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The Role of Human Resource Management in Improving Educational Quality in Primary Schools

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the role of Human Resource Management (HRM) in improving educational quality in elementary schools. The research applies a qualitative case study approach to explore HRM practices, including teacher allocation, learning process management, leadership roles, and teacher performance evaluation. Data were collected through interviews, observation, and documentation involving principals and teachers, and analyzed using data condensation, data display, and verification techniques. The findings reveal that teacher allocation is relatively adequate, although continuous evaluation is still required. The learning process is implemented in a structured manner, yet still faces challenges in instructional variation and learning support. The principal plays an important role in providing direction and motivation through meetings, supervision, and mentoring, although consistency remains an issue. Teacher performance evaluation is conducted regularly, but follow-up actions need improvement. The study implies that effective HRM contributes significantly to educational quality improvement by strengthening teacher performance and school management systems. It also provides practical insights for improving leadership consistency, instructional quality, and evaluation effectiveness in schools, while highlighting the need for broader future studies across different educational contexts.

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INTRODUCTION

Education plays a fundamental role in shaping human capital and determining the competitiveness of a nation in the global era. In the current context, educational systems are required to continuously adapt to rapid changes driven by social transformation, technological advancement, and evolving labor market demands (Dewi, 2025; Khofsah, 2025; Manshur, 2026). The quality of

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education is strongly influenced by teacher competence, curriculum relevance, and government policy support, which together determine the effectiveness of learning outcomes and institutional performance (Al Amin et al., 2024; Rahman, 2026). According to the Ministry of Education and Culture, improving teacher quality, updating curricula in response to scientific and technological developments, and strengthening policy implementation are essential components in achieving a high-quality and competitive education system. Therefore, education is not only a national priority but also a strategic instrument for sustainable societal development and global competitiveness (Badriyah, 2025; Holidi, 2025).

Despite its strategic importance, the education system in Indonesia still faces significant structural and operational challenges (Hefniy & Alwahedi, 2025; Shoha, 2026). The government has positioned education as a national development priority grounded in Pancasila and the national constitution, emphasizing its role in developing human dignity and intellectual capacity. However, disparities in educational quality remain evident across regions and institutions (Hikmah & Mudarris, 2026; Kusumawati, 2025; Syafiih, 2025). One of the main challenges lies in the uneven quality of human resources, particularly teachers, and the suboptimal management of educational institutions. These issues affect the overall effectiveness of teaching and learning processes, resulting in inconsistent educational outcomes (Fauzi et al., 2025; Maulidy, 2025; Zaini, 2024). Consequently, the gap between policy expectations and practical implementation continues to hinder the achievement of national education goals.

At the operational level, schools serve as the primary institutions responsible for implementing national education policies through structured programs, visions, and missions. According to Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System (Sisdiknas), education aims to develop learners who are faithful, knowledgeable, skilled, creative, independent, and responsible citizens. However, empirical observations indicate that the realization of these objectives is not yet optimal in several basic education institutions. Data from local education authorities show that school performance indicators, including student academic achievement, remain below the district average (Data hasil observasi, 2024). This situation reflects the existence of internal management and resource-related constraints that affect the quality of educational delivery at the school level.

Previous studies emphasize that the quality of education is closely related to teacher performance as the main determinant of learning effectiveness. Teachers play a central role in implementing classroom instruction, managing learning activities, and ensuring that educational objectives are achieved efficiently (Fenezia & Armiati, 2025; Kartikowati et al., 2026; Zulhadi & Afdal, 2025). Research by Yaqin & Rahman (2023) highlights that school quality is strongly dependent on teacher professionalism and performance consistency. In

this context, human resources represent the most critical asset in educational organizations because they possess cognitive, emotional, and behavioral capacities that cannot be replaced by technology or infrastructure alone. Even with advanced facilities and adequate funding, educational goals cannot be achieved without competent and committed human resources (Belle & Chemen, 2025; Hidayati et al., 2025; Muslichuddin et al., 2025). Therefore, teacher quality becomes a decisive factor in determining institutional success.

In addition, Human Resource Management (HRM) has been identified as a key mechanism in improving educational performance. Effective HRM practices contribute to improved teacher performance, organizational efficiency, and overall school quality. However, many educational institutions still lack structured and systematic HR management systems. HRM in education includes planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating human resource functions to achieve institutional goals effectively and efficiently (Mustaghfiroh & Mubaroq, 2025; Parker, 2024; Tsoka, 2026). These processes are highly dependent on leadership effectiveness and institutional governance structures. Previous studies also indicate that weak HR management practices often lead to low teacher motivation, ineffective supervision, and suboptimal educational outcomes, which further reinforce the need for structured HRM implementation in schools.

Although previous research has extensively discussed teacher performance and HRM in education, limited studies specifically examine the integrated role of Human Resource Management in improving educational quality at the elementary school level within underperforming institutional contexts. Most existing studies focus on general education systems or higher-level institutions, leaving a gap in understanding how HRM is implemented in basic education settings with resource constraints. This study positions itself to fill this gap by analyzing how HRM practices influence school quality improvement through teacher performance, institutional management, and learning effectiveness. The novelty of this research lies in its contextual focus on elementary education and its emphasis on the practical implementation of HRM functions in improving educational outcomes.

This study is based on the assumption that effective Human Resource Management significantly contributes to improving the quality of education by enhancing teacher performance and institutional effectiveness. The research aims to examine how HRM practices are implemented and how they influence educational quality improvement, particularly in elementary school settings. The central argument of this study is that school quality is not only determined by external policy support but also by internal management capacity, especially in managing human resources effectively. Furthermore, this research seeks to identify supporting and inhibiting factors in HRM implementation that affect school performance improvement. The findings are expected to provide

empirical evidence and practical recommendations for improving HRM practices in basic education institutions.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research design using a case study approach. A qualitative case study is selected because it enables an in-depth exploration of a specific educational context, particularly related to the role of human resource management in improving educational quality (Kusumaputri et al., 2023; Salmona & Kaczynski, 2024; Takona, 2024). This approach is appropriate for understanding complex social phenomena within their real-life setting, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly distinguishable. The case study design allows the researcher to obtain rich, detailed, and contextualized data regarding human resource management practices in schools. The selection of this design is based on its ability to capture real experiences of teachers and school leaders in managing educational processes and improving school quality.

The research was conducted in an elementary school setting, selected based on its relevance to the research focus and accessibility for in-depth investigation. The site was chosen because it represents a typical public primary school that faces challenges related to teacher quality, management effectiveness, and educational outcomes. This condition makes it suitable for analyzing how human resource management is implemented in practice. The selection of this location is also based on the consideration that the school provides a realistic representation of educational management issues commonly found in similar institutions. Therefore, the setting provides a strong empirical foundation for exploring the relationship between human resource management and educational quality improvement.

Data collection techniques in this study include interviews, observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with school principals, classroom teachers, and education staff to obtain detailed information regarding HRM practices, teacher development, and strategies for improving educational quality (Meydan & Akkaş, 2024; Susanto & Jailani, 2023). Observation was carried out to directly examine school activities such as classroom learning processes and teacher meetings. Documentation was used to collect supporting data, including school profiles, teacher development programs, policy documents, and institutional reports related to human resource management. These three techniques were used to ensure data completeness and depth from multiple perspectives.

Data analysis in this study follows the interactive model consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. Data

condensation involves selecting, simplifying, and organizing raw data obtained from the field to focus on relevant findings. Data display is conducted by presenting the condensed data in narrative form to facilitate interpretation and understanding of patterns emerging from the data. The final step is conclusion drawing and verification, which involves interpreting findings and validating them through continuous comparison with field evidence. To ensure data validity, this study applies triangulation techniques, particularly source triangulation, by comparing information from different informants and data collection methods to strengthen credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Determination of Teacher Needs

The determination of teacher needs is an essential process in ensuring the availability of adequate human resources to support the learning process in schools. This process involves analyzing student enrollment data, curriculum requirements, and available institutional resources to establish an appropriate teacher workload distribution. The objective is to ensure that the number of teachers aligns with educational demands and supports effective learning delivery.

Table 1. Summary of Research Findings on Human Resource Management Practices in Schools

No	Research Focus	Key Findings	Interpretation
1	Determination of teacher needs	The number of teachers is considered sufficient and aligned with school needs. No major recruitment changes are planned, but periodic evaluation is conducted.	Teacher allocation is relatively stable, but requires continuous monitoring to ensure long-term suitability with institutional needs.
2	Learning process	Learning is implemented through structured planning, task distribution based on teacher competence, curriculum-based teaching, and periodic evaluation.	The learning process is systematically managed, although improvements are still needed in planning, teaching variation, and instructional support.
3	Principal's role in direction and motivation	The principal provides direction through meetings and supervision, and motivates teachers through appreciation, training, and mentoring.	Leadership plays a strong role in guiding teachers, but consistency and responsiveness to classroom challenges need improvement.
4	Monitoring and evaluation of	Teacher performance is evaluated through supervision,	Evaluation is conducted systematically, but supervision

teacher performance	classroom observation, document review, and annual assessment.	frequency and follow-up actions still need strengthening.

Table 1 summarizes the key findings of this study regarding human resource management practices in improving educational quality. The findings show that teacher allocation in the school is relatively adequate, although continuous evaluation is still required to ensure future alignment with institutional needs. The learning process is implemented in a structured manner through planning, task distribution based on teacher competence, curriculum-based instruction, and periodic evaluation, although improvements are still needed in instructional variation, planning quality, and learning support. In terms of leadership, the principal plays an active role in providing direction and motivation through meetings, supervision, training, and appreciation programs, yet consistency and responsiveness to classroom challenges remain areas for improvement. Furthermore, teacher performance evaluation is conducted systematically through supervision, observation, document review, and annual assessment; however, the frequency of supervision and follow-up actions still require strengthening to maximize their impact on teacher professionalism and overall educational quality.

Based on interviews with the principal, the current number of teachers is considered sufficient to meet the school's operational needs. Teachers are viewed as competent in their respective fields and are able to perform their instructional duties effectively. The school has no immediate plans to increase or reduce the number of teachers, although continuous monitoring is conducted to adjust staffing needs when necessary.

Supporting informants also expressed agreement that the current number of teachers is adequate. However, they emphasized the importance of periodic evaluation to ensure that staffing levels remain aligned with future educational demands. Overall, the findings indicate that teacher allocation in the school is relatively stable, but still requires continuous assessment to maintain long-term effectiveness.

Learning Process

The learning process in this study refers to a structured set of educational activities involving planning, implementation, evaluation, and supervision. These stages are designed to improve teacher competence and enhance the overall quality of education through effective human resource management practices.

The principal explained that learning activities are systematically organized through lesson planning, teacher task distribution based on competencies, and implementation guided by the curriculum framework. Learning outcomes are continuously evaluated through supervision and periodic assessments to ensure quality improvement.

However, supporting informants highlighted several challenges in the learning process, particularly related to planning, instructional variation, and teacher mentoring. Some teachers indicated that limited learning resources and insufficient instructional support affect the optimal implementation of teaching strategies. Despite these challenges, the learning process continues to function, although improvements are needed in instructional planning, teaching methods, and supervisory support to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.

The Role of the Principal in Providing Direction and Motivation

The role of the principal in providing direction and motivation is a critical component of school-based human resource management. It involves guiding teachers in understanding institutional goals, instructional standards, and classroom responsibilities. In addition, motivation is provided to enhance teacher commitment, professional behavior, and instructional performance.

The principal stated that guidance is delivered regularly through teacher meetings and classroom supervision. Direction includes the explanation of learning objectives, teaching procedures, and monitoring of instructional tools. Motivation is provided through appreciation of teacher performance, training opportunities, mentoring, and support in addressing classroom challenges.

However, responses from teachers show variation in perception. Some informants indicated that the principal's direction and motivation are effective and consistently delivered, contributing to improved teacher performance. Others noted that communication and supervision are not always consistent, which may reduce the effectiveness of instructional support. Overall, the findings suggest that the principal plays a significant role in teacher motivation, although consistency and responsiveness to classroom challenges need further improvement.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Teacher Performance

Monitoring and evaluating teacher performance is a fundamental function of human resource management in schools. This process aims to ensure that teachers carry out their professional responsibilities effectively, including lesson planning, classroom instruction, and student assessment. Monitoring activities

are conducted through classroom supervision, document reviews, and regular evaluation meetings.

The principal explained that teacher performance is evaluated annually through a structured system involving observation, supervision, and review of learning outcomes. The purpose of this evaluation is to assess teacher effectiveness, provide constructive feedback, and identify training needs for professional development.

However, some teachers expressed concerns that the monitoring process is not always implemented consistently. Limited supervision frequency and less responsive follow-up actions may reduce the effectiveness of teacher development efforts. Despite this, evaluation activities remain an important mechanism for improving instructional quality and strengthening teacher professionalism within the school.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that human resource management (HRM) plays a central role in improving educational quality through teacher allocation, instructional management, leadership practices, and performance evaluation. These findings are consistent with Hasibuan's HRM theory, which emphasizes that planning, organizing, directing, and controlling human resources are essential functions in achieving organizational effectiveness. In this study, teacher allocation is found to be relatively stable and aligned with school needs, which supports the principle that effective HR planning ensures resource adequacy (Dakir et al., 2022; Mundiri et al., 2021). However, the findings also show that continuous evaluation is still required, which aligns with previous literature stating that HR planning must remain flexible to respond to changing institutional demands. This confirms that while theoretical HRM principles are applied in practice, their implementation often requires contextual adjustments in educational settings.

The learning process findings demonstrate that structured planning, teacher task distribution based on competence, and curriculum-based instruction are implemented in the school. This aligns with the concept of effective instructional management proposed in educational management literature, which states that learning quality is strongly influenced by systematic planning and teacher competence (Dela Cruz et al., 2025; Kumala & Nadya, 2024; Zahro, 2024). However, the study also identifies gaps in instructional variation, learning support, and resource availability. These limitations differ from ideal theoretical expectations, where learning processes are assumed to be fully supported by

adequate resources and consistent pedagogical innovation. This suggests that while the school applies core HRM principles in managing learning activities, practical constraints still hinder optimal implementation. The implication is that improving teacher development programs and instructional resources is necessary to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

Regarding leadership, the findings show that the principal plays an active role in providing direction and motivation through meetings, supervision, training, and appreciation. This is consistent with transformational leadership theory, which emphasizes the importance of motivation, guidance, and supportive leadership in improving teacher performance. However, the study also reveals inconsistencies in communication, supervision frequency, and responsiveness to classroom challenges (Ghozali, 2024; Samsi, 2025; Suhermanto, 2024). This partially differs from theoretical expectations, which suggest that effective leadership should be consistent and continuously supportive. The discrepancy highlights that leadership effectiveness in practice is influenced by situational constraints such as workload and institutional capacity. The implication is that strengthening leadership consistency can significantly enhance teacher engagement and instructional quality.

In terms of performance evaluation, the findings confirm that teacher assessment is conducted through supervision, observation, document review, and annual evaluation. This is in line with standard HRM performance management theory, which emphasizes continuous monitoring and feedback as key elements of employee development. However, the study identifies weaknesses in supervision consistency and follow-up actions, which reduce the effectiveness of the evaluation process (Mustafa & Maulana, 2024; Permatasari & Shudiq, 2024; Sholehah & Ichsan, 2025). This contrasts with theoretical models that assume performance evaluation systems are fully integrated with continuous improvement mechanisms. The implication is that schools need to strengthen feedback systems and follow-up interventions to ensure that evaluation results translate into real improvements in teacher professionalism and educational outcomes.

Overall, this study contributes both theoretically and practically to the field of educational human resource management. Theoretically, it reinforces the relevance of HRM and leadership theories in explaining school performance, while also highlighting the gap between ideal models and real-world implementation in elementary education contexts. Practically, the study provides evidence that effective teacher management, structured learning processes, consistent leadership, and strong evaluation systems are essential for improving

educational quality. The main contribution of this research lies in its contextual insight into how HRM functions operate in real school environments, particularly in resource-limited settings, and how improvements in consistency, supervision, and instructional support can significantly enhance educational outcomes.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the most important finding that human resource management practices play a crucial role in improving educational quality through effective teacher allocation, instructional organization, leadership support, and performance evaluation. The main insight shows that although schools have implemented basic HRM functions, continuous improvement is still required to strengthen consistency, supervision, and instructional effectiveness. The strength of this study lies in its contribution to educational management theory by providing empirical evidence that supports the relevance of HRM and leadership theories in real school contexts, particularly in explaining how internal management processes influence teacher performance and learning quality. However, the study is limited by its focus on a single school context and reliance on qualitative data, which may restrict generalizability. Therefore, future research is recommended to expand the scope to multiple schools and integrate quantitative approaches to produce more comprehensive and generalizable findings regarding HRM effectiveness in education.

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