



Transforming Educational Human Resources to Enhance Institutional Quality and Student Admission Rates

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61987/jemr.v5i1.1750>

ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Educational human resource transformation, Educational management, Student enrollment

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Urban private secondary schools continue to face persistent challenges, particularly related to limited financial resources and declining public trust, which directly affect student enrollment rates. This study aims to analyze how the transformation of educational human resources (HR) contributes to improving school quality and increasing student enrollment. Employing a qualitative research design with a phenomenological approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews with the school principal as the key informant. The data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, encompassing data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that educational HR transformation, particularly through systematic competency mapping and the implementation of structured coaching and mentoring programs, plays a critical role in enhancing instructional quality and cultivating a professional organizational culture. Furthermore, the integration of a low-cost school policy with continuous HR quality improvement has proven effective in increasing access to education and rebuilding public trust, as evidenced by a notable rise in student enrollment. The study implies that sustainable and strategically managed educational HR transformation serves as a fundamental mechanism for improving school quality and strengthening enrollment performance in urban private secondary schools.

Article History:

Received: October 2025; Revised: November 2025; Accepted: December 2025

Please cite this article in APA style as:

Rohayati, R., Jayanti, T. D., Khotimah, K., Suprapti, E., Hengelina, & Victorinie, I. (2026). Transforming Educational Human Resources to Enhance Institutional Quality and Student Admission Rates. *Journal of Educational Management Research*, 5(1), 686-698.

INTRODUCTION

The implementation of sustainable development strategies in education, such as continuous coaching and mentoring to strengthen teachers' competencies and performance, is inseparable from the broader transformation of educational human resources. This issue is highly relevant to society, as the quality of secondary education plays a crucial role in shaping human capital and social

(Dewi, 2025; Kusumawati, 2025; Najiburohman et al., 2025; Syafiih, 2025) concern, particularly in urban private schools that operate in highly competitive environments (Andesta et al., 2025). These schools are not only expected to meet administrative standards but also to demonstrate credible educational services that foster public trust. Public confidence in schools is essential because it influences parental decision-making and access to quality education. One of the most visible indicators of public trust is the rate of new student enrollment (P. Guru et al., 2025). Therefore, understanding how schools can improve quality and rebuild trust through effective human resource management is socially significant. This issue underscores the importance of educational HR transformation as a strategic response to societal demands for quality and sustainability in education systems.

Despite the growing demand for quality education, many private secondary schools in urban areas face persistent challenges that threaten their sustainability. Limited financial resources, intense competition among schools, and declining public trust have created systemic problems that affect institutional performance and enrollment stability. Schools with limited capacity to develop professional and competent educational personnel often struggle to deliver high-quality learning experiences (Badriyah, 2025; Kamalia, 2023; Muzayyin & Bali, 2023; Saleha & Sholihah, 2024). As a result, these schools tend to be perceived negatively by the community, leading to decreased interest from prospective students and parents. The decline in student enrollment is not merely an administrative issue but reflects deeper structural problems related to leadership, organizational culture, and human resource management. Without strategic interventions, private schools risk entering a cycle of declining quality and reduced public confidence. This condition highlights the urgency of identifying effective strategies that can address these problems holistically. In this context, transforming educational human resources emerges as a critical approach to overcoming institutional weaknesses and ensuring the long-term viability of private schools in urban settings.

The challenges described above are clearly reflected in the empirical conditions experienced by SMA PGRI 2 Kota Bekasi. At the time of its establishment around 2013, the school enrolled only two students, indicating extremely low public trust and limited institutional attractiveness. This situation illustrated the vulnerability of private schools that lack effective management strategies, particularly in the development of educational human resources. Such a critical condition posed a serious threat to the school's sustainability and existence. Over time, however, SMA PGRI 2 Kota Bekasi gradually implemented various improvement efforts focused on strengthening and transforming its educational human resources. These efforts included enhancing teachers'

competencies, reinforcing discipline and work responsibility, improving the professionalism of educational staff, and cultivating a humanistic service-oriented educational culture. These transformations gradually improved the quality of learning processes, created a more conducive school climate, and increased satisfaction among students and parents. Consequently, public trust improved significantly, as reflected in the substantial increase in student enrollment over time.

Previous studies consistently indicate that the quality of educational human resources has a significant influence on school quality and institutional image. Professional, adaptive, and highly committed educators are more likely to create meaningful learning experiences that positively impact student outcomes and stakeholder satisfaction (Komariah et al., 2025). This satisfaction subsequently shapes public perceptions and parental decisions in selecting schools. Empirical findings also demonstrate that effective human resource management contributes to improved educational quality and organizational performance (Kasmini et al., 2021). From a theoretical perspective, educational human resource development aligns with human resource management principles that emphasize systematic planning, continuous competency development, motivation, and performance evaluation (Manajemen & Islam, 2024). Furthermore, Sari (2024) highlights that educational management transformation plays a crucial role in improving school quality through strengthening human resources and reshaping organizational culture (Sari, 2024). These studies collectively affirm the strategic importance of HR transformation in enhancing internal school quality.

However, despite the extensive body of research on educational human resource development, most previous studies have primarily focused on internal quality improvement within schools. The relationship between HR transformation and student enrollment is often treated as an indirect or secondary outcome rather than as a strategic indicator of public trust. As a result, student enrollment is rarely positioned as a central variable reflecting the success of educational HR transformation. This limitation is particularly evident in studies conducted in private secondary schools located in urban areas with intense competition. Consequently, there is a lack of empirical research that explicitly examines how educational HR transformation influences both school quality and student enrollment simultaneously. This gap indicates the need for research that integrates internal quality improvement with external indicators of institutional credibility. The gap is important because enrollment trends provide tangible evidence of how the community perceives school quality. Therefore, further investigation is required to clarify this relationship and strengthen the theoretical and practical understanding of educational HR transformation.

The novelty of this study lies in its integrative approach to examining educational human resource transformation as a key factor linking internal school quality improvement with increased student enrollment. Unlike previous studies that focus predominantly on internal organizational outcomes, this research positions student enrollment as a strategic indicator of public trust and institutional success. By using the empirical context of SMA PGRI 2 Kota Bekasi, which experienced remarkable growth from only two students in 2013 to approximately 414 students in the 2024/2025 academic year, this study offers a unique and contextually rich perspective. The research highlights how systematic HR development, supported by sustainable leadership programs, can generate long-term improvements in both quality and institutional attractiveness. This integrative perspective represents a state-of-the-art contribution to educational management research, particularly in the context of urban private schools. It also responds directly to the identified research gap by providing evidence-based insights into the strategic role of educational HR transformation.

Based on the issues and gaps identified, this study addresses the following research problem: How do the programs developed by the principal of SMA PGRI 2 Kota Bekasi contribute to improving school quality and increasing student enrollment? The main argument of this study is that well-designed and sustainable educational human resource programs, initiated and led by school leadership, play a decisive role in enhancing both internal educational quality and external public trust. By strengthening teacher competencies, fostering a professional work culture, and aligning HR development with student-centered values, schools can improve learning outcomes and institutional credibility. This study is expected to contribute theoretically by enriching the discourse on educational human resource management and practically by offering strategic insights for private schools seeking to improve quality and sustainability. Ultimately, the findings aim to provide evidence that educational HR transformation is not only an internal management strategy but also a key determinant of institutional survival and growth.

RESEACH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design using a case study approach to obtain an in-depth and contextual understanding of educational human resource transformation within a specific school setting (Nasir et al., 2023). A qualitative case study was selected because it allows researchers to explore complex social phenomena in their real-life context and to capture participants' experiences, perceptions, and interpretations comprehensively (Niam et al., 2024). This approach is particularly appropriate for examining

leadership-driven programs and human resource development initiatives that cannot be separated from their institutional and cultural environments. By focusing on a single case, the study was able to investigate the strategies developed by school leadership and their implications for school quality and student enrollment in a holistic manner. The phenomenological orientation within the case study design enabled the researcher to understand the lived experiences and meanings constructed by the main informant regarding the implementation and impact of the school's transformation programs.

The research was conducted at SMA PGRI 2 Kota Bekasi, a private secondary school located in an urban area with a high level of institutional competition. This site was selected purposively due to its unique and transformative development trajectory. Since its establishment in 2013, the school experienced a significant shift from extremely low student enrollment to substantial growth in the number of students. This condition made SMA PGRI 2 Kota Bekasi a relevant and information-rich case for examining how educational human resource transformation contributes to improving school quality and public trust. The school's context provided an opportunity to analyze leadership strategies, organizational changes, and HR development practices that are highly relevant to other private schools facing similar challenges in urban environments.

Data were collected primarily through semi-structured, in-depth interviews. The main participant in this study was the principal of SMA PGRI 2 Kota Bekasi, who played a central role as the initiator and implementer of the school's transformation programs. Semi-structured interviews were chosen to allow flexibility in exploring emerging themes while maintaining consistency with the research objectives. The interviews were conducted face-to-face in a comfortable and supportive environment to encourage open and reflective responses. Open-ended questions were used to explore the principal's perspectives on program planning, implementation, and impacts on school quality and student enrollment. With the participant's consent, each interview lasted between 30 and 45 minutes and was audio-recorded to ensure accuracy and facilitate systematic data analysis.

The data analysis process followed the interactive qualitative data analysis model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), as cited in Fajri et al. (2023). This model consists of three interrelated stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification.

At this stage, the researcher systematically selected, focused, and simplified the interview data to identify information relevant to the research objectives. Statements related to leadership programs, human resource transformation, and school development were emphasized, while irrelevant or repetitive data were excluded. This process helped organize raw data into

meaningful and manageable units.

After data condensation, the organized data were presented in the form of descriptive narratives and thematic categorizations. The data were structured according to key themes, such as flagship programs, leadership roles, and HR development strategies, enabling clearer interpretation and comparison across themes.

In the final stage, the researcher interpreted the displayed data to draw conclusions regarding the role of the principal in supporting the realization of a transformational school. To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, data verification was conducted through member checking, whereby the main informant reviewed and confirmed the accuracy of the interpretations.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Interviews with the principal of SMA PGRI 2 Kota Bekasi revealed that the school has undergone a profound and sustained transformation over the past decade. In 2013, the school was in a critical condition, enrolling only two students. This situation reflected not only low public interest but also weak public trust in the quality of education and the sustainability of the institution. Such conditions illustrate how private schools, particularly in urban contexts, may face existential threats when they fail to establish credibility and competitive educational value.

According to the principal, the primary challenges at the beginning of his leadership were not limited to academic matters but were closely related to rebuilding the school's image and public perception. At that time, private schools such as SMA PGRI 2 Kota Bekasi were often perceived as a last-resort option, associated with negative reputations, limited funding, inadequate facilities, and unprofessional management. These perceptions constituted significant barriers to increasing student enrollment and strengthening the school's institutional presence amid intense competition in urban secondary education.

Through visionary leadership and the implementation of long-term, well-planned management strategies centered on human resource development, the school gradually emerged from this state of decline. This transformation was realized through improvements in school governance, enhancement of teacher and staff competencies, the cultivation of a professional work culture, and the strengthening of learning services and student development programs. Over time, these efforts led to improvements in instructional quality, a more conducive school climate, and increased satisfaction among students and parents.

At present, SMA PGRI 2 Kota Bekasi is a private secondary school located in the Titian Kencana residential area of North Bekasi and holds an A accreditation status. The school is widely recognized by the community for its

commitment to both academic and non-academic achievement. Academically, graduates have been accepted into various public universities through available admission pathways. In non-academic domains, the school actively develops students' potential through extracurricular activities that support character formation, leadership, and creativity. From a curricular perspective, the school consistently implements the 2013 Curriculum for the Social Sciences stream (Aini et al., 2025; Maisuroh & Aisyah, 2024; Safitri, 2024; Sanjani, 2024), emphasizing a balance between knowledge, skills, and attitudes in line with its vision of producing graduates who are faithful, resilient, independent, and adaptable to global challenges.

The substantial increase in student enrollment serves as a concrete indicator of the success of this transformation. The number of students has grown from only two in 2013 to approximately 414 in the most recent academic year. This achievement cannot be interpreted merely as a demographic coincidence but rather as evidence of effective school management rooted in human resource development. It also reflects the restoration and strengthening of public trust in the school's quality and credibility, positioning SMA PGRI 2 Kota Bekasi as a best practice example of how private schools can recover and grow through effective leadership and professional management.

One of the initial strategic interventions identified in the findings is the implementation of a low-cost school program. The principal introduced an innovative policy that allowed students to enroll with an initial fee of Rp500,000, enabling immediate participation in the learning process. This policy emerged from the principal's concern for the socio-economic conditions of the majority of students, who come from lower-middle-income families. High education costs were identified as a major barrier preventing families from sending their children to senior secondary school, potentially exacerbating educational access inequality.

The low-cost school policy was designed not merely as a reduction in tuition fees but as a social strategy to rebuild public trust and demonstrate the school's commitment to inclusive, equitable, and sustainable education. From an educational management perspective, this approach can be understood as value-based educational marketing, in which the school positions itself not only as a service provider but also as a socially responsive institution. By emphasizing empathy, social responsibility, and public benefit, the school created positive differentiation in a competitive urban private school landscape (Strategi & Pendidikan, 2022).

This policy also aligns with principles of Islamic educational management, particularly justice (*al-'adl*), public benefit (*al-mashlahah*), and social usefulness (*an-naf'*). Education is viewed as a social trust rather than a purely economic

commodity. However, the principal emphasized that affordability alone was insufficient to ensure sustainability. Without quality improvement, low-cost education would result only in superficial quantitative growth. Therefore, the policy was accompanied by a strong focus on enhancing the quality of educational human resources through professional development programs, pedagogical training, competency strengthening, work ethic development, and the cultivation of a professional school culture.

In this context, the transformation of educational human resources emerged as the foundation for improving school quality. The principal viewed teachers and staff as the most critical assets of the school, asserting that buildings, facilities, and curricula would be meaningless without competent, committed educators who share the school's vision. The transformation process began with systematic competency mapping covering pedagogical, professional, social, and personal dimensions. This process revealed that many teachers possessed significant potential but lacked structured guidance and development opportunities.

To address this condition, the principal introduced coaching and mentoring programs as core strategies for human resource development. These programs aimed not only to enhance teachers' competencies but also to foster a collaborative and reflective work culture. This approach is consistent with findings by Aziz and Marlina (2025), who emphasize that strategic human resource management in Islamic schools significantly improves educator performance and learning quality through continuous training, evaluation, and competency development (Aziz & Marlina, 2025).

Coaching, in this study, is understood as a dialogical and developmental process oriented toward unlocking individual potential. The principal acted as a coach, particularly in supporting teachers' instructional performance and classroom management. Interviews indicated that coaching sessions were conducted regularly, both informally and in small group discussions. Teachers were encouraged to reflect on their teaching practices, identify challenges, and formulate solutions independently with guidance from the principal. This approach contrasts with traditional supervisory models that tend to be directive and evaluative. Coaching emphasizes empowerment, making teachers feel valued, heard, and motivated to grow.

The coaching practice aligns with transformational leadership theory in educational management, where leaders function as facilitators of change and catalysts for human resource development. Coaching serves as a mechanism for aligning the school's vision with classroom practices, enabling continuous improvement in educational quality. This approach is supported by the literature, which recognizes coaching and mentoring as effective strategies for

enhancing professional practice, fostering collaborative cultures, and promoting reflective learning communities (Aini & Wahid, 2024; Rahmatillah & Andayani, 2025; Sain et al., 2024).

In addition to coaching, the principal implemented a mentoring program involving senior teachers as mentors for new or less experienced teachers. The program was designed to accelerate adaptation, knowledge transfer, and internalization of school culture. Mentoring activities included joint lesson planning, classroom management guidance, and understanding student characteristics. This reciprocal learning process strengthened competencies on both sides and contributed to a sense of collegiality and solidarity among teachers.

From the perspective of Islamic educational human resource management, mentoring reflects the values of *ta'awun* (mutual assistance) and *tarbiyah* (continuous education). Teachers are positioned not only as instructors but also as educators and mentors for their colleagues. This mentoring model is consistent with Knight's (2019) concept of instructional coaching, which emphasizes dialogical and reflective relationships between mentors and mentees (Knight, 2019).

The findings further indicate that coaching and mentoring have had a significant positive impact on learning quality. Teachers became more confident, innovative, and responsive to students' needs. Teaching methods evolved from monotonous approaches to more varied and contextualized practices. These improvements directly influenced student and parent satisfaction, gradually rebuilding public trust in the school. From a management perspective, enhanced learning quality strengthened the school's image as a provider of quality education despite relatively low costs.

A strong correlation was identified between improvements in school quality and increased student enrollment. The principal emphasized that enrollment growth was not primarily the result of promotional activities but rather a consequence of trust built through consistent educational quality. The increase from two students in 2013 to 414 students reflects the success of integrating low-cost policies with human resource development through coaching and mentoring. This finding supports the view that student enrollment success is strongly influenced by internal school quality, particularly the quality of educational human resources (Rusdiah, 2024; Yakin, 2025).

From the perspective of Islamic educational management, the transformation at SMA PGRI 2 Kota Bekasi reflects the application of Islamic leadership values such as *amanah* (trustworthiness), responsibility, and social commitment. The principal acted not only as an administrator but also as a *murabbi* who nurtures and empowers school human resources. Coaching and

mentoring function as practical manifestations of tarbiyah and ta'dib, emphasizing both competence development and character formation. These findings are consistent with Maulana et al. (2020), who highlight the importance of value-based leadership in strengthening teacher competence through professional and spiritual development (Maulana et al., 2020).

Overall, the study demonstrates that the synergy between low-cost education policies and the strengthening of educational human resources through coaching and mentoring is a decisive factor in improving school quality and increasing student enrollment at SMA PGRI 2 Kota Bekasi. This integrative strategy has successfully enhanced service quality, restored public trust, and ensured institutional sustainability in a highly competitive urban educational environment.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the most critical factor in improving school quality and the success of student enrollment lies in the transformation of educational human resources. The key lesson derived from this research is that leadership-driven HR transformation, when integrated with inclusive access policies such as affordable school fees, can effectively restore public trust and strengthen the competitiveness of private schools in urban contexts. The findings highlight that affordability alone is insufficient; sustainable improvement emerges only when cost accessibility is accompanied by systematic efforts to enhance teacher competence, professional culture, and institutional governance. The implementation of coaching and mentoring programs proved to be particularly effective in fostering collaboration, reflective practice, and continuous professional development, thereby improving learning quality and reinforcing the school's credibility in the eyes of the community.

From an academic perspective, this study contributes to the field of educational management by offering an integrative framework that links educational human resource transformation with both internal quality improvement and external indicators of success, namely student enrollment. By positioning enrollment growth as a strategic reflection of public trust, this research extends existing literature that often treats enrollment as a secondary outcome. Furthermore, the study enriches Islamic educational management discourse by empirically demonstrating how the values of tarbiyah, ta'dib, and ta'awun can be operationalized through modern management practices such as coaching and mentoring. However, this study is limited by its single-case design and reliance on a primary informant, which may constrain the generalizability of the findings. Future research is recommended to employ multi-site case studies, include perspectives from teachers, students, and parents, and integrate mixed-

method approaches to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how educational HR transformation influences school quality and enrollment dynamics across diverse educational contexts.

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