

THE ROLE OF THE HEADTEACHER'S LEADERSHIP IN THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

This article discusses the role of headteachers' leadership in the effectiveness of educational management. Headteachers hold a strategic position as both leaders and key drivers in the planning, organisation, implementation, supervision and evaluation of educational programmes in schools. Effective leadership leads to improved teacher performance, the creation of a conducive school culture, and the optimal utilisation of educational resources. Through a literature review approach, this article demonstrates that the success of educational management is greatly influenced by the quality of the headteacher's leadership—which should be visionary, communicative, participatory, and adaptable to change. The findings confirm that headteachers are not merely implementers of policy, but also the determinants of the school's internal policy direction to achieve better educational quality.

Keywords: headteacher leadership; effectiveness; educational management; quality of education; literature review

Introduction

Education is one of the key foundations for the development of high-quality human resources. Amidst social and technological changes, and the demands of 21st-century skills, schools are required not only to carry out administrative functions, but also to deliver an effective, adaptive and high-quality learning process (Zimmerman and Schunk, 2003). In this context, educational management plays a vital role as it provides the framework for organising all school resources so that educational objectives can be optimally achieved. The success of educational management is heavily influenced by the quality of leadership at the school level, particularly the leadership of the headteacher as the central figure in decision-making and setting the school's policy direction (Romandoni et al., 2024).

The headteacher does not merely act as an administrator but also as an educational leader responsible for creating a school climate that is conducive, productive and quality-oriented. In practice, the headteacher must be able to carry out the functions of planning, organising, implementing, supervising and evaluating in an integrated manner so that all components of the school work in harmony. Effective leadership enables headteachers to motivate teachers, educational staff, pupils and the

school community to participate actively in achieving the educational institution's vision and mission. Consequently, headteachers' leadership is a strategic factor that determines the effectiveness of educational management within the school (Priyantono Rudito and Mardi F. N. Sinaga, 2017).

The effectiveness of educational management is inextricably linked to the headteacher's ability to formulate a clear vision and communicate it consistently to the entire school community. A strong vision serves as both a policy direction and a foundation for educational decision-making. A visionary headteacher is able to identify the school's future needs, anticipate challenges, and adapt managerial strategies to keep pace with the times. In such circumstances, the school becomes not merely a venue for the learning process, but also a continuously evolving learning organisation. This visionary capacity is crucial because educational management requires a clear direction so that limited resources can be utilised efficiently and effectively (Magfiroh et al., 2023).

In addition to the aspect of vision, a headteacher's leadership is also closely linked to the ability to establish effective communication and coordination. As an educational organisation, a school comprises various elements that must be managed harmoniously, ranging from teachers and administrative staff to pupils, parents and the local community. Without good communication, it is difficult to implement various school programmes consistently. A headteacher who is able to build positive interpersonal relationships will find it easier to foster cooperation, reduce conflict and enhance a sense of ownership towards school programmes. In this regard, participatory leadership is a relevant approach as it involves various stakeholders in the decision-making process, thereby making school management more open and accountable (Sari et al., 2025).

The headteacher's leadership also has a direct impact on teachers' performance as the frontline of the educational process. Teachers working in a supportive leadership environment tend to be more motivated to innovate and carry out their duties professionally. Headteachers who are able to provide appropriate guidance, recognition and academic supervision will encourage teachers to develop their pedagogical, professional, social and personal competencies. Consequently, the effectiveness of educational management is evident not only in the orderliness of administrative processes but also in the improved quality of the learning process in the classroom. The relationship between leadership and teacher performance has long been regarded as one of the key indicators of a school's success (Hifza et al., 2020).

On the other hand, effective educational management requires the efficient and accountable management of resources. Headteachers are expected to manage budgets, facilities and infrastructure, teaching staff, and work programmes so that all support the achievement of educational objectives. In this regard, good leadership is evident in a headteacher's ability to set priorities, draw up needs-based plans, and

ensure that every programme has a clear benefit. A headteacher who is skilled in resource management will be able to avoid wastage, programme overlaps, and discrepancies between plans and implementation. The effectiveness of educational management also increases when all resources are managed in a targeted and transparent manner (Aslan and Soesanto, 2026).

Furthermore, the headteacher's leadership plays a vital role in fostering a positive school culture. A healthy school culture is characterised by discipline, cooperation, responsibility, mutual respect and a focus on achievement. This culture does not develop spontaneously, but rather through the headteacher's exemplary behaviour and consistent policies. A leader who is able to set an example in integrity, discipline and work ethic will find it easier to instil these values in the entire school community. In the long term, a strong school culture will enhance the effectiveness of management, as every individual adheres to the same standards of behaviour in carrying out their duties and responsibilities (Hayani et al., 2024).

The challenges of headteachers' leadership in the modern era are becoming increasingly complex, as schools must contend with curriculum changes, technological developments, demands for public accountability, and ever-rising community expectations. In this context, headteachers cannot rely solely on administrative experience; rather, they must possess adaptive, innovative and responsive capabilities. Headteachers must be able to utilise information technology to support school management, improve the efficiency of communication and accelerate decision-making. If headteachers are unable to adapt, the effectiveness of educational management will be hampered by slow bureaucracy and policies that are irrelevant to on-the-ground needs (Hamid and Aslan, 2025).

Transformational leadership is one approach frequently associated with the effectiveness of educational management. This approach emphasises a leader's ability to inspire, motivate and transform the way an organisation operates through values, vision and setting an example. School headteachers who practise transformational leadership do not merely direct their staff, but also foster their commitment and creativity. In the school context, such leadership is vital because education requires continuous innovation to remain relevant to pupils' needs. When headteachers are able to drive positive change, the effectiveness of school management will increase significantly (Darojat et al., 2026).

In addition to transformational leadership, a democratic approach is also relevant to school management. Democratic headteachers provide space for teachers and staff to express their opinions, participate in decision-making, and share responsibility for the implementation of programmes. This approach can foster a sense of ownership of school policies and reduce resistance to change. In educational management, such collective involvement is vital because schools are not organisations that can function solely through one-way directives. The success of school programmes

depends heavily on the synergy between the headteacher's leadership and the participation of all stakeholders in education (Sapitri, 2024).

The effectiveness of educational management is also evident in a school's ability to achieve its learning objectives and produce graduates of the expected standard. The headteacher bears a significant responsibility for ensuring that all school policies and programmes are genuinely focused on improving the quality of education. This includes monitoring the learning process, evaluating teachers' performance, facilitating continuous professional development, and implementing continuous improvements to the school system. With strong leadership, headteachers can ensure that evaluation is not merely a formality, but a tool for quality improvement. Therefore, the effectiveness of educational management depends heavily on the extent to which headteachers are able to integrate all school components towards a clear direction of development (Lubis, 2015).

From an educational policy perspective, headteachers also act as a link between government policy and practice within the school. Various educational regulations established at central or regional level require appropriate interpretation and implementation at the school level. This is where the importance of headteachers' leadership lies in translating policy into concrete programmes suited to the school's circumstances. A headteacher who understands the local context will be better able to adapt policies to the needs of pupils and the school environment. Thus, the effectiveness of educational management is determined not only by formal rules but also by the leader's ability to manage policy implementation in a contextually appropriate manner (Aslan, 2026); (Rozikin et al., 2024).

Based on the above, it is clear that the headteacher's leadership plays a central role in ensuring the effectiveness of educational management. Headteachers who possess vision, communication skills, managerial competence, exemplary behaviour, and adaptability will be better able to steer the school towards achieving the desired standards of quality. Therefore, a discussion of the role of headteachers' leadership is crucial to emphasise that the success of educational management depends not only on the system but also on the quality of its leaders. This article will examine how headteachers' leadership acts as a driving force in educational management, as well as how such leadership impacts the overall effectiveness of school management.

Research Methodology

The research method employed in this article is a literature review, which is a data collection technique involving the examination of various relevant written sources, such as books, scientific journals and other supporting documents relating to the role of headteachers' leadership in the effectiveness of educational management. Through a literature review, researchers can analyse, compare and synthesise various expert opinions to gain a comprehensive understanding of the topic under discussion (Myeong

et al., 2022). This approach also enables researchers to construct a scientific argument based on theory and previous research findings without conducting direct field data collection (Eliyah and Aslan, 2025).

Results and Discussion

The School Head's Leadership as a Driving Force in Educational Management

The leadership of the headteacher is a crucial factor in determining the direction and quality of educational management within a school. As a formal leader, the headteacher is not only responsible for carrying out administrative functions, but also plays a role in mobilising all components of the school to work in a coordinated manner towards achieving educational objectives. A school's success in achieving high-quality learning, a healthy working culture and good educational services is greatly influenced by how the headteacher leads, directs and coordinates the available resources. In this context, the headteacher is the central figure who determines whether the school is able to operate effectively or, conversely, experiences stagnation in its management (Sholeh et al., 2025).

The headteacher's role as a driving force in educational management is evident in their ability to draw up clear and realistic plans. Planning is a crucial initial stage in management as it determines the direction of work for the entire school community. A headteacher with a strong vision will be able to translate educational objectives into measurable, systematic work programmes that are tailored to the school's needs. In practice, good planning does not focus solely on academic targets but also encompasses character development, the enhancement of teachers' competences, and the fostering of school culture. Thus, the headteacher's leadership serves as the cornerstone in ensuring that all educational activities proceed in accordance with the established objectives (Darojat et al., 2026).

In addition to planning, the headteacher also plays a role in organising educational resources effectively. A school is an organisation comprising various elements, such as teachers, educational support staff, pupils, facilities and infrastructure, as well as relationships with the community. All these elements need to be managed and positioned appropriately so that they support one another. An effective headteacher is able to allocate tasks proportionally, place people according to their competencies, and create a clear work structure. Good organisation facilitates the implementation of programmes, reduces overlapping responsibilities, and enhances work efficiency within the school environment (Sholeh et al., 2025).

The headteacher also plays a vital role in motivating teachers and educational support staff. Within an educational organisation, motivation is a key factor influencing work ethic and the quality of task execution. A headteacher who is able to provide moral support, recognition and set a good example will find it easier to inspire their staff. Motivation need not always take a material form; it can also take the form of recognition

of achievements, opportunities for development and communication that values the contribution of each individual. When teachers feel valued, they tend to perform better and are more committed to the school's objectives (Aslan and Soesanto, 2026).

In carrying out educational management, the headteacher also acts as a supervisor who monitors and guides the learning process. Supervision is not merely an activity of assessing teachers, but an effort to help teachers continue to develop and improve the quality of their teaching. A headteacher who carries out supervision professionally will be able to identify weaknesses in learning, provide constructive feedback, and encourage teachers to make continuous improvements. Effective supervision has a direct impact on improving the quality of classroom learning, as teachers receive clear guidance on how to enhance the effectiveness of their teaching (Toader et al., 2023).

The headteacher's leadership is also crucial in fostering a conducive school climate. A positive school climate is characterised by harmonious relationships, good discipline, open communication, and a working environment that supports the learning process. The headteacher bears the responsibility for fostering a healthy work culture through consistent policies and by setting an example through their behaviour. If the headteacher is able to create a safe, comfortable and mutually respectful working environment, then the entire school community will find it easier to collaborate in delivering the educational programme. This conducive climate is one of the key prerequisites for effective educational management (Shatila, 2025).

In the era of modern education, headteachers are also required to be leaders who are adaptable to change. Changes to the curriculum, technological developments and increasing demands from the community mean that headteachers must be able to make decisions quickly and accurately. Adaptable headteachers will be able to adjust management strategies to the school's current circumstances without losing sight of the educational vision. This ability to adapt is crucial because schools can no longer be managed effectively using old, bureaucratic and rigid methods. Conversely, schools require leaders who are flexible, innovative and responsive to the needs of the times (Schein, 2010). As the driving force behind educational management, headteachers must also be able to foster collaboration between teachers, pupils, parents and the community. Education cannot function optimally if it relies solely on one party, as a school's success is the result of the collective efforts of various stakeholders. A headteacher who practises collaborative leadership will find it easier to build external support for school programmes, such as literacy initiatives, character development and learning innovations. Effective collaboration not only strengthens programme implementation but also enhances public trust in the school (Rahman and Aslan, 2025).

Headteachers also play a vital role in enhancing teachers' professionalism through ongoing coaching and development. Teachers are at the forefront of education; consequently, the quality of a school depends heavily on teachers'

competence. Effective headteachers will facilitate training, professional discussions, mentoring and learning evaluations so that teachers can continually improve their capabilities. In this regard, headteachers act as facilitators who create learning spaces for teachers so that they never cease to develop. The continuous professional development of teachers will have a direct impact on the quality of the teaching and learning process and, ultimately, strengthen the effectiveness of school management (Romandoni et al., 2024).

In the context of implementing education policy, headteachers serve as a link between government policy and practice on the ground. Every education policy requires interpretation and application tailored to the school's specific circumstances. A headteacher with strong managerial and leadership skills will be able to translate policies into effective, concrete actions. For example, in implementing the 'Merdeka Belajar' initiative, headteachers need to encourage teachers to be more creative, provide scope for active learning, and involve pupils more meaningfully in the learning process. This role demonstrates that headteachers are not merely policy implementers, but also the guiding force behind policy implementation at school level (Darojat et al., 2026).

A headteacher's decision-making ability is also a crucial aspect of educational management. Every school inevitably faces issues that require swift, appropriate and accountable solutions. A firm yet wise headteacher will be able to resolve various managerial issues, ranging from internal conflicts and the allocation of tasks to the management of resources. Sound decisions will help the school remain stable and on track, whilst weak decisions can hinder the progress of educational programmes. Therefore, the quality of a headteacher's leadership significantly influences the soundness and effectiveness of managerial decisions within the school (Shatila, 2025).

Ultimately, the headteacher, as the driving force behind educational management, must possess integrity, competence and a strong vision. Effective leadership is measured not only by the ability to manage administration, but also by the ability to inspire, nurture and motivate others to achieve shared goals. When a headteacher is able to fulfil the roles of educator, manager, supervisor, leader, innovator and motivator in a balanced manner, educational management will function effectively and sustainably. Thus, the headteacher's leadership is not merely a structural position, but the primary force that determines the quality of educational processes and outcomes within the school.

The Impact of Headteachers' Leadership on the Effectiveness of Educational Management

The leadership of the headteacher has a significant impact on the effectiveness of educational management, as the headteacher is the key decision-maker in the running of the school. In the context of educational organisations, effectiveness is

measured not only by the achievement of administrative targets, but also by the extent to which the school is able to carry out its managerial functions in a coordinated, efficient and quality-oriented manner. A headteacher who is able to direct the school's resources effectively will result in more structured and productive management. This demonstrates that the quality of leadership is a determining factor in the school's success in achieving its planned educational objectives (Syarqowi et al., 2025).

The first impact of a headteacher's leadership is evident in the increased effectiveness of school-based management. School-based management requires autonomy, participation, transparency and accountability in the administration of education. Headteachers with strong leadership will be able to promote a more decentralised form of management that is responsive to the school's needs. Research findings indicate that headteachers' leadership has a direct impact on the implementation of school-based management; this implies that the better the leadership exercised, the higher the level of effectiveness in school management (Sulastini et al., 2024).

Furthermore, headteachers' leadership impacts the efficient use of educational resources. These resources include teaching staff, support staff, facilities and infrastructure, the budget, and teaching time. Headteachers who are skilled at leading will be able to allocate these resources appropriately to prevent wastage or imbalances in the implementation of school programmes. The effectiveness of educational management increases when all resources are directed towards the right priorities, such as improving the quality of learning, fostering pupils' character, and supporting teachers' professional development. Thus, effective leadership creates a system of work that is economical, precise and productive (Aslan et al., 2020); (Hifza et al., 2020).

The subsequent impact is evident in the improved performance of teachers as the primary implementers of the learning process. Headteachers who are capable of leading effectively are usually also able to motivate teachers to work more effectively. Motivation arising from supportive leadership will have an impact on teachers' discipline, creativity and commitment in carrying out their duties. Headteachers who provide supervision, feedback and professional support will help teachers to develop continuously. Consequently, the learning process becomes more effective, and educational management runs more smoothly as the school's core components operate productively (Wahyudi et al., 2025).

The headteacher's leadership also influences the creation of a healthy organisational culture within the school. A positive organisational culture is characterised by cooperation, trust, discipline and a focus on achievement. A headteacher who sets an example in work ethics will instil the same values in the entire school community. Once a strong organisational culture has been established, the implementation of school programmes becomes easier as all parties share similar standards of behaviour. In this context, the effectiveness of educational management

depends not only on formal rules but also on collective habits built through consistent leadership (Lee et al., 2011).

In terms of decision-making, the headteacher's leadership influences the speed and accuracy of the school's response to various issues. Schools often face problems requiring immediate decisions, such as internal conflicts, programme delays or resource constraints. A headteacher with analytical skills and decisiveness will be able to make the right decisions without neglecting consultation. Good decisions maintain organisational stability and prevent the school from falling into managerial confusion. Consequently, the effectiveness of educational management is heavily influenced by the quality of decisions made by the headteacher in carrying out their leadership functions (Toader et al., 2023).

The headteacher's leadership also contributes to improving the quality of educational services provided to pupils. In schools led effectively, teaching and learning, student welfare, and administrative management run in a more orderly and responsive manner. A headteacher with a quality-oriented approach will ensure that every school programme genuinely supports pupils' needs, in both academic and non-academic aspects. Good service delivery reflects management effectiveness, as the school is better able to meet the expectations of users of educational services. Consequently, high-quality leadership has a positive influence on the quality of services and the satisfaction of the school community (Andrian et al., 2024).

In terms of innovation, headteachers play a vital role in driving educational management reform. Innovation is essential to ensure schools do not fall behind the times, particularly amidst technological advancements and the demands of 21st-century learning. An innovative headteacher will encourage the use of educational technology, the development of new teaching methods, and more flexible managerial strategies. Such innovation not only enriches the learning process but also strengthens the overall effectiveness of the school organisation. When headteachers are able to act as agents of change, educational management becomes more dynamic and relevant to the needs of the community (Hayani et al., 2024).

The leadership of headteachers also impacts the quality of academic and managerial supervision. Well-conducted supervision helps teachers understand their strengths and weaknesses in the learning process. Headteachers who actively carry out supervision do so not to find fault, but to nurture teachers so that they become more competent and professional. In the long term, effective supervision will improve the quality of learning and enhance school governance. This is a vital component of effective educational management, as quality improvement cannot be separated from continuous professional development (Syarqowi et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the headteacher's leadership influences the level of participation by the school community in decision-making and programme implementation. Schools led in an open manner typically provide space for teachers, staff, pupils and parents to

participate according to their respective capacities. This participation is important as it fosters a sense of ownership of the school and enhances shared responsibility. A democratic headteacher will find it easier to build consensus and reduce resistance to new policies. Consequently, educational management becomes more effective as all members of the school community are actively involved in achieving shared goals (NANDA, 2025).

The impact of the headteacher's leadership is also evident in the school's ability to address external challenges. Schools do not operate in isolation but interact with their social and cultural environments, as well as government policies. A strong headteacher is able to forge relationships with the local community, the school committee, and other organisations to support educational programmes. This external support is invaluable in helping schools overcome constraints relating to budgets, facilities and human resources. With a strong network in place, the effectiveness of educational management is enhanced as the school secures the necessary support to implement its programmes (Syarqowi et al., 2025).

In the context of learning outcomes, headteachers' leadership has an indirect yet significant impact on pupils' achievement. Schools that are managed effectively typically have a more structured learning system, more professional teachers, and a more conducive learning environment. All of these are the result of headteachers' leadership, which is able to harmoniously integrate various elements of management.

When educational management is effective, pupils receive better educational services and their opportunities to excel increase. Therefore, pupils' academic success can be understood as one of the outcomes of effective headteacher leadership (Hayani et al., 2024); (Dewi et al., 2020).

Ultimately, the impact of a headteacher's leadership on the effectiveness of educational management is far-reaching and encompasses almost every aspect of school life. From planning, organising, implementation and supervision to evaluation, everything is influenced by the quality of the headteacher's leadership. Leaders who are able to steer the organisation in a visionary, participatory and adaptive manner will produce schools that are more effective, stable and of higher quality. Therefore, enhancing the leadership competencies of headteachers is one of the most important strategies for strengthening educational management in schools. Without strong leadership, it will be difficult to achieve optimal effectiveness in educational management.

Conclusion

The leadership role of the headteacher is crucial to the effectiveness of educational management within a school. The headteacher functions not only as an administrator, but also as a leader who directs, coordinates and mobilises all components of the school to work towards the same educational goals. Through

visionary, participatory and adaptive leadership, the headteacher is able to create a system of educational management that is better planned, more organised and quality-oriented. Furthermore, the headteacher's leadership has a direct impact on teachers' performance, school culture, and the quality of educational provision for pupils. A headteacher who is able to provide motivation, supervision and set a good example will foster a conducive and productive school environment. This demonstrates that the effectiveness of educational management depends not only on rules and organisational structure, but also on the quality of leadership capable of optimally mobilising all the school's resources.

Therefore, improving the quality of education must begin with strengthening the leadership competencies of headteachers. Professional, innovative and communicative headteachers will be better equipped to tackle educational challenges and lead their schools towards achieving better outcomes. Consequently, headteachers' leadership is a key factor in realising effective, efficient and sustainable educational management.

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