

Challenges and Strategies of School Principals in Preparing the Implementation of Mandatory English in Primary Schools

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the awareness, challenges, and strategies employed by school principals in preparing for the implementation of English as a compulsory subject in elementary schools in Boyolangu Subdistrict. The study employed a qualitative approach using data collection techniques, including in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis. The results showed that school principals demonstrated strong awareness and understanding of the importance of introducing English at the elementary school level to prepare students for global developments. However, the preparation process for implementation continued to face several challenges, including a limited number of qualified English teachers, unequal availability of facilities and learning resources, and increasing managerial demands for school principals responsible for leading multiple educational units. To address these challenges, school principals implemented adaptive leadership strategies based on the POAC management functions (Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling), which were reflected through enhanced collaboration with school committees and supervisors, the optimal utilization of digital technology-based learning media, and continuous academic supervision. This study concluded that the successful preparation for implementing the policy of making English a compulsory subject in elementary schools was strongly influenced by principals' ability to apply adaptive leadership and effective managerial governance.



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INTRODUCTION

English plays a crucial role as an international lingua franca that facilitates communication across countries, cultures, and scientific fields, particularly in the context of the digital era and globalization (Tritias Utami & Dwinata, 2025). Advances in information technology, the rapid dissemination of knowledge, and increasing global interactions in educational, economic, and social sectors require individuals to possess adequate English proficiency (Hooda, 2022). Therefore, English proficiency is no longer regarded merely as a supporting skill but has become a key competency that influences a nation's ability to participate actively at the global level. In response to these demands, English learning at an early age, particularly in elementary schools, has received increasing attention. The concept of early language acquisition suggests that children possess greater cognitive and neurological

flexibility in acquiring foreign languages during early developmental stages (Sepioł, 2025). At this stage, vocabulary, pronunciation, and language structures can be acquired more naturally. Therefore, English learning in elementary schools is considered an important foundation for continuous language development at subsequent educational levels (Cesare Ardaya et al., 2022).

In Indonesia, the inclusion of English in the elementary school curriculum has undergone a dynamic policy development process. Initially, English was categorized as a local content subject, making its implementation highly dependent on local government policies and school readiness (Cesare Ardaya et al., 2022). However, in response to increasing global demands and evaluations of national education quality, the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education, Abdul Mu'ti, announced that English would become a compulsory subject beginning in the 2027/2028 academic year. This policy transition represents a shift from an optional approach toward a more structured and nationally standardized implementation. Through this policy, the government aims to improve human resource quality from the elementary education level (Deasy Yunita Siregar et al., 2023). English is expected to serve as a foundation for strengthening the competitiveness of Indonesia's younger generation in facing global challenges in both academic and professional contexts (Tritias Utami & Dwinata, 2025). Furthermore, this policy is considered a strategic effort to address disparities in English proficiency, which have received limited attention at the elementary education level (Cesare Ardaya et al., 2022).

This policy transition was formally regulated through Permendikbudristek Number 12 of 2024, which stipulated that English would remain an optional subject until the 2026/2027 academic year before becoming compulsory in the 2027/2028 academic year. This transition period was intended to provide schools with sufficient time to prepare human resources, infrastructure, and curricula to support effective English instruction. However, field implementation has revealed various structural and administrative challenges. Many elementary schools continue to face limitations in curriculum readiness, instructional planning, and adjustments to school administrative systems required by the new policy. These conditions may create a gap between the intended objectives of the policy and its actual implementation in schools (Deasy Yunita Siregar et al., 2023).

Boyolangu Subdistrict was selected as the research setting because it represents variations in elementary education implementation. Although several schools have introduced English as a local content subject, the level of readiness to provide English instruction varies among schools (Yohana et al., 2025). These differences are influenced by factors such as resource availability, teacher competence, and supporting facilities and infrastructure (Oktaviani & Lestari, 2023). One frequently encountered challenge is the limited availability of English teachers with appropriate academic qualifications to teach at the elementary school level (Nurhayati et al., 2020). Consequently, English instruction in some schools is conducted by classroom teachers or teachers from other subject areas who may not have received specialized training in teaching English to elementary school students (Iryani, 2023). Furthermore, limitations in teaching materials and supporting facilities affect schools' readiness to implement English as a compulsory subject. This study also identified that some school principals are responsible for managing more than one elementary school unit, resulting in greater managerial complexity, particularly in planning, implementing, and supervising

educational programs (Ardiansyah et al., 2023). These conditions make Boyolangu Subdistrict an appropriate context for examining the challenges and strategies of school principals in preparing for the implementation of English as a compulsory subject in elementary schools.

Recent empirical studies have confirmed the urgency and complexity of implementing compulsory English instruction in Indonesian elementary schools. Rahman et al. (2026) found that stakeholders, including teachers, principals, and parents, generally supported compulsory English instruction; however, they identified systemic barriers, including shortages of qualified teachers, curriculum inconsistencies, and inadequate learning resources. Similarly, research on the transition complexity of English as a Subject in Basic Education (ESBE) in Indonesia highlighted multidimensional challenges during the transition period, particularly between elementary and secondary education levels, emphasizing that students often receive limited preparation for adapting to the policy change. Furthermore, teacher pedagogical readiness has become a critical concern, as many classroom teachers continue to experience limited confidence, insufficient instructional strategies, and inadequate teaching media for delivering effective English instruction at the elementary level (Erling et al., 2017; Imran et al., 2024; Mutiah et al., 2020; Sibomana, 2022; Tekir & Akar, 2020).

Previous studies have examined English instruction implementation in elementary schools, but most have focused primarily on teacher readiness, instructional strategies, student learning outcomes, or curriculum implementation. Meanwhile, research specifically examining the role of school principals in preparing for compulsory English implementation from leadership and school management perspectives remains limited. This limitation is also evident in the context of elementary schools in Boyolangu Subdistrict, which have received limited research attention. The research gap is particularly apparent in the lack of studies examining how principals apply adaptive leadership, implement POAC management functions, and manage the complexities of school leadership under resource constraints. Additionally, existing literature has rarely addressed comparisons between public and private elementary schools regarding leadership-driven innovation in English learning (Faridli¹ et al., 2026; Obeid, 2024; Relic Jr, 2025; Umar et al., 2025).

The urgency of this research is strengthened by the upcoming implementation of compulsory English policy in 2027, which provides schools with a limited preparation period. Despite the policy's objectives, the readiness of teaching personnel, particularly classroom teachers who may lack formal English qualifications, remains a significant concern. Without systematic preparation and effective leadership, the policy may become an administrative obligation rather than a meaningful improvement in student learning outcomes. The managerial challenges experienced by school principals, especially those responsible for multiple school units, further highlight the need to examine leadership strategies that support successful policy implementation. Therefore, this research is timely in identifying how principals can effectively bridge the gap between policy expectations and actual school practices.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the dual role of school principals as leaders and managers in preparing for compulsory English implementation, particularly within the understudied context of Boyolangu Subdistrict. While previous studies have mainly examined teacher readiness and curriculum implementation, this research integrates POAC management theory (Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling) to analyze principals' strategies. Furthermore, this study addresses the limited exploration of leadership practices

across different school contexts, including principals who manage multiple school units. By providing empirical evidence regarding the challenges and adaptive strategies employed by principals, this research contributes to the broader understanding of educational leadership in policy implementation, particularly within Indonesian elementary education.

The purpose of this research was to explore the challenges faced by school principals in preparing for the implementation of English as a compulsory subject in elementary schools and to analyze the strategies used to address these challenges. The research objectives were: (1) to examine principals' awareness and understanding of the importance of English as a compulsory subject at the elementary level; (2) to identify the challenges faced by principals in preparing for this policy, particularly regarding human resources, facilities, and managerial responsibilities; and (3) to analyze the strategies implemented by principals to overcome these challenges and improve school readiness. The contributions of this research are both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, it contributes to the literature on educational leadership and language education policy implementation. Practically, it provides recommendations for policymakers, school administrators, and teacher training institutions in supporting schools during this policy transition.

The benefits of this research extend to multiple stakeholders. For school principals, this study provides insights into adaptive leadership strategies and management practices that can support effective policy preparation and implementation. For teachers, particularly those assigned to teach English without formal qualifications, this research emphasizes the importance of professional development and collaborative support. For education policymakers, the findings provide evidence-based recommendations for developing targeted interventions, including teacher training programs, resource allocation strategies, and regulatory improvements to support English instruction. Additionally, this research contributes to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on Quality Education by supporting efforts to strengthen teacher capacity and promote innovative learning approaches. Ultimately, this study aims to support the effective implementation of compulsory English policy and equip students with essential global competencies for future academic and professional development.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of school principals' perceptions, challenges, and strategies in preparing for the implementation of the compulsory English language policy in elementary schools. This approach was appropriate for exploring experiences, social dynamics, and leadership practices that could not be fully captured through numerical data. A case study design was applied to examine the implementation of the policy in elementary schools in the Boyolangu region, focusing on factors such as teacher readiness, facilities, school culture, collaboration, and principals' leadership practices based on the POAC management functions.

The researcher served as the primary instrument in the data collection process by conducting direct observations, face-to-face interviews, and document analysis. The researcher visited schools to assess facility readiness and interviewed school principals as the main informants. The researcher's role involved adapting to field conditions, exploring participants' experiences, and interpreting findings by comparing policy expectations with actual practices in schools. Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and

Saldaña, which consisted of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

To ensure data trustworthiness, the study applied source and method triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing interview data obtained from school principals with findings from observations and document analysis. Method triangulation involved cross-checking interview results with field notes and school documents. Member checking was also conducted by providing interview summaries or transcripts to participants to confirm the accuracy of the collected information.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Theme 1: School Principals Awareness as the Foundation for Preparing the Implementation of Mandatory English

The interview results indicate that school principals have a strong understanding of the urgency of mastering English starting in elementary school. English is no longer perceived merely as a supplementary subject but rather as a necessary competency for addressing global developments, technological advancements, and educational demands in the modern era. This awareness serves as the foundation for schools in implementing English programs, although their implementation still faces various obstacles. The informants believe that early English proficiency can expand students' access to various information sources while preparing them to compete and adapt to future global dynamics.

This perspective is reflected in a statement by the Principal of School AN, who explained that the implementation of the English program at the school is based on the reality that English has become a vital necessity in global society. The statement was conveyed as follows:

"Sepertinya bahasa Inggris sekarang sudah menjadi kebutuhan di era global ini, jadi sudah mulai diterapkan."

"It seems that English has now become a necessity in this globalised era, so it has started to be implemented."

In line with this view, the principal of School LS stated that the rapid development of science and technology requires students to possess English language skills from an early age. According to him, introducing English at the elementary school level is an appropriate step to equip students with competencies that meet the demands of the changing times.

"Dalam mengikuti perkembangan global saat ini, di mana perkembangan ilmu pengetahuan dan teknologi itu sudah tidak bisa terukur lagi, alangkah baiknya jika sedini mungkin kita membekali anak-anak itu dengan Bahasa Inggris sesuai dengan levelnya."

"In keeping pace with current global developments, where advances in science and technology are now beyond measure, it would be advisable for us to equip these children with English, at a level appropriate to them, as early as possible."

Overall, these findings indicate that the policy of implementing English in elementary schools stems from the principals' awareness of the importance of building students' global competencies. English is viewed as an essential tool that can enhance students' readiness to continue their education to the next level and face various challenges in the future.

Theme 2: Collaborative Programme Planning Amid Resource Constraints

The research findings indicate that English language programme planning is carried out collaboratively, involving various stakeholders within the school. The headteacher does not design the programme alone, but invites teachers, support staff and the school committee to participate in the planning process. The involvement of these various parties aims to ensure that the programme developed is in line with the pupils' needs and the school's circumstances. However, the planning process still faces various challenges, particularly regarding limited human resources and the adaptation of learning materials.

Principal AN explained that programme planning is carried out through joint discussions with all parties involved in the delivery of learning.

"Kita bicarakan bersama antara saya, teman-teman guru kelas, guru bahasa Inggris, dan juga dari komite"

"We'll discuss this together. myself, my fellow class teachers, the English teacher, and members of the committee"

A similar view was expressed by principal LS, who explained that the programme development process involves the teaching staff, educational support staff, the school committee and the inspector.

"Untuk mulai perencanaan, itu sejak awal tahun ajaran itu kami biasanya melibatkan seluruh dewan guru, kemudian tenaga kependidikan, komite, dan pengawas."

"To begin the planning process, right from the start of the academic year we usually involve the entire teaching staff, followed by support staff, the committee and the inspector."

Nevertheless, the informants acknowledged that limited human resources remain a major challenge in programme planning. LS stated :

"Tentunya dalam perencanaan ini, sudah tidak bisa dipungkiri yaitu tentang SDM."

"Of course, when it comes to this planning, there is no denying the importance of human resources."

These findings indicate that the success of English programme planning is heavily influenced by collaboration amongst stakeholders, but continues to face challenges in the form of resource constraints and the need to adapt the programme to the school's circumstances.

Theme 3: Shortages of Teachers, Professional Competence, and Regulations Relating to Teachers' Welfare

Based on the interview findings, the issue of limited teaching resources was one of the most frequently raised findings by the informants. They considered that the successful implementation of the English language programme was greatly influenced by the availability of sufficient teaching staff and their level of competence. The challenges faced are not only the limited number of English teachers, but also variations in competence levels amongst teachers, as well as regulations concerning welfare which are deemed not to fully support the professionalism of English teachers.

As a measure to address the shortage of teaching staff, the school has implemented various strategies, one of which is the recruitment of new teachers to meet teaching needs.

AN : "Kita umumkan lowongan ke media dan disebarkan ke grup WhatsApp teman-teman."

AN : "We'll advertise the vacancy in the media and share it with our friends' WhatsApp groups."

On the other hand, the principal LS explained that there are still English teachers who require further professional development so that teaching can take place more effectively and achieve optimal results.

“Untuk SD C, mohon maaf, menurut saya memang kompetensinya masih perlu ditambah dan ditambah lagi”

”As for Primary School C, I’m afraid I do think their competence still needs to be improved and improved yet further”

In addition to the issue of competence, the principal of school LS also highlighted that there are obstacles arising from regulations, particularly those relating to the welfare of English teachers. This situation is considered to affect teachers’ motivation and professionalism in carrying out their duties.

“Guru Bahasa Inggris harus merangkap sebagai wali kelas baru bisa diajukan untuk pencairan tunjangan. Kan ini juga kurang adil.” “English teachers must also act as form tutors before they can apply for their allowance to be paid out. Surely this is rather unfair.”

In an effort to improve the quality of teaching staff, the school encourages teachers to take part in various online training courses and to actively share best practices and professional experiences with their colleagues. These findings indicate that the challenges in implementing the English programme in primary schools are not only related to the limited number of teaching staff, but also concern the strengthening of professional competence and the need for regulatory support that can underpin teachers’ welfare and professionalism.

Theme 4: Innovative, Educational, and Student Centered Learning Strategies

Based on the research findings, it was discovered that schools implement a variety of innovative learning strategies in an effort to increase students’ interest in learning and their active participation in English language instruction. These strategies are tailored to the characteristics of elementary school students, who are more easily engaged by learning activities that are interactive, enjoyable, and closely tied to their daily experiences. Therefore, teachers utilize various learning resources such as the surrounding environment, digital technology, educational videos, and educational games to create a more engaging and meaningful learning process.

Principal LS stated that using the environment as a learning medium can boost students’ enthusiasm because it allows them to learn in a more contextual way and be directly involved in learning activities. This statement was conveyed as follows :

“Yang pertama kita menggunakan media lingkungan. Ini ternyata kalau saya amati, anak-anak itu lebih antusias, lebih senang, dan hasilnya itu lebih nyantol ke otak anak.”

” First, we use the environment as a learning medium. From what

I’ve observed, this makes the children more enthusiastic and happier, and the information sticks better in their minds.”

In addition to utilizing the surrounding environment, the school also integrates digital technology as a learning support tool. According to LS, the use of digital media provides a more varied learning experience, thereby helping students understand the material more easily. This was explained as follows :

“Anak-anak sering kita berikan materi-materi yang kita ambilkan dari YouTube”

”We often show our children videos we find on YouTube”

On the other hand, Principal AN emphasized that the use of various educational games is an effective strategy in English language learning because it aligns with the characteristics and developmental stages of elementary school students. Through this approach, students are expected to learn in a fun atmosphere without compromising the achievement of learning objectives. “Guru bahasa Inggris kita kreatif, beliau sering menggunakan media terbaru, game seperti ular tangga, dan permainan lain yang membuat anak-anak senang.”

”Our English teacher is creative, she often uses the latest teaching materials, games like Snakes and Ladders, and other games that the children enjoy.”

Overall, these findings indicate that the implementation of English language instruction in elementary schools has shifted toward a student-centered learning approach. Through the use of innovative media and teaching strategies, teachers are able to create more engaging learning experiences, increase students’ motivation to learn, and encourage their active participation throughout the learning process.

Theme 5: The Role of School Principals in Supervision, Motivation, and Program Evaluation

The research findings reveal that school principals play a very important role in supporting the sustained implementation of English language programs in schools. This role is manifested through various forms of leadership, such as motivating teachers, supervising the learning process, monitoring program implementation, and conducting evaluations accompanied by continuous follow-up. In addition, the principal also fosters open communication with teachers so that various obstacles that arise during program implementation can be identified early on and resolved collaboratively.

Principal AN explained that efforts to motivate teachers are carried out through intensive communication and regular discussions. According to him, open interaction serves as a means to provide support while seeking solutions to various problems encountered in the implementation of the English language program. This statement was conveyed as follows :

“Kita sering-sering berkomunikasi. Jika ada kendala di lapangan, kita bicarakan bersama untuk mencari solusinya.”

“Let’s stay in touch. If there are any issues on the ground, let’s discuss them together to find a solution.”

In addition to providing motivation, the principal also conducts periodic supervision as a form of oversight of the program’s implementation. Principal LS explained that supervision activities are carried out to ensure the learning process proceeds in accordance with established objectives and standards. This was expressed as follows :

“Kami secara berkala masuk ke kelas, mulai memeriksa administrasi kelas sampai dengan pelaksanaan pembelajaran. Baru setelah itu nanti kita ada feedback”

“We periodically visit classrooms to check everything from classroom administration to the delivery of instruction. Only after that will we provide feedback.”

In terms of evaluation, the school implements continuous assessment to monitor the progress of the English language program. The results of this evaluation are then used as a basis for determining steps to improve and refine the program so that its implementation becomes more effective. This statement was conveyed as follows :

“Evaluasi tetap ada. Mulai dari evaluasi harian, tengah semester, hingga akhir semester.”

”Assessments are still conducted, ranging from daily assessments to midterm and end-of-semester assessments.”

Overall, these findings indicate that the principal’s leadership makes a significant contribution to the successful implementation of the English language program in elementary schools. Through collaborative communication, consistent supervision, and continuous evaluation, the principal is able to maintain the quality of the program’s implementation while fostering continuous improvement in line with the school’s needs.

Challenges Faced by School Principals in Preparing for the Implementation of English as a Required Subject in Elementary Schools

The first research question in this study focuses on examining the various challenges faced by school principals in preparing for the implementation of English as a required subject in elementary schools. Based on the research findings, it was found that all school principals have a high level of understanding and awareness regarding the importance of English proficiency starting from the elementary education level. This awareness is grounded in the view that English language proficiency is a necessary competency for students to prepare them for future developments in the world of education and global demands . On this basis, school principals have begun designing various forms of preparation and support programs even though the policy making English a mandatory subject has not yet been fully implemented.

Although various preparatory efforts have been made, the research findings indicate that this process still faces a number of fairly complex challenges . The most significant obstacle relates to limited human resources, particularly the lack of English teachers with qualifications that meet the schools' needs . In some schools, English instruction is still conducted by homeroom teachers or teachers without a background in English education. This situation requires school principals to adjust teaching load assignments and seek alternatives to ensure that the learning process can continue to run optimally. These findings indicate that the readiness of teaching staff is a key factor influencing the success of implementing an educational policy.

In addition to human resources, this study also reveals that the availability of facilities and infrastructure to support English language learning remains inadequate. Resources such as textbooks, learning materials, technological devices, and digital learning resources are not yet evenly distributed across all schools. This situation requires school principals to adapt program planning to the specific conditions and capabilities of their respective schools. Differences in the availability of these facilities also affect schools' readiness to implement new policies. Thus, the success of implementation preparations depends not only on the competence of educators but is also determined by the adequacy of the supporting facilities available to the school .

Further research findings indicate that school principals also face challenges in the managerial aspect. The diverse responsibilities that must be carried out simultaneously require principals to effectively manage administrative tasks, organize human resources, and prepare for the implementation of new policies. This situation becomes even more complex because one of the informants in this study is responsible for leading more than one school. Consequently, planning, coordination, supervision, and evaluation activities require better time management and prioritization of tasks. Therefore, school principals are required to possess

adaptive leadership skills so that all school programs can be carried out optimally in accordance with the established objectives.

The results of this study align with George R. Terry's management theory, which emphasizes that the effectiveness of the Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling (POAC) functions is significantly influenced by the readiness of organizational resources. Regarding the planning function, the principal has developed various plans as part of the preparation for implementing English as a required subject. However, its implementation is still hampered by a shortage of competent teachers and inadequate learning support facilities. Furthermore, regarding the organizing function, the school principal has sought to optimize the placement and assignment of teachers' duties based on available competencies, although the school's needs have not yet been fully met. This situation indicates that the success of management functions is not solely determined by the leader's capacity but is also influenced by the readiness of the organization's resources.

The findings of this study further support the results of previous research, which states that teacher competence is one of the key factors in determining the success of educational policy implementation. In line with this, other studies explain that limitations in teacher competence remain a challenge in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in elementary schools. Furthermore, research points out that limited learning facilities and technological support constitute one of the obstacles in conducting English language instruction. The similarity in these research findings indicates that the various challenges identified in this study are not experienced by just one school but represent issues faced by many schools as they navigate changes in educational policy.

Based on these overall findings, it can be concluded that the first research question has been successfully answered. This study shows that the main challenges faced by school principals in preparing for the implementation of English as a required subject in elementary schools include a shortage of qualified English teachers, suboptimal availability of learning facilities and infrastructure, and the complexity of managerial responsibilities that must be carried out simultaneously. These various challenges require school principals to exercise adaptive and flexible leadership and to develop school management strategies that are aligned with existing conditions and available resources.

Principals' Strategies for Overcoming Limitations in Human Resources and Supporting Facilities

The second research question in this study aims to analyze the strategies implemented by school principals to address limitations in human resources and supporting facilities as part of the preparations for implementing English as a required subject in elementary schools. Based on the research findings, it was found that school principals not only strive to resolve various obstacles that arise but also design and implement strategies tailored to the characteristics and needs of each school. These strategies are realized through systematic planning, optimization of available resources, enhancement of teacher competencies, utilization of learning media, and the continuous implementation of supervision and evaluation.

One of the most prominent strategies is optimizing the potential of the school's existing human resources. Given that the number of teachers qualified in English language education remains limited, school principals support teachers in developing their competencies through various activities, such as training, Teacher Working Groups (KKG), workshops, and self-

directed learning . In addition, teaching assignments are distributed by taking into account each teacher's abilities, experience, and potential. This approach demonstrates that the principal prioritizes empowering internal resources before seeking alternative sources of teaching staff from outside the school.

The research findings also indicate that the principal employs a collaborative approach in preparing for policy implementation. Teachers, the school committee, supervisors, and various other stakeholders are involved in both the development and implementation of the English language program . Through intensive coordination and communication, the various challenges faced by the school can be discussed collectively, leading to solutions tailored to the needs and conditions of each school. This collaborative approach simultaneously strengthens the commitment of the entire school community to supporting the gradual implementation of the policy.

Another strategy implemented is maximizing the use of available facilities through the development of creative, innovative, and easily accessible learning media. Research findings show that limited resources do not prevent school principals from continuing to promote optimal English language learning. Teachers are encouraged to utilize various simple media, develop teaching materials independently, and use digital technologies, such as educational videos, interactive presentations, and a variety of online learning resources. The use of these various media aims to create a learning process that is more engaging, interactive, and suited to the characteristics of elementary school students, even though school facilities remain limited .

In addition, school principals also implement academic supervision supported by ongoing monitoring and evaluation activities to ensure that all programs are carried out in accordance with planned targets. Supervisory activities are carried out through observation of the learning process, providing feedback to teachers, and evaluating various obstacles that arise during the policy implementation preparation process . The results of these evaluations are then used as the basis for refining the program in the next phase so that every policy implemented can be continuously improved in accordance with the school's needs.

When viewed through the lens of George R. Terry's management theory, the strategies implemented by the principal reflect the application of the four functions of management: Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling (POAC) . In the planning function, the principal develops various programs aimed at enhancing the school's readiness, including planning for teacher competency development and providing learning materials that support the teaching and learning process. Furthermore, the organizing function is realized through the allocation of tasks, strengthening cooperation with various parties, and the optimal utilization of available resources. In the actuating function, the principal motivates teachers, facilitates training activities, and encourages creative and innovative learning. Meanwhile, the controlling function is reflected in the continuous implementation of supervision, monitoring, and evaluation to ensure that all programs proceed in accordance with established objectives.

The findings of this study reinforce the results of previous research, which states that teacher professional development is one of the key strategies for enhancing schools' readiness to adapt to changes in education policy . In line with these findings, studies argue that collaboration among stakeholders, the use of learning technologies, and the adaptation of strategies based on school conditions are effective steps in overcoming resource constraints .

Meanwhile, other research explains that the success of educational policy implementation is heavily influenced by the principal's ability to empower teachers, foster collaboration, and conduct ongoing evaluations. The consistency of these research findings indicates that the strategies implemented by the principal in this study are strongly linked to various prior research findings on educational leadership.

Based on the overall discussion, it can be concluded that the second research question has been answered. The strategies implemented by school principals to address limitations in human resources and supporting facilities include developing teacher competencies, strengthening collaboration with various stakeholders, optimizing the use of learning media and facilities, and conducting ongoing supervision and evaluation. These strategies demonstrate the school principals' ability to exercise adaptive, collaborative, and contextual leadership, enabling the school to prepare for the implementation of English as a required subject despite facing various resource constraints.

CONCLUSION

The findings showed that school principals generally had a strong understanding of the urgency of introducing English at the elementary level, viewing it as an essential competency for addressing globalization and technological demands. This awareness encouraged principals to actively prepare for policy implementation. However, the preparation process faced several challenges, including a shortage of qualified English teachers, which resulted in variations in instructional quality; disparities in the availability of facilities and learning resources among schools; and increased managerial responsibilities for principals overseeing more than one school unit. To address these challenges, principals implemented adaptive leadership strategies through the POAC management functions by planning and organizing programs collaboratively with teachers, school committees, and supervisors; optimizing available resources and digital learning media during implementation; and conducting regular academic supervision to support teachers and evaluate school readiness. Overall, the successful implementation of English as a compulsory subject depended not only on government policy but also significantly on principals' adaptive leadership and managerial effectiveness. Therefore, strengthening leadership competencies, improving teacher capacity, and ensuring adequate learning facilities are essential for sustainable policy implementation.

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