

Improving Private Junior High School Principals' Performance: The Roles of Organizational Culture, Personality, Job Satisfaction, and Decision-Making in Garut Regency

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ABSTRACT

Principals' managerial performance plays a critical role in improving school effectiveness and educational quality. However, limited studies have examined. This study aimed to analyze the direct and indirect relationships among these variables and identify priority areas for improving principals' managerial performance in private junior high schools. This study employed the Human Resource Management Strengthening Modeling and Optimization (POP-SDM) approach using a sequential exploratory mixed-methods design. The qualitative phase involved interviews with 15 private junior high school principals to identify key variables affecting managerial performance. The quantitative phase surveyed 128 principals selected through proportional random sampling from a population of 188 principals in Garut Regency, Indonesia. Data were analyzed using path analysis, and the results were optimized through Scientific Identification Theory for Operational Research in Education Management (SITOREM) analysis. The findings revealed that organizational culture, personality, job satisfaction, and decision-making had positive and significant direct effects on principals' managerial performance. Decision-making emerged as the strongest predictor of performance. Job satisfaction significantly mediated the effects of organizational culture and personality on managerial performance, while decision-making significantly mediated the relationship between personality and performance. SITOREM analysis identified decision-making competencies, reward systems, organizational norms, and managerial functions as priority areas requiring improvement. The study highlights the importance of integrating organizational and individual factors in enhancing principals' managerial effectiveness. The findings suggest that strengthening decision-making capabilities, improving job satisfaction, and fostering a supportive organizational culture can substantially improve school leadership performance. These results provide practical guidance for policymakers and educational stakeholders in designing evidence-based leadership development and school improvement programs.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Educational quality is a global issue that continues to receive attention across education systems worldwide (Nasution, Ningsih, & Neliwati, 2023). Educational quality determines the ability of schools to prepare students to face social, economic, and technological challenges. Various factors influence educational quality, including school leadership, teachers, students, educational facilities, learning environments, and curriculum (Sururuddin, Saputra, & Ramdan, 2025). Among these factors, school leadership has been consistently identified as one of the most important determinants of school effectiveness and educational outcomes.

Numerous studies have shown that effective school principals contribute significantly to improving educational quality by creating positive learning environments, optimizing organizational resources, and strengthening teacher performance. International studies have demonstrated that schools led by principals with strong leadership competencies tend to achieve higher organizational effectiveness and better academic outcomes (Tshabalala, 2024; Alghamdi, 2024; He, Guo, & Abazie, 2024). These findings indicate that principals' managerial performance is a critical factor in achieving sustainable school improvement.

In Indonesia, principals are expected to perform multiple leadership functions, including planning, organizing, directing, and controlling educational resources. However, many private schools continue to face managerial challenges that affect school effectiveness. Variations in leadership characteristics, organizational culture, job satisfaction, and decision-making processes may influence the ability of principals to manage schools effectively. Therefore, understanding the factors that contribute to principals' managerial performance remains an important area of educational research.

Garut Regency provides an important context for examining these issues. As one of the regions with a large number of private junior high schools and diverse institutional characteristics, Garut continues to face challenges related to educational quality. Accreditation data show that only a limited proportion of private junior high schools have achieved the highest accreditation status. In addition, teacher competency levels remain below expected standards. These conditions place greater responsibility on school principals to improve organizational effectiveness, manage educational resources, and create supportive learning environments (Dyanti, Diko, & Ncanywa, 2024; Puspitasari & Prayito, 2024).

A preliminary survey conducted from March 4 to March 24, 2025, involving 40 private junior high school supervisors in Garut Regency, revealed weaknesses in principals' managerial functions, particularly in planning, organizing, directing, and controlling school operations. Follow-up interviews with 15 principals identified job satisfaction and decision-making as the most frequently cited factors related to managerial performance. Further analysis revealed that organizational culture and personality were the variables most frequently associated with both job satisfaction and decision-making.

Previous studies have examined the influence of organizational culture, leadership, personality, organizational commitment, emotional intelligence, and motivation on school performance (Kurniawan, Setyaningsih, Abdullah, & Entang, 2022; Wardiah, 2024; Nizam, Rahman, & Wei, 2024). However, these studies generally investigate these variables separately. Limited research has examined the integrated relationships among organizational culture, personality, job satisfaction, decision-making, and principals' managerial performance within a single analytical framework. Consequently, there remains a need for a more comprehensive model that explains both the direct and indirect effects of these variables on principals' performance.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the direct and indirect effects of organizational culture and personality on principals' managerial performance through job satisfaction and decision-making among private junior high school principals in Garut Regency. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following research questions: (1) Do organizational culture and personality directly influence principals' managerial performance? (2) Do job satisfaction and decision-making mediate the relationships between organizational culture, personality, and principals' managerial performance? and (3) Which indicators should be prioritized to improve principals' managerial performance?

The novelty of this study lies in the development of an integrated analytical model that combines organizational culture, personality, job satisfaction, and decision-making in explaining principals' managerial performance through both direct and indirect effects. In addition, this study applies the Human Resource Management Strengthening Modeling and Optimization (POP-SDM) approach combined with SITOREM analysis to identify priority improvement indicators. This approach contributes theoretically to educational leadership research and provides practical recommendations for strengthening school leadership and improving educational quality.

2. METHODS

This study employed the Human Resource Management Strengthening Modeling and Optimization (POP-SDM) approach using a sequential exploratory mixed-methods design (Widodo Sunaryo & Sri Setyaningsih, 2020). The research was conducted in two stages. The qualitative phase aimed to identify variables influencing principals' managerial performance through interviews and expert judgment. The identified variables were then organized into an influence constellation to formulate the research hypotheses. The quantitative phase was subsequently carried out to test the proposed hypotheses using path analysis. Finally, the findings were optimized through the Scientific Identification Theory for Operational Research in Education Management (SITOREM) method to determine priority indicators that should be maintained and those requiring improvement as the basis for strategic recommendations. The POP-SDM approach consists of seven stages, namely Research Theme, Pre-Modelling, Modelling, Pre-Model Testing, Model Testing, Model Optimization, and Optimal Recommendation.

The population of this study consisted of 188 principals of private junior high schools accredited B in Garut Regency. In the qualitative phase, 15 principals were selected through purposive sampling based on their experience and expertise in school management. In the quantitative phase, proportional random sampling was employed to ensure representative participation from the population. The sample size was determined using the Taro Yamane formula with a 5% margin of error, resulting in a final sample of 128 respondents.

Data were collected through interviews, questionnaires, and documentation studies. Interviews were conducted during the qualitative phase to identify dominant variables affecting principals' managerial performance. The questionnaire measured five variables: organizational culture, personality, job satisfaction, decision-making, and principals' managerial performance. All questionnaire items were assessed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The instrument was developed based on established theoretical indicators and adapted to the context of educational leadership. Instrument validity was examined using the Pearson Product-Moment correlation test, while reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The results indicated that all items met the required validity and reliability standards and were therefore suitable for use in the study.

Quantitative data were analyzed using path analysis to examine both direct and indirect relationships among organizational culture, personality, job satisfaction, decision-making, and principals' managerial performance. Statistical analyses were performed using IBM SPSS and AMOS software. The results of the path analysis were subsequently evaluated using SITOREM analysis, which combines empirical findings and expert judgments to identify indicators that should be maintained and those requiring improvement. This process enabled the formulation of priority recommendations for strengthening principals' managerial performance.

The study adhered to ethical research principles throughout the research process. Participation was voluntary, and all respondents were informed about the purpose of the study before providing their consent. The confidentiality and anonymity of participants were guaranteed, and all data collected were used solely for academic and research purposes.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Findings

3.1.1 Direct and Indirect Effects on Principals' Performance

Based on the results of the path analysis, the managerial performance of principals (Z) is influenced both directly and indirectly by organizational culture (X1), personality (X2), job satisfaction (Y1), and decision making (Y2). The path coefficient values and significance levels indicate that all main variables contribute to improving principals' performance, although with different levels of influence.

Table 1. Direct and Indirect Effects on Principals' Performance

No	Jalur	PL β	PTL	Pr Reg	Sobel (z) & Pr
1	X ₁ -Z	0.064	-	0.000	-
2	X ₂ -Z	0.073	-	0.000	-
3	Y ₁ -Z	0.081	-	0.000	-
4	Y ₂ -Z	0.465	-	0.000	-
5	X ₁ -Y ₁	0.538	-	0.003	-
6	X ₂ -Y ₁	0.361	-	0.003	-
7	X ₁ -Y ₂	-0.096	-	0.000	-
8	X ₂ -Y ₂	0.014	-	0.000	-
9	X ₁ -Y ₁ -Z	(0.538) x (0.081)	0.0435	0.000	Z value 4.18 > Z table 1.65
10	X ₂ -Y ₁ -Z	(0.361) x (0.081)	0.0292	0.012	Z value 2.24 > Z table 1.65
11	X ₁ -Y ₂ -Z	(- 0.096) x (0.465)	-0.0446	0.216	Z value -0.78 > Z table 1.65
12	X ₂ -Y ₂ -Z	(0.014) x (0.465)	0.0065	0.014	Z value 2.19 > Z table 1.65

The path analysis results indicate that organizational culture, personality, job satisfaction, and decision-making contribute to principals' managerial performance. Among the examined variables, decision-making demonstrates the strongest direct effect on managerial performance ($\beta = 0.465$), indicating that principals with stronger decision-making capabilities tend to exhibit higher managerial effectiveness. In contrast, organizational culture ($\beta = 0.064$), personality ($\beta = 0.073$), and job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.081$) show relatively weaker direct effects, although all relationships were statistically significant according to the model estimation results.

The analysis also reveals that organizational culture and personality significantly influence job satisfaction. Organizational culture has a stronger effect on job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.538$) than personality ($\beta = 0.361$). Furthermore, both variables affect decision-making, although their effects are comparatively smaller. These findings suggest that organizational and individual factors contribute to managerial performance not only directly but also through mediating variables.

The mediation analysis shows that job satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between organizational culture and principals' managerial performance (indirect effect = 0.0435; Sobel Z = 4.18, $p < 0.05$). Similarly, job satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between personality and managerial performance (indirect effect = 0.0292; Sobel Z = 2.24, $p < 0.05$). These findings indicate that improvements in organizational culture and personality may enhance managerial performance through increased job satisfaction.

In contrast, decision-making does not significantly mediate the relationship between organizational culture and managerial performance. The Sobel test yielded a Z value of -0.78, which is below the critical value of 1.65, indicating a non-significant indirect effect. However, decision-making significantly mediates the relationship between personality and managerial performance (indirect effect = 0.0065; Sobel Z = 2.19, $p < 0.05$).

Overall, the findings suggest that decision-making is the most influential determinant of principals' managerial performance, while job satisfaction serves as an important mediating mechanism linking organizational culture and personality to managerial effectiveness.

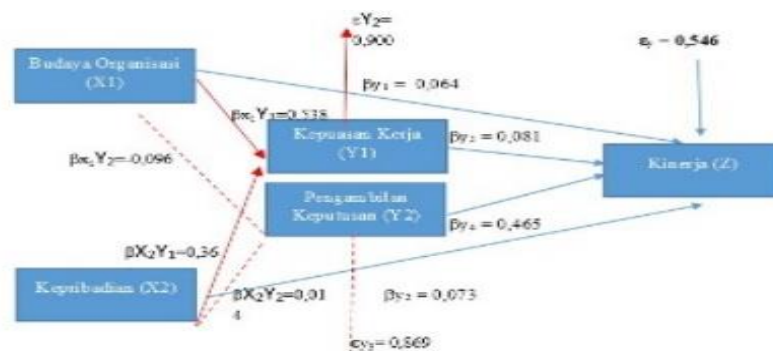


Figure 1. Path Analysis

3.1.2 SITOREM Analysis

The Scientific Identification Theory for Operational Research in Education Management (SITOREM) analysis was conducted to identify priority indicators that should be improved and indicators that should be maintained to optimize the managerial performance of private junior high school principals. By integrating the results of empirical analysis with expert judgment, SITOREM provides a systematic framework for determining strategic areas for intervention and development. The analysis revealed that principals' performance can be enhanced through a dual strategy: improving indicators with relatively low performance and maintaining or strengthening indicators that have already demonstrated satisfactory conditions.

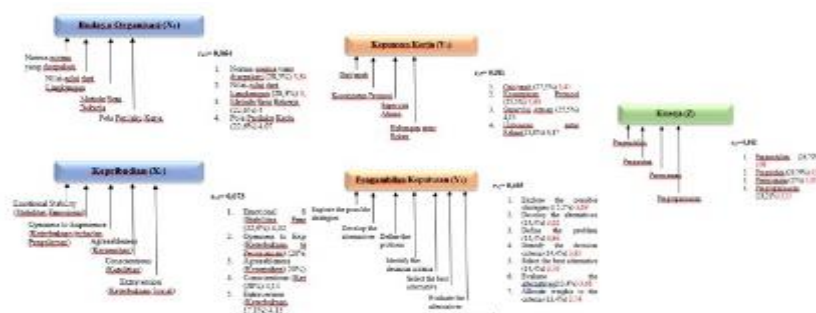


Figure 2. Analysis of SITOREM

The findings indicate that several indicators require immediate improvement because they were identified as priority areas contributing to managerial performance. Most of these indicators are associated with the decision-making process. Specifically, principals need to strengthen their ability to explore possible strategies, develop alternative solutions, define organizational problems clearly, identify decision criteria, select the most appropriate alternatives, evaluate available alternatives, and allocate appropriate weights to decision criteria. These results suggest that although decision-making was found to be the strongest predictor of managerial performance, several aspects of the decision-making process still require significant enhancement. Strengthening these competencies will enable principals to make more systematic, evidence-based, and effective decisions in managing school operations.

In addition to decision-making indicators, several job satisfaction and organizational culture dimensions were identified as needing improvement. These include salary and wages, promotion opportunities, organizational norms agreed upon by members, and environmental values within the school organization. The findings suggest that improving principals' perceptions of fairness, career advancement opportunities, and organizational values may contribute to higher levels of satisfaction and organizational commitment, which in turn can enhance managerial effectiveness. Furthermore, three key managerial functions—controlling, directing, planning, and organizing—were also identified

as priority areas for development, indicating the need for continuous leadership capacity-building programs.

Conversely, the SITOREM analysis identified several indicators that should be maintained and further strengthened because they already demonstrate favorable conditions and contribute positively to principals' performance. These indicators include supervision by superiors, relationships among colleagues, emotional stability, openness to experience, agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, effective work methods, and positive work behavior patterns. These strengths reflect supportive professional relationships, positive personality characteristics, and constructive work habits that facilitate effective leadership practices.

Overall, the SITOREM analysis provides a practical roadmap for improving principals' managerial performance by prioritizing interventions in decision-making competencies, organizational support systems, and managerial functions while preserving existing strengths related to personality, professional relationships, and work behavior. These findings offer valuable guidance for policymakers, educational authorities, and leadership development programs seeking to enhance school leadership effectiveness.

3.2 Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that organizational culture, personality, job satisfaction, and decision-making are significant determinants of principals' managerial performance in private junior high schools. Among these variables, decision-making emerged as the strongest predictor of managerial performance, indicating that principals who possess the ability to identify problems, evaluate alternatives, and select appropriate courses of action are more effective in carrying out managerial functions. This finding is consistent with educational leadership literature emphasizing that decision-making is a core competency of school leaders because it directly influences resource allocation, instructional improvement, and organizational effectiveness. Effective decision-making enables principals to respond to complex school challenges and implement strategic actions that improve overall school performance (Mailool, 2020; Tshabalala, 2024). The strong effect of decision-making found in this study further supports the argument that managerial effectiveness depends not only on leadership attributes but also on the quality of decisions made in daily school operations.

The results also indicate that organizational culture has a positive direct effect on principals' managerial performance. A supportive organizational culture characterized by shared values, collaborative norms, and positive work practices creates an environment that facilitates leadership effectiveness. Organizational culture serves as a framework that guides behavior, shapes expectations, and promotes coordinated actions among school members. When school principals operate within a strong organizational culture, they are better positioned to mobilize teachers and staff toward common goals and improve organizational performance. These findings corroborate previous studies demonstrating that organizational culture significantly contributes to principals' effectiveness and school performance (Suherman, 2022; Taufik, 2022). From a theoretical perspective, the findings support organizational behavior theories suggesting that organizational culture functions as a social control mechanism that influences managerial actions and organizational outcomes.

Personality was also found to exert a positive and significant influence on principals' managerial performance. Principals with favorable personality characteristics, such as conscientiousness, emotional stability, openness to experience, agreeableness, and extraversion, tend to demonstrate stronger managerial capabilities. These personality traits influence how leaders interact with stakeholders, manage conflicts, cope with challenges, and motivate school personnel. Personality plays a crucial role in determining leadership behavior because it shapes individual responses to organizational situations and influences the quality of interpersonal relationships. The present findings are aligned with previous studies indicating that principals' personality traits are associated with leadership effectiveness and organizational performance (Serepina Tiurmaida, 2023; Süle & Kiral, 2022). Consequently, personality development should be considered an important component of

leadership preparation and professional development programs for school principals.

Another important finding is the positive effect of job satisfaction on principals' managerial performance. Principals who experience higher levels of satisfaction with their work tend to perform managerial responsibilities more effectively. Job satisfaction reflects positive emotional responses toward work conditions, recognition, compensation, professional growth opportunities, and workplace relationships. Satisfied principals are more motivated to invest effort in achieving organizational goals and maintaining effective school operations. This finding is consistent with organizational psychology research indicating that job satisfaction contributes to higher job performance across various professional contexts, including education (Ahmad & Fitriani, 2023; Simanjuntak et al., 2023). The relationship between job satisfaction and performance supports motivational theories suggesting that positive work attitudes encourage greater commitment, persistence, and productivity.

The study further reveals that organizational culture and personality significantly influence job satisfaction. Organizational culture exhibited a stronger effect on job satisfaction than personality, suggesting that contextual factors within schools may play a more substantial role in shaping principals' work experiences than individual characteristics alone. A positive organizational culture promotes trust, collaboration, support, and professional recognition, all of which contribute to greater satisfaction among school leaders. These findings are consistent with previous studies reporting that organizational culture is a significant predictor of job satisfaction because it influences employees' perceptions of their work environment and organizational support (Fikri & Hartono, 2021; Silalahi et al., 2021). Similarly, personality contributes to job satisfaction because individual dispositions affect how people perceive and respond to workplace conditions. Principals who possess positive personality traits are more likely to develop constructive attitudes toward their work and maintain higher levels of satisfaction (William, 2023; Yusof, 2025).

The mediation analysis provides additional insights into the mechanisms through which organizational culture and personality influence managerial performance. Job satisfaction significantly mediated the effects of organizational culture and personality on principals' managerial performance. This finding suggests that organizational culture and personality improve performance partly by increasing principals' satisfaction with their work. In other words, principals who operate within supportive organizational cultures and possess positive personality traits tend to experience greater job satisfaction, which subsequently enhances their managerial effectiveness. These results are consistent with the broader literature emphasizing the mediating role of job satisfaction in linking organizational and personal factors to performance outcomes (Fikri & Hartono, 2021; Ahmad & Fitriani, 2023).

Interestingly, decision-making significantly mediated the relationship between personality and managerial performance but did not significantly mediate the relationship between organizational culture and performance. This finding suggests that personality influences managerial effectiveness partly because it affects how principals make decisions. Personality traits such as conscientiousness, openness to experience, and emotional stability have been associated with rational and effective decision-making processes (Çelik & Yılmaz, 2020; Freitas et al., 2019). Principals with these characteristics are more likely to analyze information carefully, evaluate alternatives systematically, and make informed decisions that improve organizational outcomes. However, the non-significant mediating effect of decision-making on the relationship between organizational culture and performance indicates that organizational culture may influence performance through other pathways, such as communication, collaboration, or organizational commitment.

The SITOREM analysis complements these findings by identifying priority areas for improvement. Indicators related to decision-making processes, reward systems, organizational norms, and managerial functions were identified as requiring immediate attention. These results reinforce the importance of strengthening principals' analytical and strategic decision-making skills while simultaneously improving organizational support mechanisms. Maintaining strong indicators such as collegial relationships, emotional stability, openness to experience, conscientiousness, and effective work methods is equally important because these factors provide a foundation for sustainable

leadership performance. Collectively, the findings support an integrated model of principal performance in which organizational culture, personality, job satisfaction, and decision-making interact to enhance managerial effectiveness and ultimately contribute to school improvement.

4. CONCLUSION

This study confirms the importance of integrating organizational and individual factors in explaining principals' managerial performance. The findings contribute to educational leadership theory by demonstrating that organizational culture, personality, job satisfaction, and decision-making operate within an interconnected framework that influences managerial effectiveness. The study also strengthens the application of the Human Resource Management Strengthening Modeling and Optimization (POP-SDM) approach combined with SITOREM analysis as a comprehensive model for identifying priority areas in school leadership improvement.

From a practical perspective, the findings provide guidance for policymakers, education authorities, and school management developers in designing leadership development programs that emphasize organizational culture strengthening, character development, job satisfaction enhancement, and decision-making capacity. Nevertheless, this study is limited to private junior high schools in Garut Regency and employs a cross-sectional design, which may limit the generalizability of the findings and the examination of long-term causal relationships. Future studies are recommended to adopt longitudinal designs, expand the research to different regions, and incorporate emerging variables such as digital leadership, leadership competencies, organizational commitment, and technology-based school management to provide a broader understanding of factors influencing principals' managerial performance.

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