



Principal Managerial Competencies for Sustaining School Accreditation: The Roles of School Planning and Program Monitoring in Quality Assurance

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:

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This study aims to analyze the principal's managerial competence in school planning and in implementing program monitoring and evaluation to support the sustainability of school accreditation. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis, and were analyzed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña interactive model, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that the principal demonstrates strong managerial competence in preparing school strategic and operational plans based on educational report data, school self-evaluation, and previous program evaluation results. In addition, program monitoring and evaluation are conducted systematically through coordination meetings, academic supervision, program reporting, and follow-up actions based on evaluation findings. These managerial practices contribute to continuous quality improvement by strengthening planning, ensuring effective program implementation, and fostering evidence-based decision-making. The study implies that principals' managerial competence plays a vital role in sustaining school quality assurance and maintaining accreditation standards through systematic planning, continuous monitoring, and ongoing evaluation.

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INTRODUCTION

Improving educational quality has become a fundamental concern for governments, educational institutions, and society because schools are expected to produce graduates who are capable of responding to rapid scientific, technological, and social changes (Demirbilek, 2022). Educational quality is no longer measured solely by students' academic achievement but also by the effectiveness of school management in meeting established quality standards.

Consequently, school accreditation has become an essential quality assurance mechanism that evaluates the extent to which educational institutions comply with national standards and continuously improve their performance (Abedini et al., 2026). In Indonesia, school quality is assessed based on the National Education Standards, which encompass graduate competencies, curriculum, learning processes, educators and educational personnel, facilities and infrastructure, management, financing, and educational assessment (Dey & Beri, 2025). Therefore, maintaining accreditation reflects a school's commitment to sustainable quality improvement rather than merely fulfilling administrative requirements.

Despite the establishment of comprehensive quality assurance policies, many schools continue to encounter difficulties in maintaining consistent accreditation performance. These challenges are commonly associated with ineffective strategic planning, weak implementation of school programs, inadequate monitoring and evaluation systems, and limited utilization of evaluation results for continuous improvement. Such conditions often reduce schools' ability to adapt to changing educational policies and stakeholder expectations. Within this context, the principal plays a pivotal managerial role in ensuring that school resources are effectively planned, organized, implemented, monitored, and evaluated to achieve institutional goals. According to the Appendix of the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia Number 13 of 2007 concerning Standards for School Principals, principals are required to possess sixteen managerial competencies, including the ability to formulate school plans and to conduct monitoring, evaluation, reporting, and follow-up of school programs (Pramono & Widiyanto, 2024). These competencies constitute a critical foundation for sustaining educational quality and accreditation.

Field evidence indicates that schools demonstrating sustainable accreditation performance generally implement systematic managerial practices characterized by data-driven planning and continuous monitoring of school programs. Preliminary findings revealed that school development planning was formulated based on education report cards, school self-evaluation results, and previous program evaluations. These sources of evidence were used to identify institutional strengths, weaknesses, available resources, and priority improvement areas before being translated into strategic and operational plans. Furthermore, program implementation was supported by a quality assurance team responsible for monitoring activities, coordinating periodic evaluations, documenting program outcomes, and recommending corrective actions. Monitoring was conducted regularly through coordination meetings, supervision activities, and program reports, while evaluation findings were

consistently utilized as the basis for subsequent planning cycles. These practices illustrate that sustainable accreditation is achieved not only through compliance with accreditation requirements but also through the implementation of evidence-based managerial processes that promote continuous school improvement and organizational learning.

Previous studies have consistently demonstrated that principals' managerial competence significantly influences educational quality and school performance. Managerial competence enables principals to organize school resources effectively through planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision, thereby improving institutional effectiveness (Nguyen et al., 2021). The management theory proposed by Terry further explains that planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling (POAC) constitute the essential managerial functions required to achieve organizational objectives (Gaol, 2021). Within educational management, planning and controlling are particularly relevant to quality assurance because they guide program implementation and facilitate continuous improvement (Khutwane & Mahlangu, 2025). Empirical studies also reveal that schools receiving higher accreditation ratings generally exhibit stronger managerial leadership than those with lower accreditation levels (Ralebese et al., 2025). Likewise, effective managerial competence contributes to institutional quality through systematic management practices (Idris et al., 2022). Successful accreditation depends largely on the principal's capacity to implement management functions consistently and sustainably (Galdames-Calderón, 2023).

Although previous studies have confirmed the importance of principals' managerial competence in improving educational quality and school effectiveness, several limitations remain evident in the existing literature. Most studies have examined managerial competence as a broad construct without investigating the specific competencies that directly contribute to sustaining school accreditation over time (Oyeniran et al., 2024). Furthermore, previous research has primarily focused on the relationship between managerial competence and overall school quality or accreditation outcomes, while limited attention has been given to the managerial processes underlying accreditation sustainability. In particular, the competencies related to strategic school planning and the implementation of monitoring, evaluation, reporting, and follow-up have rarely been investigated as integrated managerial practices. Consequently, there is still insufficient empirical evidence explaining how these competencies interact to establish a continuous quality assurance system that enables schools to maintain accreditation standards. Addressing this gap is important because

sustainable accreditation requires not only compliance with quality indicators but also consistent managerial practices that support evidence-based decision-making and continuous institutional improvement (Rawasiyah Rawasiyah, 2025).

This study offers a different perspective by concentrating specifically on two interrelated managerial competencies that are considered fundamental to sustainable school quality assurance, namely school planning and program monitoring and evaluation. Rather than examining managerial competence as a comprehensive concept, this study explores how these competencies are implemented as an integrated managerial cycle consisting of planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, reporting, and continuous follow-up. Such an approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of the managerial mechanisms that enable schools to sustain educational quality over time. The study also emphasizes the role of evidence-based planning through the utilization of educational performance data and institutional evaluation results, as well as the importance of continuous monitoring in supporting organizational learning and quality improvement. By focusing on these managerial processes, this research contributes a practical and conceptual framework that explains how principals' managerial competence supports the sustainability of school accreditation through continuous quality management.

Based on the issues, field phenomena, and research gaps discussed above, this study seeks to answer the following question: How do principals' managerial competencies in school planning and program monitoring and evaluation contribute to sustaining school accreditation? This study argues that sustainable accreditation is not merely the outcome of fulfilling external assessment requirements but rather the result of a systematic managerial process in which evidence-based planning, continuous monitoring, comprehensive evaluation, and timely follow-up are implemented as an integrated quality assurance cycle. The effectiveness of these managerial competencies is expected to strengthen organizational governance, improve the consistency of program implementation, and foster a culture of continuous quality improvement within schools. Accordingly, this research aims to analyze principals' managerial competencies in school planning and in conducting program monitoring and evaluation to support accreditation sustainability. The findings are expected to enrich the theoretical discourse on educational management by providing a more focused explanation of managerial competence in the context of sustainable accreditation, while also offering practical guidance for principals and policymakers in strengthening school quality assurance systems.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive case study design to obtain an in-depth understanding of the principal's managerial competencies in school planning and program monitoring and evaluation for sustaining school accreditation. A qualitative approach is appropriate because it enables researchers to investigate phenomena within their natural settings and to interpret participants' experiences and perspectives comprehensively rather than emphasizing statistical generalization (Lim, 2025). The case study design was selected because it allows an intensive examination of managerial practices within a single educational institution that has demonstrated sustained accreditation performance. The research was conducted at a public junior high school that has consistently maintained the highest accreditation status. This site was purposively selected because it provides a relevant context for exploring managerial practices that support sustainable educational quality and accreditation, thereby offering rich empirical evidence aligned with the objectives of the study.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, non-participant observations, and document analysis to ensure comprehensive and credible findings. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the principal, teachers, and educational staff directly involved in school management and accreditation activities, allowing participants to describe their experiences while enabling the researcher to explore emerging issues in greater depth (Uraguchi, 2025). Non-participant observations were carried out to examine the implementation of school planning, monitoring, and evaluation practices without direct involvement in school activities (Zanti et al., 2022). Documentary evidence was collected to support and validate the interview and observational data, including strategic plans (RENSTRA), operational plans (RENOP), education report cards, accreditation documents, program evaluation reports, and other institutional records relevant to the research focus (Laia et al., 2025). Data were obtained from both primary and secondary sources to provide a comprehensive understanding of the investigated phenomenon.

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Lim, 2025). Data condensation involved selecting, simplifying, coding, and organizing information relevant to the research objectives to facilitate meaningful interpretation. Subsequently, the condensed data were systematically presented in the form of narrative descriptions and thematic matrices to identify patterns, relationships, and emerging themes. The final stage involved drawing and continuously verifying

conclusions throughout the research process to ensure that the findings accurately reflected the collected evidence. To enhance the trustworthiness of the study, data credibility was established through **source triangulation** by comparing information obtained from the principal, teachers, and educational staff, and method triangulation by integrating findings from interviews, observations, and documentary analysis, thereby strengthening the validity and reliability of the research findings (Lim, 2025).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Principal's Managerial Competence in School Planning

The findings indicate that the principal demonstrated strong managerial competence in school planning to support the sustainability of school accreditation. School planning was conducted systematically using education report cards, School Self-Evaluation (SSE), and the results of previous program evaluations as the primary sources of information. These data were used to identify school strengths and weaknesses, determine quality improvement priorities, assess the availability of human and financial resources, and formulate school development targets. Based on this analysis, the principal collaborated with the school quality assurance team to develop the Strategic Plan (RENSTRA), Operational Plan (RENOP), and annual work programs that served as the foundation for implementing school improvement initiatives.

The findings further revealed that the planning process followed a structured sequence beginning with a comprehensive needs assessment. The principal analyzed educational performance data, institutional conditions, available resources, and previous evaluation results before determining priority programs. The preparation of planning documents involved the active participation of the school quality assurance team, ensuring that school development programs reflected institutional needs and available resources. This collaborative approach enabled the school to establish clear development priorities and align program implementation with long-term institutional objectives.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that school planning was implemented through a systematic, collaborative, and evidence-based process. The resulting planning documents provided clear guidance for implementing school programs and allocating available resources while supporting continuous educational quality improvement. The planning process also established a structured framework for implementing subsequent school programs aimed at sustaining accreditation standards.

Principal's Managerial Competence in Monitoring, Evaluation, and Follow-up of School Programs

The findings indicate that the principal implemented monitoring, evaluation, and follow-up activities continuously to support educational quality and accreditation sustainability. Monitoring covered multiple areas of school management, including curriculum implementation, student affairs, learning activities, facilities and infrastructure, financial management, and other school programs. Based on the interview results, monitoring was conducted regularly through monthly quality management meetings in which each program coordinator reported program implementation, achievements, challenges encountered, and proposed improvement measures. This process enabled school leaders to review program progress periodically and identify areas requiring further attention.

The findings also revealed that the principal adopted a collaborative monitoring system by delegating supervisory responsibilities to vice principals, senior teachers, subject coordinators, and members of the school quality assurance team. This collaborative approach allowed monitoring activities to be carried out more effectively across different program areas while ensuring that information from each unit was systematically documented. Furthermore, every school program followed a consistent management cycle consisting of planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, reporting, and follow-up. At the completion of each activity, program coordinators prepared evaluation reports documenting program achievements, implementation constraints, and recommendations for future improvement.

The evaluation process was not limited to measuring program completion but also focused on identifying factors affecting program implementation and determining appropriate follow-up actions. Evaluation findings were subsequently used as the basis for improving ongoing programs and preparing future school plans. This continuous cycle of monitoring, evaluation, reporting, and follow-up demonstrates that quality improvement activities were integrated into the school's managerial practices and implemented consistently throughout the academic year.

Table 1. Findings on the Principal's Managerial Competence in Monitoring, Evaluation, and Follow-up of School Programs

Monitoring and Evaluation Aspect	Findings
Monitoring objects	Curriculum, student affairs, learning activities, facilities and infrastructure, financial management, and other school programs
Monitoring personnel	Principal, vice principals, senior teachers, program coordinators, and the school quality assurance team

Monitoring mechanism	Monthly quality management meetings, routine supervision, and program reports
Evaluation activities	Assessment of program implementation, achievement of program objectives, and identification of implementation constraints
Follow-up actions	Improvement of ongoing programs and preparation of subsequent school programs based on evaluation results
Outcome	Continuous educational quality improvement and sustained school accreditation

Table 1 summarizes the implementation of monitoring, evaluation, and follow-up activities undertaken by the school. Monitoring involved multiple management areas and was conducted collaboratively by the principal and other school personnel through regular quality management meetings and program reporting. Evaluation focused on documenting program achievements and implementation constraints, while follow-up activities were directed toward improving subsequent programs. Overall, the findings indicate that monitoring and evaluation were implemented systematically as part of the school's routine management practices to support continuous quality improvement and accreditation sustainability.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that the principal's managerial competence in school planning plays a fundamental role in sustaining school accreditation through systematic and evidence-based planning. The planning process, which was developed using education report cards, School Self-Evaluation (SSE), and previous program evaluation results, reflects the implementation of strategic management principles in educational institutions. Planning establishes organizational direction and provides a framework for allocating school resources effectively (Parveen et al., 2024). It also serves as an essential managerial competency that enables principals to direct educational resources toward achieving institutional goals (Tharaba et al., 2025). The present findings indicate that strategic planning is not merely an administrative requirement but functions as a mechanism for sustaining accreditation through continuous quality improvement. This finding supports previous research showing that managerial competence strengthens principals' ability to organize educational resources and improve institutional performance (Rahminawati & Supriyadi, 2023).

The findings further indicate that evidence-based planning contributes substantially to effective school governance and accreditation sustainability. The use of education report cards and School Self-Evaluation enabled the school to identify institutional priorities objectively before determining development

programs and allocating available resources. This finding is consistent with research showing that schools achieving higher accreditation generally employ data-driven planning as the basis for decision-making (Alenezi et al., 2023). Strategic planning documents also facilitate the alignment between long-term institutional objectives and operational programs, thereby strengthening organizational effectiveness (Amaral & Norcini, 2022). Moreover, the preparation of RENSTRA and RENOP provides documented evidence of systematic and accountable school management during accreditation assessments (Shal et al., 2024). Compared with previous studies, the present research demonstrates more explicitly how educational data, institutional evaluation, and strategic planning are integrated into a continuous quality assurance cycle rather than functioning as separate managerial activities.

Another important finding is the collaborative nature of the planning process, in which the principal actively involved the school quality assurance team in identifying institutional needs, determining development priorities, and preparing strategic programs. This collaborative practice indicates that managerial competence extends beyond planning activities to include the effective organization and coordination of human resources for achieving institutional objectives. These findings are consistent with previous studies reporting that principals' managerial competence improves institutional quality through effective planning and organizational coordination (Puerta-Guardo et al., 2025). The findings also reflect the managerial responsibilities required of school principals in planning, organizing, and managing school resources systematically as stipulated in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia Number 13 of 2007 concerning Standards for School Principals (Van Vuuren & Van Der Bank, 2023). From a theoretical perspective, this study reinforces the application of the Planning component of the POAC framework by demonstrating that collaborative and evidence-based planning strengthens institutional governance and supports accreditation sustainability. From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that schools should establish participatory planning mechanisms supported by quality assurance teams and comprehensive educational data to ensure that school development programs remain responsive, measurable, and sustainable.

The findings indicate that the principal implemented monitoring, evaluation, and follow-up activities as an integrated managerial cycle to support continuous educational quality improvement and accreditation sustainability. Monitoring was conducted regularly through quality management meetings, program reports, and the involvement of vice principals, senior teachers, program coordinators, and the school quality assurance team. This collaborative monitoring system enabled the school to identify implementation constraints,

evaluate program achievements, and formulate appropriate corrective actions in a timely manner. Such practices demonstrate that monitoring and evaluation function not only as administrative procedures but also as strategic management instruments for maintaining organizational performance. These findings are consistent with the controlling function in educational management, which emphasizes continuous supervision and corrective actions to ensure that organizational activities remain aligned with predetermined objectives (Javed & Alenezi, 2023). The findings also support previous studies reporting that systematic monitoring and evaluation strengthen school quality assurance and contribute to sustaining accreditation standards (Yani et al., 2024).

Another important finding is that monitoring, evaluation, and follow-up were implemented as a continuous improvement cycle rather than as activities conducted solely to fulfill accreditation requirements. Evaluation results were consistently used as the basis for revising ongoing programs, preparing subsequent work plans, and improving institutional performance. This finding differs from many previous studies that examined principals' managerial competence primarily from the perspective of educational quality improvement or accreditation achievement. The present study demonstrates that school planning and monitoring are interconnected managerial processes that continuously reinforce one another within a sustainable quality assurance system. Consequently, this study extends the existing literature by explaining that accreditation sustainability is achieved through an integrated managerial cycle consisting of evidence-based planning, collaborative implementation, systematic monitoring, comprehensive evaluation, and continuous follow-up rather than through isolated managerial functions.

Theoretically, this study enriches the literature on educational management by providing empirical evidence that the Planning and Controlling dimensions of the POAC framework operate as complementary managerial functions in sustaining school accreditation. The findings suggest that sustainable accreditation should be understood as a continuous organizational process supported by evidence-based planning and systematic quality control rather than as the outcome of periodic external assessment. Practically, the study provides a managerial framework that can be adopted by school principals to strengthen internal quality assurance through strategic planning, collaborative monitoring, and continuous evaluation. The integration of these managerial competencies offers a practical reference for schools and educational policymakers seeking to establish sustainable quality management systems capable of maintaining accreditation standards while continuously improving educational quality.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that sustainable school accreditation is strongly supported by the principal's managerial competence in implementing evidence-based school planning and systematic monitoring, evaluation, and follow-up as an integrated quality assurance cycle. The most important finding is that accreditation sustainability is achieved not merely through compliance with accreditation requirements but through continuous managerial practices that utilize educational performance data, collaborative planning, and ongoing program improvement to strengthen school quality. These findings contribute to the field of educational management by providing empirical evidence that the Planning and Controlling dimensions of managerial competence function as complementary processes in sustaining accreditation, thereby extending existing knowledge on principal leadership beyond general school quality improvement toward long-term accreditation sustainability. Nevertheless, this study is limited to a single qualitative case, which may restrict the transferability of its findings to other educational contexts. Future research is therefore recommended to examine multiple schools with different accreditation levels using comparative qualitative or mixed-methods approaches to develop a broader understanding of how principals' managerial competencies influence sustainable quality assurance across diverse educational settings.

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