



STRATEGIC SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN STUDENT ADMISSION MANAGEMENT: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY AT A PUBLIC JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

Effective student admission management has become an increasingly important issue for public schools facing growing competition in attracting prospective students while maintaining educational quality. This study aims to explore the strategic leadership practices employed by the principal of SMP Negeri 19 Jambi in improving student enrollment through comprehensive planning, stakeholder collaboration, and institutional management. A qualitative case study approach was employed to obtain an in-depth understanding of leadership practices within the school's natural setting. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis involving the principal, vice principal, teachers, administrative staff, and school committee representatives. The data were analyzed using the interactive model of data analysis, including data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing, while credibility was strengthened through source, technique, and time triangulation. The findings reveal that student admission management was implemented through four interrelated strategic dimensions: strategic planning, institutional promotion and community engagement, collaborative stakeholder involvement, and continuous evaluation of admission outcomes. The principal also strengthened school competitiveness by optimizing digital communication, improving educational services, and fostering partnerships with surrounding communities. These integrated leadership practices contributed to increased public trust and improved student enrollment.

ABSTRAK

Manajemen penerimaan peserta didik baru menjadi salah satu aspek strategis dalam meningkatkan daya saing sekolah negeri di tengah semakin ketatnya persaingan antarlembaga pendidikan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis strategi kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dalam pengelolaan penerimaan peserta didik baru di SMP Negeri 19 Kota Jambi melalui perencanaan strategis, kolaborasi dengan pemangku kepentingan, serta penguatan manajemen sekolah. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus untuk memperoleh pemahaman yang mendalam mengenai praktik kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dalam konteks nyata. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur, observasi partisipatif, dan analisis dokumen dengan melibatkan kepala sekolah, wakil kepala sekolah, guru, tenaga administrasi, serta komite sekolah. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan model interaktif yang meliputi kondensasi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan, sedangkan keabsahan data dijamin melalui triangulasi sumber, teknik, dan waktu. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa strategi kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dalam pengelolaan penerimaan peserta didik baru diwujudkan melalui empat dimensi utama, yaitu perencanaan strategis, promosi sekolah dan penguatan hubungan dengan masyarakat, kolaborasi antarpemangku kepentingan, serta evaluasi berkelanjutan terhadap pelaksanaan penerimaan peserta didik baru. Selain itu, kepala sekolah memperkuat daya saing sekolah melalui optimalisasi media digital, peningkatan kualitas layanan pendidikan, dan pengembangan kemitraan dengan masyarakat.

Kata kunci: kepemimpinan strategis, manajemen penerimaan peserta didik baru, manajemen pendidikan, sekolah menengah pertama negeri, studi kasus kualitatif.

INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions across the world are currently facing increasingly complex challenges resulting from demographic changes, technological advancement, educational decentralization, and growing public expectations regarding educational quality. These developments require schools not only to improve learning outcomes but also to strengthen institutional competitiveness through effective leadership and strategic management. Within this context, school leadership has become one of the most influential factors determining organizational effectiveness because principals are expected to formulate long-term strategies, mobilize institutional resources, and establish collaborative relationships with internal and external stakeholders to achieve sustainable school improvement (Bush, 2020; Fullan, 2020; Hallinger, 2022; UNESCO, 2021). Contemporary educational leadership therefore extends beyond administrative responsibilities and increasingly emphasizes strategic decision-making capable of responding to dynamic educational environments while maintaining institutional quality and public trust (Leithwood, 2020; Northouse, 2021; OECD, 2023).

One strategic dimension receiving growing scholarly attention is student admission management. Traditionally, student admission has been regarded as an annual administrative procedure intended to register new learners. However, recent educational management literature argues that student admission represents a strategic organizational process closely associated with school sustainability, institutional reputation, financial stability, and educational competitiveness. The ability of schools to attract prospective students reflects not only promotional effectiveness but also stakeholders' confidence in institutional leadership, educational services, academic quality, and organizational performance (Bank, 2018; Bryson, 2018; Fullan, 2020; Robinson et al., 2008). Consequently, effective admission management requires school leaders to integrate strategic planning, stakeholder communication, institutional branding, and continuous evaluation into a coherent leadership framework rather than treating admission merely as an operational activity (Bush & Glover, 2014; Hallinger, 2020; Mintzberg, 1994).

In Indonesia, the implementation of student admission management has become increasingly significant following continuous reforms in educational governance, decentralization policies, and the implementation of the New Student Admission System (*Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru-PPDB*). These reforms have intensified competition among public and private schools while simultaneously increasing parental awareness regarding educational quality and school accountability. Parents no longer select schools solely based on geographical proximity but increasingly consider leadership quality, academic achievement, educational facilities, student services, institutional reputation, and future educational opportunities (Anisyah et al., 2025; Budiman & Fatahillah, 2025; Tantowi et al., 2025; Yugo, 2025). Such conditions require principals to formulate adaptive admission strategies capable of strengthening community trust while ensuring equitable educational access in accordance with national educational objectives (OECD, 2023; UNESCO, 2021).

Strategic leadership provides an important theoretical perspective for understanding how school leaders influence organizational performance through systematic planning, resource management, innovation, and stakeholder engagement. According to (Bryson, 2018), strategic management enables organizations to anticipate environmental changes through structured planning and collaborative decision-making processes. Similarly, (Bush, 2020) argues that educational leadership should balance managerial competence with instructional leadership and organizational development. (Hallinger, 2022) further emphasizes that leadership effectiveness depends on leaders' capacity to adapt organizational strategies to contextual

challenges, while (Leithwood, 2020) highlights that leadership indirectly improves student outcomes through organizational conditions that support continuous improvement. Collectively, these perspectives indicate that strategic leadership is particularly relevant in managing student admission because successful enrolment depends upon institutional readiness, collaborative governance, and sustainable organizational development rather than isolated administrative actions.

Previous studies have consistently demonstrated the importance of strategic leadership for improving educational organizations. (Hallinger, 2022) reported that effective school leadership significantly influences institutional improvement when leadership practices are responsive to contextual conditions. (Budiman & Fatahillah, 2025) found that strategic management strengthens organizational sustainability within Islamic boarding schools through systematic planning and institutional innovation. (Hamid & Purnomo, 2025) concluded that principals acting as strategic human resource managers contribute substantially to educational quality by improving teacher performance and organizational effectiveness. Similarly, (Tantowi et al., 2025) highlighted the growing role of digital technology in enhancing administrative efficiency and educational services, whereas (Hashim et al., 2022) emphasized that strategic planning has become increasingly essential for educational institutions undergoing digital transformation. Furthermore, (Anisyah et al., 2025) demonstrated that technology-based educational management enhances institutional responsiveness and service quality. Although these studies collectively confirm the significance of strategic leadership, most concentrate on organizational performance, digital transformation, or human resource management rather than specifically examining how principals strategically manage student admission processes within public secondary schools.

Despite the growing body of literature on educational leadership and strategic management, several important research gaps remain. First, previous studies have predominantly examined strategic leadership in relation to school effectiveness, instructional leadership, organizational performance, digital transformation, or human resource development (Bush, 2020; Hallinger, 2022; Hashim et al., 2022; Leithwood, 2020). Although these studies provide valuable insights into leadership practices, they offer limited empirical evidence regarding how strategic leadership is specifically operationalized in managing student admission within public secondary schools. Student admission involves multiple managerial dimensions-including strategic planning, stakeholder coordination, institutional communication, and continuous evaluation-that require leadership approaches extending beyond routine administrative procedures. Consequently, the strategic role of school principals in designing and implementing admission management remains insufficiently explored, particularly in developing-country contexts.

Second, previous empirical studies have largely focused on higher education institutions, Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), or private educational organizations (Budiman & Fatahillah, 2025; Tantowi et al., 2025; Yugo, 2025). Comparatively fewer studies have investigated public junior high schools, where principals operate within more complex regulatory frameworks while simultaneously responding to community expectations and government policies. In Indonesia, the implementation of the *Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru* (PPDB) system requires school leaders to balance policy compliance, transparency, equity, and institutional competitiveness. This complexity suggests that strategic leadership in student admission should be understood as a context-dependent process shaped by organizational culture, stakeholder participation, and local educational conditions rather than as a universal managerial practice (Bryson, 2018; Hallinger, 2022; OECD, 2023).

Furthermore, many previous studies have emphasized the outcomes of educational leadership without sufficiently explaining the leadership processes through which those outcomes are achieved. As argued by (Bush & Glover, 2014), effective educational leadership should be understood not only through organizational achievements but also through leaders' strategic actions in mobilizing institutional resources and building collaborative relationships. Similarly, (Robinson et al., 2008) emphasize that leadership influences educational outcomes indirectly through organizational processes rather than through direct intervention alone. Accordingly, investigating how principals formulate strategic planning, coordinate school personnel, engage surrounding communities, promote institutional excellence, and evaluate admission programs provides a more comprehensive understanding of strategic leadership in educational management.

Based on these gaps, this study offers several important contributions to the literature on strategic educational leadership. Theoretically, it extends existing discussions by positioning student admission management as a strategic leadership process rather than merely an administrative responsibility. The study demonstrates how leadership practices integrate strategic planning, stakeholder collaboration, institutional promotion, and continuous evaluation into a coherent management framework that supports school sustainability. Practically, the findings provide evidence-based recommendations for school principals and educational policymakers in designing more effective admission management strategies capable of strengthening institutional competitiveness while maintaining transparency, accountability, and equitable educational access. These contributions are expected to enrich the discourse on educational leadership, particularly within the context of public secondary education in developing countries (Bush, 2020; Fullan, 2020; Hallinger, 2022; UNESCO, 2021).

Accordingly, this study aims to examine how strategic school leadership is implemented in managing student admission at SMP Negeri 19 Kota Jambi and how these leadership practices contribute to strengthening institutional competitiveness and sustaining student enrolment. By providing empirical evidence from a public junior high school in Indonesia, this study extends the literature on strategic educational leadership by demonstrating that student admission management constitutes a strategic leadership process involving institutional planning, stakeholder collaboration, school promotion, and continuous evaluation. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to the development of strategic educational leadership and practically to assist school leaders and policymakers in designing more effective and sustainable student admission management strategies.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore how strategic school leadership was implemented in managing student admission at SMP Negeri 19 Kota Jambi. A qualitative approach was selected because the study sought to understand leadership practices, decision-making processes, and institutional strategies from the perspectives of individuals directly involved in the admission process rather than to measure relationships between variables. The case study approach enabled an in-depth examination of leadership phenomena within their real-life context, allowing the researcher to capture organizational dynamics, stakeholder interactions, and contextual factors influencing admission management (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018). This design is particularly appropriate for investigating complex educational leadership practices that cannot be adequately explained using quantitative methods.

Research Site and Participants

The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 19 Kota Jambi, Indonesia, a public junior high school recognized for implementing various strategic initiatives to improve student admission management and strengthen institutional competitiveness. Informants were selected using purposive sampling based on their roles, responsibilities, and direct involvement in planning, implementing, and evaluating student admission activities. The selection of participants followed the principle of information-rich cases to obtain comprehensive and credible data regarding strategic leadership practices (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The participants included the principal as the key decision-maker, vice principals, members of the student admission committee, administrative staff, teachers involved in promotional activities, school committee representatives, and parents of newly admitted students. The diversity of participants enabled the researcher to examine strategic leadership from multiple perspectives and to enhance the credibility of the findings through data triangulation.

Table 1. Research Participants

Participant	Position	Role in Research
P1	Principal	Strategic leadership and policy formulation
P2	Vice Principal	Coordination of admission implementation
P3	Admission Committee Coordinator	Admission planning and execution
P4	Administrative Staff	Administrative management of admission
P5	Teacher	School promotion and community outreach
P6	School Committee Representative	Stakeholder collaboration
P7	Parent of New Student	User perspective on admission services

Data Collection

Data were collected from January to March 2025 through semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews enabled participants to explain leadership strategies, institutional policies, and experiences related to student admission management in greater depth. Participant observation was conducted during admission activities and school promotional events to understand leadership practices and organizational interactions in their natural setting. Documentary evidence-including school strategic plans, admission guidelines, annual reports, meeting minutes, promotional materials, and institutional archives-was examined to corroborate information obtained from interviews and observations (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018).

The combination of multiple data sources enhanced the richness of the findings and allowed the researcher to understand student admission management from organizational, managerial, and stakeholder perspectives.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by (Miles et al., 2020), consisting of four interrelated stages: data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentary evidence were coded systematically to identify recurring themes associated with strategic leadership, institutional planning, stakeholder engagement, and admission management. Emerging categories were continuously compared across data sources to develop

comprehensive interpretations while ensuring analytical consistency throughout the research process.

Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of the study was established using credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability criteria (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility was strengthened through source triangulation, methodological triangulation, and member checking with selected participants. Transferability was supported by providing detailed descriptions of the research context and participants. Dependability was maintained through systematic documentation of the research procedures, while confirmability was ensured by preserving interview records, observation notes, coding processes, and documentary evidence as an audit trail. These procedures enhanced the reliability and trustworthiness of the findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Strategic Planning in Student Admission Management

The findings indicate that strategic planning constituted the foundation of student admission management at SMP Negeri 19 Kota Jambi. The planning process was initiated immediately after the school received official guidelines from the local Education Office. Rather than merely preparing administrative requirements, the principal coordinated a series of planning meetings involving the vice principal, administrative head, administrative staff, teachers, and the student admission committee to formulate strategies based on previous admission outcomes.

Interview findings revealed that the planning process began with a comprehensive evaluation of the previous admission cycle. School leaders reviewed the number of applicants, the most preferred admission pathways, enrolment trends, and operational challenges encountered during the previous academic year. These findings served as the basis for determining recruitment targets, designing promotional strategies, allocating committee responsibilities, and preparing administrative procedures for the upcoming admission period. As explained by the principal,

"Before determining this year's strategy, we always evaluate the previous admission process, identify existing problems, and formulate improvements together with the admission committee." (Principal, Interview, March 2026).

Similar views were expressed by the Head of Administration, who explained that previous admission data became the primary reference for designing school promotion strategies and improving administrative services throughout the admission process.

Observation findings confirmed that annual planning meetings were conducted before the admission period commenced. During these meetings, committee members discussed promotional activities, admission schedules, documentation requirements, online registration procedures, and the division of responsibilities among committee members. Documentary evidence, including meeting minutes and annual work plans, also demonstrated that student admission management had become an integral component of the school's annual strategic planning.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that student admission management at SMP Negeri 19 Kota Jambi is not implemented as an isolated administrative activity but rather as a systematic strategic planning process involving organizational coordination, evidence-based decision

making, and institutional preparation prior to the admission period.

Stakeholder Collaboration and School Promotion

The findings revealed that stakeholder collaboration played a crucial role in strengthening student admission management at SMP Negeri 19 Kota Jambi. Rather than relying solely on the admission committee, the principal actively involved vice principals, teachers, administrative staff, the school committee, parents, and surrounding elementary schools in implementing various admission strategies. This collaborative approach enabled the school to organize admission activities more effectively while expanding public awareness of the school's educational programs and achievements.

Interview data indicated that the principal encouraged all school members to participate in promoting the school according to their respective roles and responsibilities. Teachers were involved in conducting outreach activities to nearby elementary schools, introducing the school's academic programs, extracurricular activities, and student achievements to prospective students and their parents. Administrative staff supported the preparation of promotional materials and registration services, while the school committee contributed by strengthening communication with the local community and encouraging parental participation during the admission period.

The study also found that school promotion was implemented through multiple communication channels to reach a broader audience. In addition to direct socialization activities at elementary schools, the school utilized printed brochures, banners, and digital platforms, including social media, to disseminate information regarding admission schedules, registration procedures, school facilities, and student achievements. These promotional activities were designed not only to provide administrative information but also to strengthen the school's public image as a learning institution committed to academic quality, student development, and educational services.

Observation findings confirmed that promotional activities were carried out in a coordinated manner before the admission period commenced. School representatives visited several feeder elementary schools, distributed informational materials, and interacted directly with students, teachers, and parents to explain the school's vision, educational programs, and admission procedures. During these activities, the principal also encouraged committee members to respond openly to questions from parents, thereby fostering transparency and strengthening community trust in the admission process.

Document analysis further demonstrated that promotional activities had been systematically incorporated into the school's annual admission work plan. The planning documents specified promotional schedules, assigned responsibilities to committee members, and outlined communication strategies for engaging prospective students and community stakeholders. This documentary evidence indicates that stakeholder collaboration and school promotion were not conducted as incidental activities but were integrated into the school's strategic admission management.

Overall, the findings suggest that stakeholder collaboration and school promotion constituted essential components of strategic leadership in student admission management. By mobilizing internal and external stakeholders through coordinated promotional initiatives and community engagement, the principal strengthened institutional visibility, improved communication with prospective students and parents, and supported the successful implementation of the student admission program.

Table 2. Stakeholder Collaboration and School Promotion.

Stakeholder	Role in Student Admission Management
Principal	Coordinated admission strategies and supervised promotional activities
Vice Principals	Assisted in planning, coordination, and implementation of admission programs
Teachers	Conducted school outreach, introduced educational programs, and promoted school achievements
Administrative Staff	Prepared registration documents, promotional materials, and admission services
School Committee	Strengthened communication with the community and supported school promotion
Parents and Community	Disseminated information about the school and encouraged prospective student enrolment
Partner Elementary Schools	Facilitated outreach activities and information dissemination to prospective students

Source: Interview, observation, and document analysis.

School Promotion and Community Engagement

One of the key strategies implemented by the principal of SMP Negeri 19 Kota Jambi to strengthen student admission management was the development of school promotion programs supported by active community engagement. Rather than relying solely on conventional dissemination of admission information, the school designed promotional activities that emphasized institutional achievements, educational services, learning facilities, and collaborative relationships with surrounding communities. Promotion was therefore viewed as a strategic effort to build public trust and strengthen the school's competitiveness within an increasingly dynamic educational environment.

The findings indicate that school promotion was conducted through multiple channels. Offline strategies included socialization visits to elementary schools, meetings with parents, distribution of brochures, installation of banners, and participation in community activities. Meanwhile, online promotion utilized social media platforms, school websites, and digital communication groups to reach broader audiences. Informants explained that combining face-to-face interaction with digital communication enabled the school to communicate more effectively with prospective students and parents while responding to changes in public information-seeking behavior.

Community engagement also became an important component of the promotion strategy. The principal encouraged teachers, administrative staff, school committee members, alumni, and local community leaders to participate in disseminating information regarding the school's programs and achievements. This collaborative approach not only expanded promotional coverage but also strengthened the school's credibility because information was delivered through trusted community networks. Several informants emphasized that recommendations from parents and alumni significantly influenced prospective students' decisions to enroll at SMP Negeri 19 Kota Jambi.

The study further found that promotional activities were integrated with the school's long-term strategic planning rather than being conducted only during the admission period. Promotional efforts were continuously supported through documentation of student

achievements, publication of extracurricular activities, educational innovation, and community service programs. Such continuous promotion gradually strengthened the school's public image and contributed to increasing community confidence in the institution.

Overall, these findings suggest that effective student admission management extends beyond administrative preparation and requires systematic communication strategies capable of strengthening institutional reputation and fostering sustainable relationships with stakeholders. School promotion therefore functions not merely as information dissemination but as an integral component of strategic educational leadership aimed at enhancing institutional competitiveness and maintaining long-term public trust.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Student Admission

The final stage of strategic leadership in student admission management at SMP Negeri 19 Kota Jambi involved systematic monitoring and evaluation of the entire admission process. Findings from interviews revealed that the principal regularly supervised each stage of student admission, beginning with the preparation of administrative documents, implementation of registration procedures, verification of applicant data, selection processes, and final reporting. Monitoring activities were conducted not only during the implementation of admission but also after the completion of the program to identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement in subsequent admission cycles.

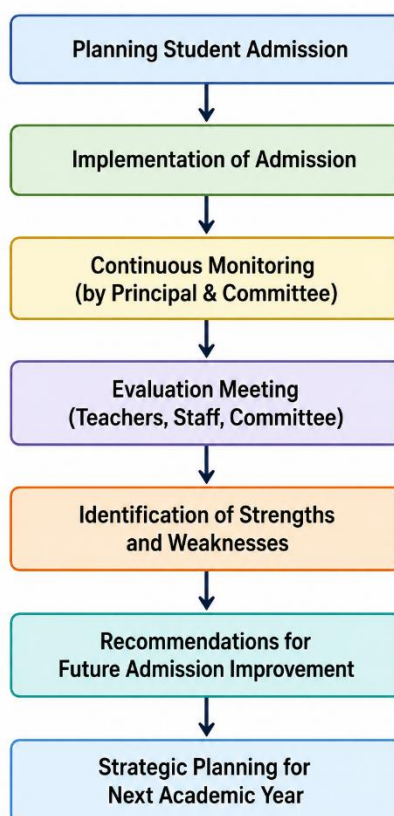
One informant explained that evaluation meetings were conducted immediately after the admission process had ended. These meetings involved the principal, vice principals, the admission committee, administrative staff, and teachers who participated in the implementation of student recruitment. During these meetings, participants discussed the effectiveness of promotional activities, the number of applicants, technical challenges encountered during registration, community responses, and recommendations for improving future admission programs. This collaborative evaluation enabled the school to formulate more effective strategies for the following academic year.

The findings also indicate that monitoring was carried out continuously throughout the admission period. The principal routinely communicated with committee members to monitor registration progress, verify the completeness of applicant documents, and ensure that administrative procedures complied with government regulations. Daily coordination allowed problems to be identified and resolved promptly, thereby preventing delays and ensuring that the admission process was implemented transparently and efficiently.

Document analysis further supports these findings. Administrative records, committee reports, meeting minutes, and annual evaluation documents demonstrate that evaluation results were formally documented and used as references in planning subsequent admission programs. The documentation also included statistical information regarding the number of applicants, accepted students, registration trends, and community participation, providing an evidence-based foundation for strategic decision-making.

Overall, the findings suggest that monitoring and evaluation were not treated merely as administrative obligations but constituted an integral component of strategic school leadership. Through continuous supervision, collaborative reflection, and evidence-based decision-making, the principal ensured that student admission management remained accountable, transparent, and responsive to institutional needs and community expectations.

Figure 1. Monitoring and Evaluation Cycle of Student Admission Management



Discussion

Strategic Leadership as a Foundation for Student Admission Management

The findings of this study demonstrate that strategic leadership constitutes the primary foundation for effective student admission management at SMP Negeri 19 Kota Jambi. Rather than functioning merely as an administrative coordinator, the principal assumed a strategic role by formulating long-term admission objectives, organizing institutional resources, coordinating stakeholders, and ensuring that every stage of the admission process aligned with the school's vision and educational goals. This finding reinforces the perspective that strategic leadership in educational organizations extends beyond operational management toward creating institutional capacity for sustainable improvement and organizational competitiveness (Bush, 2020; Hallinger, 2022; Leithwood, 2020). In contemporary educational management, strategic leadership enables school leaders to anticipate environmental changes, respond to stakeholder expectations, and align institutional planning with broader educational policies (Bryson, 2018; Fullan, 2020; Northouse, 2021).

The planning process identified in this study indicates that student admission management was conducted systematically through collaborative planning, annual evaluation, analysis of previous admission outcomes, and formulation of promotional strategies before the implementation of recruitment activities. This finding supports (Bryson, 2018), who argues that strategic planning enables educational institutions to formulate organizational priorities through systematic analysis of internal and external environments. Similarly, (Mintzberg, 1994) emphasizes that strategic planning should remain adaptive rather than rigid, allowing organizations to respond effectively to environmental uncertainty. In the context of SMP Negeri 19 Kota Jambi, planning was not limited to determining admission quotas but also incorporated stakeholder participation, institutional promotion, and administrative

preparedness, illustrating a comprehensive approach to educational management.

The present findings are also consistent with (Hallinger, 2020), who argues that effective school leadership directly influences organizational performance by integrating planning, resource management, and instructional improvement into coherent institutional strategies. (Hallinger, 2022) further explains that leadership effectiveness is highly dependent on contextual responsiveness, suggesting that school leaders should adapt leadership practices according to organizational needs and community expectations. This contextual perspective is reflected in the present study, where the principal formulated admission strategies based on local demographic conditions, community characteristics, and previous enrollment trends rather than relying solely on standardized administrative procedures. Such adaptive leadership demonstrates that strategic decision-making in public schools requires contextual understanding alongside managerial competence.

Compared with previous studies, the findings reveal several important similarities. (Budiman & Fatahillah, 2025) found that strategic management in Indonesian pesantren contributes significantly to institutional sustainability through systematic planning and organizational innovation. Likewise, (Hamid & Purnomo, 2025) reported that principals' strategic management of human resources improves educational quality by strengthening organizational effectiveness. (Fullan, 2020) similarly argues that sustainable educational improvement depends on leaders' capacity to build collaborative cultures and continuous organizational learning. These studies support the present finding that strategic leadership plays a critical role in institutional development through coordinated planning and organizational collaboration.

Nevertheless, this study also demonstrates several differences from previous research. Most earlier studies have examined strategic leadership in relation to instructional leadership, teacher performance, digital transformation, or organizational effectiveness (Bush, 2020; Hallinger, 2020; Hashim et al., 2022; Vial, 2019). Comparatively little attention has been devoted to examining how strategic leadership shapes student admission management as an integrated organizational process. The present study therefore extends existing literature by demonstrating that student admission management itself represents a strategic leadership function encompassing institutional planning, stakeholder coordination, school promotion, monitoring, and continuous evaluation. Rather than treating admission as an isolated administrative activity, the findings indicate that successful student recruitment depends on long-term leadership strategies that integrate organizational vision with community engagement.

Another distinctive finding concerns the principal's emphasis on participatory planning. Rather than making decisions independently, the principal actively involved vice principals, teachers, administrative personnel, and admission committee members in designing admission strategies. This collaborative planning reflects distributed leadership principles, whereby leadership responsibilities are shared across organizational members to improve decision quality and institutional commitment (Bush & Glover, 2014; Robinson et al., 2008). Such an approach also aligns with (Leithwood, 2020), who argues that leadership exerts greater influence on school improvement when organizational members participate actively in planning and implementation processes. Consequently, strategic leadership becomes an organizational capability rather than merely an individual characteristic of the school principal.

The findings additionally highlight the importance of balancing strategic planning with organizational flexibility. Although annual admission plans were formulated before

implementation, the principal continuously adjusted operational decisions according to emerging conditions, including changes in applicant numbers, community responses, and administrative requirements. This adaptive approach supports the argument of (Mintzberg, 1994) that effective organizational strategies often emerge through continuous learning and environmental adaptation rather than through rigid planning alone. Similar conclusions were reported by (A. S. Bryk et al., 2015), who emphasize that continuous organizational learning enables educational institutions to improve performance through iterative evaluation and evidence-based decision-making. Thus, strategic leadership in student admission management should be understood as a dynamic process characterized by planning, implementation, reflection, and continuous improvement.

From a broader educational perspective, the findings are also relevant to current international discussions concerning educational sustainability and institutional competitiveness. (UNESCO, 2021) emphasizes that school leaders should develop adaptive governance capable of responding to changing educational environments while maintaining equitable access to education. Likewise, the (OECD, 2023) argues that effective educational leadership strengthens institutional resilience through collaborative governance, innovation, and evidence-informed policy implementation. The (Bank, 2018) similarly stresses that school leadership significantly influences educational quality by improving organizational effectiveness and stakeholder confidence. The present study supports these perspectives by demonstrating that strategic leadership contributes not only to increasing student enrollment but also to strengthening institutional credibility within the local community.

Overall, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on strategic educational leadership by providing empirical evidence from the context of student admission management in Indonesian public secondary schools. Unlike previous studies that primarily conceptualize strategic leadership as a mechanism for improving instructional quality or organizational performance, this research demonstrates that strategic leadership also functions as the principal mechanism through which schools attract prospective students, build public trust, and sustain institutional competitiveness. The novelty of this study therefore lies in positioning student admission management as an integrated strategic leadership process that combines long-term planning, collaborative governance, adaptive decision-making, and continuous organizational improvement within a public school setting.

Collaborative Leadership in Student Recruitment

The findings reveal that collaborative leadership played a significant role in strengthening student recruitment at SMP Negeri 19 Kota Jambi. Rather than relying solely on the principal's authority, the admission process was implemented through active collaboration among vice principals, teachers, administrative staff, school committees, parents, and the surrounding community. This collaborative approach enabled the school to distribute responsibilities, improve communication, and ensure that recruitment activities reflected both institutional objectives and community expectations. These findings support the view that contemporary educational leadership has shifted from hierarchical management toward collaborative governance, where leadership effectiveness depends on collective participation and shared responsibility (Bush & Glover, 2014; Hallinger, 2022; Northouse, 2021).

From the perspective of distributed leadership, the findings indicate that student admission management became more effective because decision-making and implementation responsibilities were shared among multiple stakeholders rather than centralized in the principal alone. (Spillane, 2005) argues that leadership is a collective organizational practice

emerging through interactions among leaders, teachers, and staff rather than individual actions. Likewise, (Harris, 2020) emphasizes that distributed leadership enhances organizational capacity by empowering members to contribute their expertise in solving institutional problems. In the present study, teachers participated in school promotion, administrative staff ensured efficient documentation, and school committees supported community outreach, illustrating how leadership responsibilities were distributed according to organizational functions. Such collaborative practices reduced administrative burdens while increasing institutional commitment to achieving admission targets.

The findings are also consistent with the concept of collaborative governance, which emphasizes that public organizations achieve better outcomes when institutional actors actively cooperate with external stakeholders (Ansell & Gash, 2008). During the admission process, SMP Negeri 19 Kota Jambi established communication not only among internal personnel but also with parents, alumni, community leaders, and nearby elementary schools. This external collaboration strengthened public trust, facilitated information dissemination, and increased the school's visibility within the local community. (Bryson et al., 2015) similarly argue that cross-sector collaboration enables organizations to address complex challenges more effectively because multiple stakeholders contribute complementary resources, knowledge, and social networks.

Compared with previous studies, several similarities can be identified. (Robinson et al., 2008) demonstrated that collaborative leadership significantly influences school effectiveness by improving communication and shared decision-making among educational stakeholders. Likewise, (Leithwood, 2020) found that schools characterized by strong collaboration between principals and teachers tend to achieve higher organizational performance and stronger institutional commitment. (Hallinger, 2022) further argues that collaborative leadership becomes increasingly important in educational environments characterized by rapid policy changes and growing stakeholder expectations. These studies reinforce the present findings that collaboration among school members strengthens the implementation of student admission management through collective responsibility and organizational cohesion.

The present findings also align with studies conducted in the Indonesian educational context. (Budiman & Fatahillah, 2025) reported that collaborative strategic management in Islamic boarding schools improves institutional sustainability by strengthening internal coordination and community participation. Similarly, (Hamid & Purnomo, 2025) found that principals who actively involve teachers and administrative personnel in organizational decision-making are more successful in improving educational quality. (Anisyah et al., 2025) additionally demonstrated that collaboration supported by effective communication and digital technology enhances educational management efficiency. Consistent with these studies, collaboration at SMP Negeri 19 Kota Jambi was not limited to organizational coordination but also involved collective efforts to strengthen school promotion and public engagement during student recruitment.

Despite these similarities, this study offers several distinctive findings. Previous research generally examines collaborative leadership in relation to instructional improvement, teacher professional development, or organizational effectiveness (Bush, 2020; Hallinger, 2020; Harris, 2020). Comparatively limited attention has been devoted to understanding how collaborative leadership contributes specifically to student admission management. This study demonstrates that collaboration among stakeholders directly influences recruitment effectiveness by expanding communication channels, increasing institutional credibility, and facilitating community participation throughout the admission process. Consequently,

collaborative leadership should be recognized as an essential strategic component of student admission management rather than merely an internal management practice.

Another important finding concerns the contribution of trust in sustaining stakeholder collaboration. The interviews indicate that collaboration developed because stakeholders shared common educational goals and maintained mutual confidence in the school's leadership. This finding supports the organizational trust perspective proposed by (A. Bryk & Schneider, 2002), who argue that relational trust strengthens cooperation, reduces organizational conflict, and improves school improvement initiatives. Trust encouraged teachers, administrative staff, and community representatives to participate voluntarily in admission activities, thereby creating stronger institutional ownership of recruitment outcomes. In this regard, collaboration was sustained not merely through formal organizational structures but also through positive interpersonal relationships developed over time.

The findings further demonstrate that collaborative leadership enhanced the school's responsiveness to community needs during student recruitment. Rather than implementing one-way communication strategies, the principal encouraged continuous dialogue with parents and community representatives regarding admission procedures, educational programs, and institutional expectations. Such responsiveness reflects the principles of stakeholder engagement proposed by (Freeman, 2010), who argues that organizational sustainability depends on leaders' ability to accommodate stakeholder interests through continuous communication and partnership. In educational institutions, this approach contributes to greater public confidence because community members perceive themselves as active partners rather than passive recipients of educational services.

From an international perspective, these findings are also relevant to (UNESCO, 2021), which emphasizes that educational transformation requires collaborative leadership capable of building partnerships across schools, families, and communities. Similarly, the (OECD, 2023) argues that inclusive educational governance depends on meaningful stakeholder participation in institutional decision-making and policy implementation. The (Bank, 2018) further notes that community engagement strengthens accountability and contributes to sustainable school improvement, particularly in developing educational systems. The present study confirms these international perspectives by illustrating that collaborative leadership not only improves organizational coordination but also strengthens community trust, institutional legitimacy, and student recruitment outcomes.

Overall, this study contributes to the literature by extending the application of collaborative leadership theory into the domain of student admission management. While previous studies predominantly conceptualize collaboration as a mechanism for improving teaching quality and organizational effectiveness, this research demonstrates that collaborative leadership also functions as a strategic instrument for strengthening student recruitment through stakeholder participation, relational trust, and shared institutional responsibility. The novelty of this study therefore lies in positioning collaborative leadership as a critical driver of sustainable admission management within Indonesian public secondary schools, highlighting the integration of internal organizational collaboration and external community engagement as complementary dimensions of strategic educational leadership.

School Promotion and Institutional Competitiveness

The findings of this study indicate that school promotion represents a strategic dimension of educational leadership rather than merely an administrative activity conducted during the

student admission period. At SMP Negeri 19 Kota Jambi, promotional activities were systematically planned and implemented through various communication channels, including direct engagement with elementary schools, collaboration with parents and community leaders, dissemination of information through digital media, and public presentation of the school's academic and non-academic achievements. These promotional efforts were designed not only to increase student enrollment but also to strengthen institutional credibility and public trust. This finding supports the argument that school leaders must integrate promotional strategies into broader institutional planning to enhance organizational competitiveness in increasingly dynamic educational environments (Bush, 2020; Fullan, 2020; Hallinger, 2022).

From the perspective of strategic educational leadership, school promotion serves as an instrument for communicating institutional vision, educational quality, and organizational values to prospective students and the wider community. (Leithwood, 2020) argues that effective school leaders influence organizational success not only through internal management but also by building strong external relationships that enhance institutional legitimacy. Similarly, (Bryson, 2018) explains that strategic management requires organizations to develop systematic communication strategies that align stakeholder expectations with institutional objectives. The findings of this study illustrate that the principal positioned school promotion as an integral component of strategic planning by emphasizing transparency, educational quality, and continuous engagement with the surrounding community.

The findings further demonstrate that institutional competitiveness was strengthened through the school's ability to communicate its educational strengths consistently. Rather than relying solely on academic performance, SMP Negeri 19 Kota Jambi promoted its learning environment, student achievements, extracurricular activities, character education, and administrative services as distinctive institutional advantages. This finding aligns with (OECD, 2023), which emphasizes that educational competitiveness increasingly depends on schools' capacity to provide inclusive, high-quality, and learner-centered educational services. (UNESCO, 2021) similarly argues that schools must strengthen their institutional identity and public accountability to remain competitive while ensuring equitable educational opportunities. Consequently, institutional competitiveness should be understood as the ability to build sustainable public confidence rather than merely increasing enrollment numbers.

The growing importance of digital communication also emerged as a significant aspect of school promotion. The findings indicate that the principal encouraged the utilization of digital platforms to disseminate admission information, promote school achievements, and facilitate communication with prospective students and parents. This strategy reflects broader educational transformations associated with digital governance and organizational innovation. (Vial, 2019) explains that digital transformation extends beyond technological adoption toward organizational changes that improve communication and stakeholder engagement. Likewise, (Hashim et al., 2022) argue that educational institutions increasingly rely on digital strategies to strengthen institutional visibility, administrative efficiency, and service quality. The present findings therefore demonstrate that digital communication has become an essential strategic resource for enhancing school competitiveness in contemporary educational contexts.

These findings are consistent with previous international studies emphasizing the relationship between leadership, institutional image, and organizational performance. (Hallinger, 2020) reports that school leaders significantly influence organizational effectiveness

by establishing strategic directions that improve institutional performance and stakeholder confidence. (Robinson et al., 2008) similarly found that leadership practices promoting communication and organizational coherence contribute to stronger educational outcomes. Moreover, (Mergel et al., 2019) argue that organizational transformation increasingly depends on leaders' ability to integrate communication technologies into institutional governance. These studies support the present findings by demonstrating that strategic leadership enhances school competitiveness through coordinated communication and stakeholder engagement.

Within the Indonesian educational context, the findings also corroborate recent studies. (Anisyah et al., 2025) found that the integration of information technology improves educational management by facilitating communication between schools and stakeholders. (Budiman & Fatahillah, 2025) reported that strategic management enables educational institutions to strengthen organizational sustainability through innovation and community participation. Likewise, (Tantowi et al., 2025) demonstrated that digital management practices contribute to improving institutional efficiency and educational service delivery in Islamic boarding schools. Consistent with these studies, SMP Negeri 19 Kota Jambi combined conventional community outreach with digital communication strategies, thereby expanding access to information and strengthening relationships with prospective students and parents.

Despite these similarities, the present study offers several important distinctions from previous research. Most existing studies conceptualize school promotion as a marketing or public relations activity aimed at increasing institutional visibility (Hashim et al., 2022; Vial, 2019). In contrast, the findings of this study demonstrate that promotion functions as an integral component of strategic educational leadership, where communication activities are directly connected to organizational planning, stakeholder collaboration, and continuous institutional improvement. This broader perspective suggests that promotional activities should not be interpreted solely as recruitment strategies but as leadership practices that reinforce institutional identity, accountability, and public legitimacy.

Another significant finding concerns the role of community trust in enhancing institutional competitiveness. Interviews with participants indicate that parents were influenced not only by promotional materials but also by positive perceptions regarding the school's leadership, educational quality, student achievements, and organizational reputation. This finding is consistent with (Schein & Schein, 2021), who argue that organizational culture and leadership shape stakeholder perceptions through consistent organizational practices rather than symbolic communication alone. Similarly, (Freeman, 2010) emphasizes that long-term organizational sustainability depends on maintaining mutually beneficial relationships with stakeholders. Accordingly, the effectiveness of school promotion is strongly influenced by the credibility and integrity demonstrated through institutional performance rather than promotional campaigns alone.

Furthermore, the findings illustrate that school promotion contributed to institutional competitiveness by increasing organizational adaptability. Through continuous communication with the community, school leaders obtained valuable feedback regarding parents' expectations, educational service quality, and emerging educational needs. Such feedback enabled the school to refine admission strategies and improve educational programs continuously. (A. S. Bryk et al., 2015) argue that organizational improvement is most effective when leaders utilize stakeholder feedback as a source of institutional learning. This iterative process reflects the principles of continuous improvement in educational organizations, where communication and evaluation become interconnected mechanisms for sustaining

institutional development.

Overall, this study extends the literature on strategic educational leadership by demonstrating that school promotion constitutes a strategic leadership practice rather than an isolated administrative or marketing activity. While previous studies primarily discuss school promotion in relation to communication management or institutional branding, the present study highlights its broader contribution to institutional competitiveness through strategic planning, digital communication, stakeholder engagement, and continuous organizational improvement. The novelty of this research therefore lies in conceptualizing school promotion as a leadership-driven strategy that integrates organizational vision, community trust, and institutional competitiveness within the management of student admission in Indonesian public secondary schools.

Continuous Monitoring and Organizational Improvement

The findings indicate that continuous monitoring and evaluation constituted an essential component of strategic leadership in student admission management at SMP Negeri 19 Kota Jambi. Rather than limiting evaluation to the completion of the admission process, the principal implemented continuous monitoring throughout planning, implementation, and post-admission stages. Regular meetings, performance reviews, stakeholder feedback, and documentation analysis enabled the school to identify implementation challenges, improve administrative procedures, and refine future admission strategies. These findings support the view that effective educational leadership relies on continuous evaluation as a mechanism for organizational learning and sustainable institutional development (Aguinis, 2023; Bush, 2020; Fullan, 2020).

From the perspective of continuous improvement, monitoring functions not merely as a control mechanism but as an organizational learning process that facilitates evidence-based decision-making. (A. S. Bryk et al., 2015) argue that educational improvement occurs through iterative cycles of planning, implementation, evaluation, and refinement supported by systematic data collection. Likewise, (Poister, 2010) emphasizes that strategic organizations continuously evaluate program performance to ensure that institutional objectives remain aligned with changing environmental conditions. The findings of this study demonstrate that the principal used evaluation findings to identify strengths and weaknesses in recruitment activities, thereby supporting more adaptive planning for subsequent admission periods.

The findings also reflect the principles of performance management, where organizational effectiveness is enhanced through systematic measurement, feedback, and continuous improvement. (Aguinis, 2023) explains that performance management is an integrated process involving planning, monitoring, evaluating, and developing organizational performance rather than merely assessing final outcomes. Similarly, (DeNisi & Murphy, 2017) argue that effective performance management emphasizes continuous feedback, enabling organizations to respond proactively to emerging challenges. In the present study, monitoring activities generated practical information that informed managerial decisions regarding communication strategies, stakeholder coordination, and administrative procedures, illustrating how performance management principles were embedded in student admission management.

Another important finding concerns the role of data in supporting leadership decisions. Interviews revealed that the principal and administrative team regularly analyzed enrollment trends, admission records, stakeholder feedback, and implementation reports to assess program effectiveness. Such practices illustrate evidence-based leadership, in which managerial decisions are grounded in empirical information rather than intuition alone.

(Hallinger, 2022) argues that contemporary educational leaders increasingly rely on organizational evidence to formulate strategic policies and improve institutional performance. Likewise, (Bank, 2018) emphasizes that educational improvement depends on leaders' ability to utilize reliable information for continuous policy refinement. Consequently, data-based evaluation strengthens organizational accountability while reducing uncertainty in institutional decision-making.

These findings are consistent with previous international research. (Fullan, 2020) argues that sustainable school improvement requires leaders to establish continuous learning cultures where evaluation becomes part of everyday organizational practice. (Robinson et al., 2008) similarly demonstrate that school leaders who regularly evaluate educational programs are more likely to improve organizational effectiveness and student outcomes. (Hallinger, 2020) further explains that leadership contributes to school improvement by promoting reflective organizational cultures capable of adapting to educational changes. Collectively, these studies support the present findings that continuous monitoring enhances institutional adaptability and strengthens the implementation of strategic leadership.

Within the Indonesian educational context, similar patterns have been reported. (Budiman & Fatahillah, 2025) found that strategic management in Islamic educational institutions becomes more effective when evaluation results are integrated into organizational planning. (Hamid & Purnomo, 2025) also reported that principals who regularly evaluate institutional performance are more successful in improving educational quality through systematic human resource management. Furthermore, (Tantowi et al., 2025) demonstrated that digital administrative systems facilitate monitoring, documentation, and organizational accountability in educational institutions. These studies reinforce the present findings that monitoring and evaluation function as strategic instruments for strengthening both institutional governance and service quality.

Despite these similarities, the present study contributes several distinctive insights. Previous studies generally examine monitoring and evaluation within the context of instructional leadership, teacher performance, or institutional accountability (Aguinis, 2023; Hallinger, 2020). Comparatively little attention has been given to understanding how continuous evaluation specifically supports student admission management. This study demonstrates that monitoring extends beyond administrative compliance by enabling school leaders to improve recruitment strategies, strengthen stakeholder communication, and respond more effectively to changing community expectations. Thus, evaluation becomes an integral element of strategic leadership rather than merely a reporting requirement.

The findings further suggest that organizational learning emerged as a direct outcome of continuous monitoring. Feedback collected from teachers, administrative personnel, parents, and community representatives was used not only to identify operational problems but also to generate new ideas for improving future admission processes. This finding aligns with the concept of the learning organization proposed by (Schein & Schein, 2021), who argue that organizational development depends on leaders' capacity to create cultures encouraging reflection, shared learning, and continuous adaptation. Similarly, (Garavan et al., 2020) emphasize that organizational learning enhances institutional resilience by enabling organizations to transform experience into strategic knowledge. At SMP Negeri 19 Kota Jambi, evaluation activities therefore functioned as opportunities for collective learning rather than mechanisms of fault-finding.

Another significant implication concerns institutional sustainability. Continuous monitoring enabled the school to maintain consistency in admission quality while adapting

recruitment strategies to demographic changes, stakeholder expectations, and educational policy developments. (UNESCO, 2021) emphasizes that sustainable educational transformation requires institutions to adopt reflective leadership practices supported by continuous evaluation and stakeholder participation. (OECD, 2023) similarly argues that educational quality is sustained when schools establish organizational systems capable of monitoring performance and implementing evidence-based improvements. The present findings confirm these international perspectives by demonstrating that systematic evaluation strengthens institutional resilience and long-term competitiveness.

Overall, this study extends the literature on strategic educational leadership by positioning continuous monitoring and organizational improvement as interconnected dimensions of student admission management. While previous studies primarily conceptualize evaluation as an accountability mechanism, the present findings demonstrate that monitoring simultaneously supports organizational learning, stakeholder responsiveness, strategic adaptation, and institutional sustainability. The novelty of this research therefore lies in illustrating how continuous evaluation functions as a strategic leadership practice that transforms empirical evidence into organizational improvement within the context of student admission management in Indonesian public secondary schools.

Research Contribution and Novelty

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on strategic educational leadership by extending its application to the context of student admission management in Indonesian public secondary schools. While previous studies have predominantly examined strategic leadership in relation to instructional leadership, school effectiveness, organizational culture, and teacher performance (Bush, 2020; Hallinger, 2020; Leithwood, 2020), limited attention has been devoted to understanding how strategic leadership shapes the management of student admission as a comprehensive organizational process. The present study addresses this gap by demonstrating that student admission management should not be viewed merely as an administrative function but as a strategic leadership process involving long-term planning, stakeholder collaboration, institutional promotion, and continuous organizational improvement.

From a theoretical perspective, this study expands strategic educational leadership theory by integrating concepts from strategic management, distributed leadership, stakeholder engagement, and continuous improvement into a unified analytical framework for student admission management. Rather than examining these concepts independently, the findings illustrate how they interact to enhance institutional competitiveness and organizational sustainability. The study therefore provides a more holistic understanding of strategic leadership by positioning student admission management as an organizational process that requires coordination between internal governance and external stakeholder relationships. This integrated perspective enriches the literature by demonstrating that strategic leadership extends beyond instructional management toward broader institutional development.

The practical contribution of this study lies in providing an evidence-based framework that can assist school leaders in designing more effective admission management strategies. The findings suggest that successful student recruitment depends not only on administrative efficiency but also on strategic planning, collaborative leadership, community engagement, transparent communication, and systematic evaluation. Consequently, principals and educational policymakers may utilize these findings as practical guidance for improving institutional competitiveness while maintaining equitable access and public trust. Such

implications are particularly relevant for public schools operating within increasingly competitive educational environments characterized by demographic changes and rising stakeholder expectations (OECD, 2023; UNESCO, 2021).

Another important contribution concerns the Indonesian educational context. Most previous studies addressing strategic leadership have been conducted in developed educational systems or have focused on general school management. By examining leadership practices within a public junior high school in Indonesia, this study provides empirical evidence that strategic leadership is highly influenced by local institutional characteristics, community participation, and educational governance. The findings therefore contribute contextual knowledge that broadens the international discussion on educational leadership in developing countries while highlighting the importance of adapting strategic leadership practices to local educational realities.

The principal novelty of this study lies in conceptualizing student admission management as an integrated strategic leadership model comprising four interrelated dimensions: **(1) strategic planning, (2) collaborative leadership and stakeholder engagement, (3) school promotion for institutional competitiveness, and (4) continuous monitoring for organizational improvement.** Unlike previous studies that generally investigate these dimensions separately, this research demonstrates that they function as complementary components of a comprehensive leadership strategy that enhances both institutional sustainability and student recruitment effectiveness. This integrated model provides a conceptual contribution that may serve as a reference for future studies examining strategic leadership in educational institutions.

Table 3. Research Contribution and Novelty

Aspect	Previous Studies	Contribution of This Study
Strategic Leadership	Focuses on instructional leadership, organizational effectiveness, and teacher performance (Hallinger, 2020; Bush, 2020).	Demonstrates that strategic leadership also governs student admission management as an integrated organizational process.
Student Admission Management	Generally discussed as an administrative or operational activity.	Repositions student admission as a strategic leadership function influencing institutional sustainability and competitiveness.
Stakeholder Collaboration	Mostly examined in relation to school governance and teacher collaboration.	Shows that stakeholder collaboration directly supports student recruitment, public trust, and institutional legitimacy.
School Promotion	Frequently viewed as a marketing or communication activity.	Demonstrates that school promotion is a strategic leadership practice integrated with institutional planning and stakeholder engagement.
Monitoring and Evaluation	Primarily linked to accountability and performance measurement.	Positions continuous monitoring as a mechanism for organizational learning, strategic adaptation, and sustainable institutional improvement.

Indonesian Context	Limited empirical studies focusing on public junior high schools.	Provides contextual evidence of strategic leadership implementation in Indonesian public education, enriching global educational leadership literature.
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The novelty of this study lies in proposing an integrated strategic leadership framework for student admission management that combines four interrelated dimensions: strategic planning, collaborative leadership, school promotion, and continuous monitoring for organizational improvement. Unlike previous studies, which generally examine these dimensions separately, this research demonstrates that they function as a unified leadership process that strengthens institutional competitiveness, stakeholder engagement, and sustainable student recruitment in Indonesian public secondary schools. This integrated perspective contributes both theoretically to the development of strategic educational leadership literature and practically by providing an evidence-based framework for school leaders managing student admission in increasingly competitive educational environments.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how strategic leadership was implemented in managing student admission at SMP Negeri 19 Kota Jambi through a qualitative case study approach. The findings demonstrate that effective student admission management extends beyond administrative procedures and represents a comprehensive leadership process integrating strategic planning, stakeholder collaboration, school promotion, and continuous monitoring. The principal played a central role in coordinating organizational resources, strengthening communication with internal and external stakeholders, and utilizing evaluation results to improve admission practices continuously. These interconnected leadership practices contributed to enhancing institutional competitiveness while maintaining public trust and sustaining student enrollment.

The study further reveals that strategic leadership in student admission management is characterized by the integration of long-term planning, collaborative decision-making, community engagement, and evidence-based organizational improvement. Rather than functioning as isolated managerial activities, these dimensions collectively establish an adaptive leadership framework capable of responding to changing educational demands and stakeholder expectations. Consequently, student admission management should be understood as a strategic organizational process that supports both institutional sustainability and educational quality.

This study contributes theoretically by extending the literature on strategic educational leadership through the development of an integrated framework linking strategic planning, collaborative leadership, institutional promotion, and continuous organizational improvement within student admission management. Practically, the findings provide useful insights for school principals, educational administrators, and policymakers in designing more effective, transparent, and sustainable admission strategies that strengthen institutional performance and public confidence. Future studies are encouraged to examine the applicability of this framework across different educational levels, regions, and institutional contexts using comparative or mixed-method approaches to enhance its generalizability.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research was

conducted in a single public junior high school, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other educational settings. Second, the study relied primarily on qualitative data obtained through interviews, observations, and document analysis, meaning that the findings reflect participants' experiences within a specific institutional context. Third, the study focused on leadership practices during student admission management and did not quantitatively examine their impact on enrollment growth, institutional performance, or educational outcomes.

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