that have a positive impact, which always guarantees satisfaction and improves the performance of teachers and employees at the madrasah. Every decision made by the madrasah principal always benefits the madrasah community he leads and is able to anticipate all the consequences that arise from the decisions that have been made at the school (Anwar, 2014).

Based on the above description, it can be concluded that the positive impact of implementing various school administrative decisions developed in madrasahs basically lie in the

principal's ability to make appropriate and contextual decisions in accordance with the stages of effective decision-making, namely through the stages of problem formulation, determination of problem-solving criteria, identification of problem-solving alternatives, assessment of problem-solving alternatives, selection of the best alternative, and decision-making or implementation of the selected alternative. These stages are the reference for developing a decision-making model that will be developed in the principal's decision-making process regarding school administrative order

CONCLUSION

Based on the research objectives, the conclusions of this study indicate that the principal's decision-making process in regulating school administration is as follows: first, the principal's decision-making process involves problem identification, analysis of the existing situation, development of alternatives, analysis of alternatives, and selection of the best alternative. second, the factors that influence principals in decision making are their position or status, the problems that arise, the situation, conditions, and the objectives to be achieved in decision making; third, the styles of principals in decision making to organize school administration, namely directive, analytical, conceptual, and behavioral styles; Fourth, the impact of decision implementation is greatly influenced by the principal's ability and capacity in problem formulation, determining problem-solving criteria, identifying problem-solving alternatives, assessing problem-solving alternatives, selecting the best alternative, and establishing decisions or implementing the selected alternative. The practical contribution of this research is to help improve the capacity of principals in decision-making practices by providing various information related to principal decision-making in school administrative order. Meanwhile, the theoretical contribution is to help develop a better and more comprehensive theory of principal decision-making in the effort to maintain school administrative order.

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