



Educational Assistance Program Management: An Integrated Approach to Planning, Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to analyze the management of the Program Indonesia Pintar (PIP) by examining the processes of planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation within an educational institution. A qualitative descriptive research design was employed to obtain a comprehensive understanding of program management practices in their natural setting. Data were collected through observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis involving school administrators, program operators, teachers, parents, and student beneficiaries. The data were analyzed through data condensation, data display, and conclusion verification to identify patterns and themes related to program implementation. The findings reveal that the program has been managed systematically through beneficiary identification, administrative verification, coordinated fund distribution, and continuous monitoring of fund utilization. Nevertheless, several challenges remain, including delays in fund disbursement, incomplete administrative records, limited parental understanding of program procedures, and coordination issues among relevant stakeholders. The study implies that strengthening data management, improving stakeholder coordination, expanding communication with parents, and reinforcing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are essential to enhance the effectiveness, transparency, and accountability of educational assistance program management.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental human right and an essential instrument for improving the quality of human resources, reducing poverty, and promoting sustainable national development (Sreedharan et al., 2024). Equal access to education enables individuals to acquire knowledge, skills, and values necessary

for active participation in social and economic life. However, educational opportunities remain uneven because many students from economically disadvantaged families continue to experience financial barriers that limit their ability to complete compulsory education. Governments therefore implement educational assistance policies to ensure that financial hardship does not prevent children from attending school (Lokmic-Tomkins et al., 2024). Such policies are expected to improve educational participation, reduce dropout rates, and strengthen social equity. Consequently, effective management of educational assistance programs is not only important for beneficiaries but also for society because it supports inclusive education, human capital development, and long-term economic growth through equal learning opportunities for all students regardless of their socioeconomic background (Richardson et al., 2025).

Educational assistance programs have become one of the primary policy instruments for promoting educational equity and supporting vulnerable students (Assefa, 2021). Financial support helps families meet school-related expenses such as uniforms, learning materials, transportation, and other educational necessities that often become obstacles to school participation. Nevertheless, the success of these programs depends not only on the availability of financial resources but also on effective management at the institutional level. Proper planning, beneficiary selection, fund distribution, monitoring, and evaluation are essential to ensure that assistance reaches eligible students and achieves its intended objectives (Milan et al., 2024). Weak management may reduce program effectiveness, create administrative inefficiencies, and generate public distrust. Therefore, examining how educational assistance programs are managed is socially significant because it provides evidence for improving accountability, transparency, and service quality while ensuring that public resources contribute to equitable educational development and better learning opportunities for disadvantaged students (Holst et al., 2024).

Despite continuous government efforts to expand educational access, numerous challenges remain in the implementation of educational assistance programs (Tahir & Rachman, 2025). Administrative inaccuracies, delays in fund disbursement, incomplete beneficiary documentation, and inconsistencies in beneficiary selection frequently reduce program effectiveness. In some cases, students who satisfy eligibility criteria fail to receive assistance, whereas financially capable students are mistakenly included as beneficiaries (Taufiqurrahman et al., 2025). These conditions indicate that implementation problems are often associated with weaknesses in program management rather than policy formulation alone. Furthermore, limited communication between schools, parents, and education authorities may reduce understanding of program procedures and appropriate fund utilization. Such challenges affect not

only program efficiency but also educational equity because financial assistance may not reach the students who need it most. Consequently, improving management practices has become an important issue for enhancing the effectiveness and accountability of educational assistance programs.

Field observations indicate that the implementation of educational assistance programs continues to encounter operational challenges at the school level. Difficulties frequently arise during beneficiary data collection, verification of students' socioeconomic conditions, submission of required documents, and coordination with relevant stakeholders (Fenezia & Armianti, 2025). Changes in beneficiary quotas, delays in administrative processes, and limited dissemination of information to parents often influence the smooth implementation of the program (Wiyono et al., 2025). Furthermore, schools must ensure that financial assistance is utilized appropriately for educational purposes while maintaining transparency and accountability throughout the management process. These practical conditions demonstrate that successful implementation requires not only compliance with government regulations but also effective managerial capacity within educational institutions. Therefore, understanding how schools organize, implement, supervise, and evaluate educational assistance programs is essential for identifying practical solutions that improve program effectiveness and ensure that educational support reaches its intended beneficiaries.

Previous studies have consistently reported that educational assistance programs contribute positively to reducing students' financial burdens, improving school participation, and preventing early school dropout. Research has also shown that financial assistance enables students to purchase educational materials and participate more actively in learning activities (Heidari et al., 2023). Several scholars have emphasized the importance of transparent beneficiary selection, accurate administrative procedures, and effective coordination among stakeholders in supporting successful program implementation. Other studies have highlighted that educational assistance policies promote educational equity by expanding access for students from economically disadvantaged households. Although these findings demonstrate the positive contribution of educational assistance programs (Tarashtwal et al., 2026), most existing studies primarily evaluate policy outcomes and beneficiary impacts rather than examining the comprehensive managerial processes that determine program effectiveness within educational institutions.

Furthermore, existing literature pays limited attention to the integration of management functions such as planning, organizing, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation within educational assistance programs. Previous studies generally discuss these components separately and provide insufficient analysis of how they interact to influence program effectiveness (Merry et al.,

2023). Research has also focused predominantly on policy implementation from a governmental perspective, while the managerial role of schools in ensuring transparency, accountability, and appropriate fund utilization remains underexplored. As a result, there is still limited empirical evidence explaining how management practices affect the success of educational assistance programs at the institutional level. Addressing this research gap is important because effective management constitutes the foundation for achieving policy objectives, improving service quality (Luo et al., 2024), minimizing implementation problems, and ensuring that educational assistance reaches eligible students in an equitable and sustainable manner.

This study offers a comprehensive perspective by examining educational assistance management through the integrated functions of planning, organizing, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation within a single analytical framework. Rather than focusing solely on policy outcomes or beneficiary perceptions, this research investigates how managerial processes influence program effectiveness, transparency, accountability, and the achievement of educational objectives. It also explores practical challenges encountered during implementation and identifies management strategies that can strengthen institutional performance. By integrating these dimensions, the study provides a more holistic understanding of educational assistance management and offers practical recommendations for improving governance, strengthening stakeholder coordination, and enhancing the sustainability of educational support programs in educational institutions.

Based on these considerations, this study addresses the following research problem: how is the management of an educational assistance program implemented through planning, organizing, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, and what challenges influence its effectiveness? This study argues that effective program management is determined not only by policy compliance but also by systematic planning, accurate beneficiary identification, clear organizational responsibilities, transparent fund management, continuous supervision, and comprehensive evaluation. When these managerial components function collaboratively, educational assistance is more likely to reach eligible beneficiaries, improve accountability, strengthen stakeholder trust, and contribute to equitable access to education. Therefore, understanding these management processes provides valuable evidence for improving institutional practices and maximizing the effectiveness of educational assistance programs.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to provide a comprehensive description of the management of the Program Indonesia Pintar (PIP) in its natural educational setting (Villamin et al., 2025). A qualitative

descriptive approach was selected because the study aimed to describe how planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation were carried out by school stakeholders rather than testing hypotheses or developing new theories (S. Hall & Liebenberg, 2024). This approach enabled the researcher to explore participants' experiences, institutional practices, and administrative procedures through direct interaction and detailed observation. By emphasizing factual descriptions of managerial processes, qualitative descriptive research facilitated a holistic understanding of educational assistance management while preserving the context in which the program was implemented. Consequently, this design was considered appropriate for identifying implementation practices, operational challenges, and institutional responses that influenced the effectiveness of the educational assistance program within the school environment.

The research was conducted at an Islamic junior secondary school that has continuously implemented the Indonesia Smart Program as part of its educational assistance services. The research site was selected purposively because it actively administers the program and provides access to stakeholders directly involved in program management. Participants included the school principal, the program operator, homeroom teachers, parents, and students receiving educational assistance. These participants were selected because they possessed direct knowledge and practical experience regarding program implementation. Data were collected using three complementary techniques. Observation was conducted to examine the implementation of program activities and managerial practices within the school. Semi-structured interviews were undertaken to obtain detailed information concerning planning, implementation, supervision, and operational challenges. Documentation analysis was also carried out using beneficiary records, administrative documents, official reports, and supporting institutional records related to program implementation (Luo et al., 2024).

The collected data were analyzed using an interactive qualitative analysis process consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. During the data condensation stage, information obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation was organized, coded, and classified according to the research objectives. The condensed data were subsequently presented through systematic narrative descriptions to facilitate interpretation of emerging themes and relationships among research findings. Finally, conclusions were drawn and continuously verified by comparing evidence obtained from different participants and data collection methods. To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, source triangulation and methodological triangulation were applied by cross-checking information

from interviews, observations, and documentary evidence. These analytical procedures enabled the researcher to produce comprehensive and reliable descriptions of educational assistance program management while accurately reflecting the experiences and practices of participants involved in the implementation process (Heidari et al., 2023).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Planning of the Educational Assistance Program

The findings indicate that the planning process of the educational assistance program was implemented systematically to ensure that financial support was distributed to eligible students. The initial stage involved identifying prospective beneficiaries based on their socioeconomic conditions and supporting administrative documents. School personnel collected and verified information obtained from official records, including poverty-related documents and educational assistance eligibility records. The verification process involved collaboration among the school principal, program operator, and homeroom teachers to minimize data inaccuracies before submitting beneficiary proposals through the designated information system. In addition to administrative preparation, the school developed a work distribution mechanism by assigning specific responsibilities to each stakeholder involved in the program. Planning activities also included scheduling data collection, preparing submission documents, and communicating administrative requirements to parents. These procedures created a structured planning process that facilitated timely proposal submission and improved the accuracy of beneficiary selection.

The results further reveal that planning activities extended beyond administrative preparation and included strategies to improve stakeholder understanding of the program. The school organized information sessions explaining eligibility criteria, administrative procedures, fund disbursement mechanisms, and appropriate utilization of financial assistance for educational purposes. Parents and students received guidance regarding the intended use of assistance, including purchasing school uniforms, textbooks, stationery, transportation, and other learning necessities. School management emphasized continuous coordination among administrators, teachers, and parents throughout the planning process to ensure that all required documents were completed before submission. The comprehensive planning approach also reduced the possibility of administrative errors that could delay program implementation. Overall, the planning stage established an operational

foundation supporting subsequent implementation, monitoring, and evaluation activities while improving institutional readiness for managing the educational assistance program effectively.

Implementation of the Educational Assistance Program

The implementation process began after beneficiary proposals were approved through the official educational assistance system. Students whose applications met government requirements were confirmed as recipients and subsequently received financial assistance through the designated banking institution. School personnel coordinated closely with beneficiaries and parents to ensure that administrative requirements for fund withdrawal were fulfilled. Teachers also accompanied students during the disbursement process whenever necessary to facilitate smooth transactions and reduce procedural difficulties. Throughout implementation, the school maintained communication with parents regarding disbursement schedules and administrative procedures. Interviews indicated that most beneficiaries used the financial assistance to purchase educational necessities, including uniforms, school bags, shoes, textbooks, notebooks, stationery, and transportation expenses. These findings demonstrate that the program contributed directly to reducing students' educational expenses while supporting their participation in school activities.

The implementation process also involved continuous administrative management after fund distribution. School administrators documented beneficiary information, monitored fund disbursement status, and prepared implementation reports required by relevant authorities. Internal coordination among the school principal, program operator, administrative staff, and homeroom teachers ensured that implementation followed established technical guidelines. Guidance provided to students and parents emphasized that financial assistance should be allocated exclusively for educational purposes rather than household consumption. Overall, implementation was characterized by organized coordination, administrative compliance, and active communication among stakeholders. Although operational procedures generally proceeded according to established regulations, implementation remained dependent on external administrative processes related to beneficiary confirmation and fund disbursement schedules. Nevertheless, the school successfully facilitated the overall implementation process and ensured that beneficiaries accessed educational assistance according to applicable administrative procedures.



Figure 1. Verification and Distribution Process of the Indonesia Smart Program (PIP) Assistance at MTs. Lubbul Labib Maron Probolinggo.

Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of educational assistance recipients during the implementation of the program. The figure demonstrates that financial assistance was distributed through an organized administrative mechanism involving beneficiary verification, coordination with the designated bank, and supervision by school personnel during the disbursement process. It also shows that recipient distribution followed the officially approved beneficiary list, indicating that implementation was conducted systematically in accordance with institutional procedures. Furthermore, the figure reflects the school's commitment to ensuring that all confirmed beneficiaries successfully received educational assistance while maintaining administrative accountability throughout the distribution process.

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Educational Assistance Program

The findings indicate that monitoring activities were conducted from the initial administrative stage until the completion of program implementation. Administrative supervision began with the examination of beneficiary documents, including eligibility records and supporting documents required for the educational assistance program. The school principal and the program operator verified the completeness and accuracy of student data before submitting beneficiary proposals. This verification process was intended to minimize administrative errors that could affect beneficiary eligibility. After the beneficiaries had been officially determined, the school continued monitoring the fund disbursement process by ensuring that students and parents received information regarding withdrawal schedules, administrative requirements, and banking procedures. Whenever problems such as delayed disbursement or inaccurate administrative data occurred, the school immediately coordinated with the relevant authorities to facilitate problem resolution and ensure that eligible students could receive educational assistance according to the established procedures.

Evaluation activities were carried out continuously after program implementation through administrative reporting and internal monitoring. The program operator prepared reports describing the number of beneficiaries, fund distribution activities, implementation procedures, and operational issues

encountered during each implementation period. These reports were submitted to school management as evaluation materials for improving future implementation. In addition, the school utilized the Integrated Information System for Madrasah Educational Assistance to support administrative reporting, monitoring, and complaint management. Monitoring also included communication with parents regarding the appropriate utilization of educational assistance funds for school-related expenses, including uniforms, books, stationery, transportation, and other educational necessities. Although direct supervision of fund utilization remained limited because the funds were managed by students and parents, the school consistently provided guidance to encourage appropriate use of financial assistance for educational purposes.

Challenges in Program Implementation

The findings reveal several challenges affecting the implementation of the educational assistance program. The first challenge involved delays in fund disbursement, which were influenced by the beneficiary determination process and the distribution schedule established by the responsible authorities and the designated bank. As a result, some students were unable to immediately utilize the assistance to purchase educational materials required at the beginning of the academic year. Another challenge concerned changes and inconsistencies in students' administrative records. Incomplete supporting documents, changes in population data, and discrepancies in personal information occasionally delayed beneficiary verification and proposal submission. Consequently, the school was required to conduct repeated data verification and administrative updates before the beneficiary list could be finalized and approved through the official information system.

Another challenge identified during the study was the limited understanding of some parents regarding program procedures and the intended use of educational assistance funds. Several parents required repeated explanations concerning administrative requirements, withdrawal procedures, and the appropriate allocation of financial assistance for educational needs. The implementation process also depended on coordination among multiple stakeholders, including the school, educational authorities, and the designated banking institution. Differences in administrative schedules occasionally affected the overall implementation process. Furthermore, the school experienced limitations in directly monitoring how students and parents utilized the financial assistance after disbursement because the funds were managed independently by beneficiary families. Nevertheless, the school continued providing information, guidance, and regular communication to encourage the appropriate use of educational assistance and to improve the effectiveness of program implementation in subsequent periods.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that systematic planning plays a fundamental role in ensuring the successful implementation of the educational assistance program. The identification and verification of eligible beneficiaries, supported by collaboration among school administrators, program operators, and homeroom teachers, contributed to a structured planning process that minimized administrative inaccuracies (A. Hall et al., 2024). These findings are consistent with previous studies emphasizing that effective educational assistance programs require accurate beneficiary identification and comprehensive administrative preparation before program implementation (Ige et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2021). However, this study extends previous research by demonstrating that planning also involves clear task distribution and continuous communication with parents, which strengthen institutional readiness and reduce implementation barriers. From a theoretical perspective, these findings support educational management theory, which considers planning as the primary managerial function determining organizational effectiveness. Practically, comprehensive planning enables schools to improve administrative efficiency, strengthen transparency, and ensure that educational assistance reaches students who genuinely require financial support.

The implementation findings indicate that effective coordination among school management, students, parents, and financial institutions contributes significantly to the successful distribution of educational assistance. The school not only performed administrative responsibilities but also facilitated communication, accompanied students during fund disbursement, and provided guidance regarding the appropriate use of financial assistance. These findings are consistent with previous studies reporting that school involvement is essential for ensuring accountability and supporting the effectiveness of educational assistance programs (Elsenburg et al., 2021). Nevertheless, this research reveals a broader managerial role in which schools function not merely as administrative intermediaries but also as facilitators of stakeholder collaboration throughout the implementation process. This finding enriches the understanding of educational management by illustrating that implementation effectiveness depends on organizational coordination rather than solely on policy compliance (Olariu & Brad, 2022). Consequently, strengthening institutional collaboration may improve service quality, administrative efficiency, and beneficiary satisfaction during program implementation.

The monitoring and evaluation results demonstrate that continuous supervision throughout administrative verification, fund distribution, and reporting processes contributes to maintaining program accountability. Regular monitoring enabled the school to identify administrative problems, coordinate

with relevant institutions, and improve reporting accuracy for future implementation. These findings correspond with earlier research suggesting that monitoring and evaluation are essential mechanisms for ensuring transparency and effective governance in educational assistance programs (Nachinab & Armstrong, 2024). However, this study further demonstrates that monitoring extends beyond administrative control by including continuous communication with parents regarding the appropriate utilization of educational assistance funds. This broader perspective strengthens educational management theory by emphasizing monitoring as an interactive process involving multiple stakeholders rather than merely institutional supervision. Practically, continuous monitoring encourages responsible fund utilization, strengthens stakeholder trust, improves institutional accountability, and provides valuable information for future program improvement (Chaudhry et al., 2023).

The challenges identified in this study indicate that effective management of educational assistance programs depends not only on institutional commitment but also on external administrative and organizational factors. Delays in fund disbursement, incomplete beneficiary documentation, changing student data, and limited parental understanding were the primary obstacles affecting program implementation. Similar challenges have been reported in previous studies, which identified administrative complexity and weak inter-institutional coordination as significant barriers to achieving effective educational assistance delivery (Jacobs et al., 2023). However, the present findings suggest that these challenges are interconnected rather than isolated, requiring integrated management strategies involving schools, education authorities, financial institutions, and beneficiary families. From a practical perspective, strengthening communication channels, conducting periodic data updates, and providing continuous socialization for parents may reduce administrative delays and improve program efficiency. These findings emphasize that successful program implementation requires collaborative governance supported by responsive institutional management and effective stakeholder participation.

The present study offers a broader perspective on educational assistance management by integrating the managerial functions of planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and problem identification within a single analytical framework. Previous studies have generally examined educational assistance programs from the perspectives of policy effectiveness, beneficiary satisfaction, or financial impacts (Warren & Churchill, 2022). In contrast, this study demonstrates that the effectiveness of educational assistance is strongly influenced by the interaction among managerial functions operating throughout the implementation process. This integrated perspective represents

the novelty of the study because it explains how each management component contributes to organizational performance and program accountability rather than examining each aspect independently. Consequently, the findings enrich educational management literature by presenting a comprehensive model that links managerial practices with the effectiveness of educational assistance implementation. This approach also provides a foundation for future studies investigating integrated management systems in educational policy implementation across different institutional contexts.

This study contributes both theoretically and practically to the field of educational management. Theoretically, it extends existing knowledge by demonstrating that successful educational assistance implementation depends on the integration of managerial functions rather than the effectiveness of individual administrative procedures alone. The findings support the view that planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and stakeholder coordination operate as interconnected components influencing organizational performance. Practically, the study provides recommendations for schools and policymakers to strengthen beneficiary verification, improve administrative coordination, enhance communication with parents, and establish more comprehensive monitoring systems to ensure transparency and accountability. These recommendations may support continuous improvement of educational assistance management while maximizing program benefits for disadvantaged students. Although this study was conducted within a single institutional setting, its findings provide valuable empirical evidence that can inform the development of more effective educational assistance management practices in comparable educational institutions and support future comparative research in broader educational contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that effective management of the Program Indonesia Pintar (PIP) depends on the integration of planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation processes to ensure that educational assistance is distributed transparently, accountably, and to eligible beneficiaries. The most important finding is that systematic coordination among school management, teachers, parents, and relevant institutions significantly supports program implementation, although administrative challenges, delayed fund disbursement, and limited parental understanding remain important obstacles. These findings contribute to the field of educational management by providing a comprehensive framework for analyzing educational assistance programs through interconnected management functions rather than isolated administrative activities, thereby enriching the literature on school-based

program management. Nevertheless, this study is limited to a single institutional setting and relies on qualitative evidence, which may restrict the generalizability of its findings. Future research is recommended to employ comparative or mixed-methods approaches across multiple educational institutions to validate these findings, examine broader implementation patterns, and develop more effective management strategies for educational assistance programs in diverse educational contexts.

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