

Implementation of Strategic Management at Manggala High School

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the implementation of strategic management at SMA Manggala as an institutional effort to improve educational quality. The research focuses on the roles of key actors, strategic mechanisms, implementation challenges, and the early impacts on academic quality, teacher professionalism, and school culture. The key concepts include strategic management, educational leadership, internal quality assurance systems, and organizational culture in schools. This research adopts a qualitative descriptive approach using in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. The object of the study is SMA Manggala as a secondary education institution implementing a quality-based strategic framework. The findings indicate that strategic management at SMA Manggala is enacted through strong school leadership, enhanced teacher capacity, and the active role of the Internal Quality Assurance Team. Early impacts are reflected in improved academic outcomes, increased teacher professionalism, and the development of a more participatory learning climate. Nevertheless, the study identifies major challenges such as limited financial resources, resistance to change, and internal communication issues. Practical recommendations emphasize the importance of reflective leadership, dialogical organizational culture, and participatory evaluation systems to ensure the sustainability of strategic initiatives.

Keywords: educational leadership; educational quality; organizational culture; strategic management; quality assurance.

INTRODUCTION

Strategic management in contemporary education can no longer be understood simply as a set of administrative techniques for managing resources, but has become a mode of institutional

thinking that determines the direction and future of educational institutions themselves. Amidst a global landscape marked by technological acceleration, social uncertainty, and increasingly complex quality demands, schools are required to move beyond mechanistic, routine work patterns to reflect on reflective, adaptive, and visionary management patterns. Within this framework, strategic management is positioned not merely as a technical instrument but as an epistemological awareness of how educational institutions read reality, interpret change, and formulate sustainable responses (Bryson, 2021). Schools no longer function simply as spaces for transmitting knowledge, but rather as learning organizations that continually negotiate with the external environment while simultaneously self-criticizing their internal capacities (Senge, 2020).

Theoretically, strategic management encompasses a series of interconnected processes, from analyzing the internal and external environment, formulating a vision and mission, setting strategic objectives, implementing programs, and systematically evaluating and controlling them. However, in Indonesian educational practice, strategic management often remains confined to formal documents—limited to visions and missions that are beautiful on paper, but lack real life force in the daily practice of schools (Rahman & Yusof, 2021). Many educational institutions have adopted the term strategic management normatively, but have not yet transformed it into an organizational culture that truly imbues the thinking of leaders, teachers, and education staff. This creates a gap between normative discourse and empirical reality, between managerial ideals and structural realities on the ground (Hammad & Al-Sayyed, 2023).

In this context, Manggala High School is interesting to study not only for its success in formulating strategy, but also for its efforts to enact strategic management as a social practice involving all school actors. Manggala High School does not position strategy as the monopoly of the principal or management team, but rather as the result of a collective dialogue between the institutional vision and the practical experiences of educators. This approach aligns with recent research findings that confirm that the success of strategic management in education is largely determined by the level of participation and sense of ownership of the school community in the shared vision and goals (Hallinger, 2021). In other words, an effective strategy is not the most technocratically sophisticated, but rather the most culturally grounded.

Furthermore, the excellence of today's educational institutions is no longer measured narrowly by academic achievement, but rather by their ability to create a holistic, inclusive, and character-driven learning ecosystem. Schools are required to produce not only cognitively intelligent students but also morally, emotionally, and socially mature (Biesta, 2022). From this perspective, strategic management must be able to bridge the demands of academic performance and character development, between the logic of efficiency and humanitarian values. SMA Manggala, as described in its internal documents, strives to position the values of integrity, collaboration, and independence as the central axis of the school's development strategy. These values are not merely normative slogans, but are sought to be present in curriculum design, learning patterns, and the culture of relationships among school members.

However, the reality of Indonesian education shows that many schools still face difficulties in translating strategies into consistent practices. Research over the past five years has revealed that one of the main problems in implementing strategic management is the weak integration between strategic planning and the internal quality assurance (IQA) system (Suryadi & Wibowo, 2021). IQA is often understood narrowly as an administrative evaluation instrument—merely to meet accreditation or audit requirements—without truly being utilized as a strategic reflection tool for continuous improvement. As a result, the quality assurance process becomes trapped in bureaucratic rituals lacking substantive meaning.

In fact, within the current theoretical framework, internal quality assurance is seen as the heart of strategic educational management. PMI functions not only as a control mechanism but also as a space for epistemic dialogue where schools critically examine themselves, identify structural weaknesses, and formulate data-driven innovations (Stensaker, 2022).

This is where the research gap that serves as the primary foundation of this study lies. Although international and national literature has extensively discussed strategic management and quality assurance in education, most studies remain normative-conceptual or macro-quantitative, emphasizing the relationships between variables such as leadership, teacher performance, and student achievement. Relatively few studies have delved deeply into how strategic management is actually lived as a social practice in specific school contexts, particularly at the secondary education level in Indonesia. In other words, there remains a gap in research on how strategy is enacted—how it is implemented, negotiated, and even contested in the daily lives of educational institutions.

More specifically, there is little research that integratively links strategic management and PMI as a single managerial practice. Most studies separate the two: strategic management is discussed within the framework of planning and leadership, while PMI is discussed within the framework of evaluation and accreditation (Hammad & Al-Sayyed, 2023). However, conceptually, the two should be interconnected. Strategy without quality assurance will lose its corrective power, while quality assurance without strategy will lose its transformative direction. This disconnect is a latent problem in many educational institutions, including in Indonesia.

Furthermore, there is a research gap on the actors and power dynamics in strategic management implementation. Many studies still view schools as homogeneous entities that operate rationally and harmoniously, without highlighting the conflicts of interest, cultural resistance, and negotiations of meaning that occur behind strategic policies (Bush, 2022). Yet, strategy in practice is always political—involving power relations, the distribution of authority, and the tension between the ideal vision and the reality of resources. Therefore, understanding strategic management holistically requires a qualitative approach that can capture this social complexity.

Based on these theoretical and empirical gaps, this study aims to describe in depth the implementation of strategic management at SMA Manggala, by positioning PMI as an integral part of the strategic process. The main objective of this study is not simply to map planning documents, but rather to explore how strategies are understood, implemented, and evaluated by educational actors within them. Specifically, this study focuses on: (1) the types and forms of strategic activities that SMA Manggala has undertaken; (2) the roles and interactions of key actors—principals, teachers, and educational staff—in the implementation process; (3) the structural and cultural barriers encountered; and (4) the initial impact of strategy implementation on academic quality and school climate.

With this approach, the research is expected to provide theoretical contributions in the form of enriching the perspective of strategic educational management that is more contextual and practical, as well as practical contributions in the form of policy recommendations based on the school's empirical experience. In other words, this research seeks to position strategic management not as an abstract discourse floating in the sky of concepts, but as a living narrative that grows from the soil of concrete experience. Because, ultimately, educational strategy is not simply a matter of designing the future, but rather about how the people within it learn to interpret the present more meaningfully. At this point, SMA Manggala becomes not only an object of study, but also a reflective mirror of the face of Indonesian education as it seeks its own form amidst the currents of change.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Strategic management in education has undergone a significant shift in meaning over the past two decades. Previously understood as merely a top-down, long-term planning technique, in recent literature, strategic management is positioned more as a reflective practice rooted in the educational organization's ability to read context, interpret change, and collectively develop

adaptive responses (Bryson, 2021). This perspective positions schools not as bureaucratic machines operating according to fixed procedures, but as social organisms living within a complex dynamic between external demands and internal capacities.

Bryson (2021) asserts that the core of strategic management lies in the ability of public organizations—including schools—to align normative vision with operational realities. Strategy is no longer understood as a static plan, but as an ongoing process involving situational diagnosis, choice formulation, adaptive implementation, and reflective evaluation (Bryson, 2021). In the educational context, this approach is crucial because schools operate in an environment full of uncertainty: policy changes, technological transformations, job market demands, and even the socio-cultural dynamics of students (Hallinger, 2021).

In line with this, Bush (2022) views strategic management as the heart of educational leadership. Leadership is no longer reduced to the principal as a single actor, but rather a collective process involving role distribution, dialogue between actors, and the creation of shared meaning (Bush, 2022). This perspective shifts the focus of study from what leaders do to how leadership is enacted, namely, how strategic leadership is carried out in the daily practices of schools. Thus, strategy becomes a social arena where institutional visions are negotiated, questioned, and brought to life.

Within the framework of a learning organization, Senge (2020) emphasized that the success of a strategy depends heavily on the institution's capacity to learn from experience. Strategic schools are not those with the most detailed plans, but those capable of critical self-reflection, open dialogue, and integrate feedback into continuous improvement (Senge, 2020). This view is reinforced by Leithwood et al. (2020), who state that effective school leadership is characterized by the ability to build a shared vision, foster collective commitment, and create a learning culture that supports innovation (Leithwood et al., 2020).

However, despite the rapid development of the theoretical framework of strategic management, its implementation in educational practice often faces various structural and cultural barriers. Rahman and Yusof (2021) point out that many educational institutions remain trapped in a formalistic planning approach, where strategies are formulated to meet administrative demands, rather than as a tool for institutional transformation (Rahman & Yusof, 2021). Strategy documents are often drafted by a small managerial elite, without meaningful participation from teachers and education personnel. As a result, strategies lose their vitality and fail to meaningfully shape organizational behavior.

Hammad and Al-Sayyed (2023) identified several key obstacles to implementing strategic management in schools, including limited resources, cultural resistance, weak internal communication, and the limited analytical capacity of school leaders (Hammad & Al-Sayyed, 2023). These obstacles demonstrate that strategy is not simply a technical issue, but also a matter of social relations and the distribution of power. Strategies that are insensitive to the social context of schools tend to result in implementation failure, even if they appear conceptually ideal.

In current educational discourse, there is a growing awareness that strategic management cannot be separated from issues of quality and accountability. Quality is no longer understood as a static, measurable outcome, but rather as a dynamic process that requires continuous reflection (Harvey & Williams, 2020). Within this framework, internal quality assurance (IQA) is positioned as a strategic instrument that enables schools to conduct systematic, data-driven self-evaluations.

Stensaker (2022) views PMI as a learning mechanism, an organizational learning mechanism that enables educational institutions to identify gaps between actual practices and expected standards. PMI serves not only as a control tool but also as an epistemic space where knowledge about quality is produced, negotiated, and interpreted (Stensaker, 2022). Thus, PMI becomes an integral part of strategic management, not merely an administrative complement.

In the Indonesian context, studies on PMI have yielded mixed results. Suryadi and Wibowo (2021) found that many schools have adopted internal quality assurance systems, but their implementation remains procedural and compliance-oriented (Suryadi & Wibowo, 2021). PMI is

often reduced to the activity of completing evaluation instruments, without substantive reflection or strategic follow-up. This phenomenon demonstrates a gap between the conceptual ideals of PMI and the practical realities on the ground.

Nugraha et al. (2025) reinforce these findings by asserting that PMI in Indonesian schools tends to function as a tool for institutional legitimacy, rather than as an instrument for organizational learning (Nugraha et al., 2025). Schools focus more on achieving accreditation scores than on continuous improvement processes. As a result, PMI loses its transformative potential and becomes trapped in bureaucratic rituals lacking pedagogical meaning.

From all these studies, several significant research gaps can be identified. First, most studies of strategic management in education remain macro and quantitative, focusing on the relationships between variables such as leadership, teacher performance, and student achievement. Relatively few studies have qualitatively explored how strategies are implemented in daily school practice, particularly at the level of social interactions between actors.

Second, there is a lack of research that fully integrates strategic management and PMI. Most research separates the two as distinct domains: strategy as planning, PMI as evaluation. However, theoretically, the two should be interconnected as a single organizational learning cycle.

Third, there is still a lack of research that positions schools as social arenas rife with conflict, negotiation, and power dynamics in strategy implementation. An overly normative approach tends to ignore the political and cultural dimensions of strategic management, resulting in a picture that is overly idealistic and insensitive to empirical realities.

Based on these gaps, this study positions itself as an effort to fill the gap in research through an in-depth exploration of the implementation of strategic management at SMA Manggala, with a focus on the integration of strategy and PMI as a living social practice. This study aims not only to answer the question "what schools do," but also "how and why strategies are implemented in certain ways." Thus, this study is expected to provide theoretical contributions in the form of enriching a more contextual perspective on strategic management in education, as well as practical contributions in the form of policy recommendations rooted in the real experiences of educational institutions.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with the aim of gaining a deeper understanding of the strategic management implementation process at Manggala High School in a natural setting. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore the meanings, experiences, and social dynamics that accompany managerial practices, which cannot be reduced to mere statistics.

Data collection techniques were carried out through three main methods, namely: (1) in-depth interviews, involving the principal, the Internal Quality Assurance System Team (SPMI), the vice principal, and strategy implementation staff; (2) participatory observation, of various strategy implementation activities, such as teacher training activities, quality evaluation meetings, and technology-based learning practices; and (3) documentation studies, of strategic planning documents, activity reports, quality evaluation instruments, and school policy archives (Adlini et al., 2022).

Data analysis was conducted simultaneously and continuously through three main stages: data reduction, which involved selecting and focusing information relevant to the research objectives; data presentation, in the form of descriptive narratives and thematic matrices; and conclusion drawing and verification, through a process of critical interpretation of the findings. Data validity was maintained through triangulation techniques of sources and methods, ensuring that the research findings had a level of validity that could be scientifically justified (Berna et al., 2024).

DISCUSSION

Implementation of Strategic Management at Manggala High School

The implementation of strategic management at SMA Manggala can be understood as a relatively mature institutional effort to translate modern management theory into concrete and contextual educational practices. From a theoretical perspective, SMA Manggala's practices demonstrate significant alignment with the strategic management model developed by Wheelen and Hunger, which emphasizes four main components: environmental analysis, strategy formulation, strategy implementation, and evaluation and control (Wheelen & Hunger, 2015). Although this model originates from the business management tradition, recent studies confirm that the framework is increasingly relevant in the educational context, particularly in the face of complex demands for quality, public accountability, and rapid social change (Hashim et al., 2022). SMA Manggala appears to have not merely adopted this framework normatively but has internalized it into the school's organizational work system.

In the implementation phase, the strategy at SMA Manggala is not understood as a static document that stops at the formulation of a vision and mission, but as a living process articulated through concrete policies, role distribution, and the daily practices of the school community. This aligns with Bryson's view that an effective strategy is one that is realized through collective action, not simply a formal statement on paper (Bryson et al., 2025). In this context, SMA Manggala demonstrates the characteristics of a learning organization, where strategy becomes part of the institutional culture, not merely a short-term managerial project.

One of the most prominent aspects of strategic management implementation at SMA Manggala is the relatively well-planned and priority-based allocation of resources. The school directs financial, human, and facility resources toward core programs such as improving teacher competency, strengthening student character, and developing digital learning infrastructure. This practice reflects the fundamental principle of strategic management, which places resource allocation at the heart of strategy implementation (Hitt et al., 2017). From an educational perspective, investment in teacher development directly contributes to improving the quality of instruction and student learning outcomes. SMA Manggala consciously positions teachers as strategic assets, not merely implementers of the curriculum, thus prioritizing budgets for training, academic supervision, and professional development.

The allocation of resources at SMA Manggala also demonstrates the logic of strategic rationality, where each program is linked to the school's medium- and long-term goals. For example, the procurement of a Learning Management System is not solely aimed at following digitalization trends, but is linked to the school's vision of building a learning ecosystem that adapts to technological developments and the needs of the digital generation. This aligns with Stensaker's research findings, which emphasize that educational technology only has a significant impact when integrated into institutional strategies, not treated as an ad hoc project (Stensaker, 2022). Thus, SMA Manggala is not simply adopting technology but utilizing it as a strategic instrument for pedagogical transformation.

In addition to resource allocation, the implementation of strategic management at SMA Manggala is also reflected in the development of a relatively flexible and collaborative organizational structure. The formation of the Internal Quality Assurance System (SPMI) Team is a concrete example of how the school constructed a new structure to support institutional strategy. This team serves not only as an evaluation unit but also as a coordination center between strategic policies and operational practices. In educational management literature, an effective organizational structure is characterized by the ability to integrate various functions without creating fragmentation of roles (Secundo et al., 2025). SMA Manggala appears to have successfully positioned the SPMI Team as a connecting node between strategic leadership and technical implementation at the classroom level.

The existence of such a structure also strengthens the participatory dimension of strategic management. Strategy is not monopolized by the principal as a sole actor, but is implemented

through a relatively equal distribution of roles among leaders, teachers, and staff. This aligns with the concept of distributed leadership, which emphasizes that strategic leadership in education is collective and collaborative (Leithwood et al., 2020). In SMA Manggala's practice, teachers are not only the objects of policy but also the subjects involved in program formulation, activity evaluation, and the development of learning innovations. This situation demonstrates that strategy has become a shared responsibility, not simply the agenda of a managerial elite.

Another important dimension in the implementation of strategic management at SMA Manggala is the use of information systems as a basis for decision-making. The school has developed a documentation and reporting system that allows for regular monitoring of academic performance, student attendance, and program outcomes. In modern management literature, information systems are seen as a key prerequisite for rational, data-driven decision-making (Elgendy et al., 2022). In the educational context, the systematic use of data contributes to increased accountability and transparency in school management (Memarian & Doleck, 2023). SMA Manggala appears to be moving toward an evidence-based management model, where policies are no longer based solely on intuition but on analysis of available data.

The use of this information system also strengthens the evaluation function within the strategic management cycle. The SPMI team uses data as a basis for conducting internal audits, assessing program effectiveness, and formulating recommendations for improvement. This practice aligns with Harvey and Williams's view that internal quality assurance ideally functions as an organizational learning mechanism, not simply an administrative control tool (Harvey & Williams, 2020). In this regard, SMA Manggala demonstrates the potential for making evaluation a space for collective reflection, where the school community systematically learns from successes and failures.

Another equally important aspect is the operational policies developed to support strategy implementation. Policies regarding teacher training, technology use, and strengthening character education demonstrate alignment between the school's normative vision and daily practice. In strategic management theory, operational policies serve as a bridge between abstract strategies and concrete actions (Hansen et al., 2024). Without clear policies, strategies lose their implementability and risk remaining merely rhetorical. SMA Manggala appears to recognize this by formulating relatively detailed and applicable policies, making it easier for teachers and staff to translate strategic objectives into practical work.

Interestingly, the strategy at Manggala High School is not only oriented towards the cognitive dimension of education, but also towards character building and school culture. Positive habituation programs, extracurricular activities, and an emphasis on the values of discipline and responsibility demonstrate a holistic understanding of the strategy. This aligns with Biesta's critique of the reductionism of educational management, which overemphasizes academic achievement while neglecting the ethical and existential dimensions of education (Segev, 2024). In this context, Manggala High School demonstrates an effort to maintain a balance between the logic of performativity and humanitarian values, so that the strategy does not become trapped in a purely technocratic orientation.

The implementation of strategic management at Manggala High School can be understood as an organizational practice relatively consistent with Wheelen and Hunger's theoretical framework, but with contextual adaptations according to the characteristics of the educational institution. Strategy is realized through priority-based resource allocation, a collaborative organizational structure, information systems that support decision-making, and applicable operational policies. These findings reinforce the view that strategic management in education is not simply the adoption of business concepts, but a process of recontextualization that requires sensitivity to the pedagogical values and social dynamics of the school (Ferlie & Ongaro, 2022).

Thus, the research objective of describing strategic activities at Manggala High School can be said to have been substantially achieved. Strategy does not stop at the level of discourse, but

exists as a social practice that shapes the way school members think, act, and interact. In other words, strategic management at Manggala High School has moved from mere strategic planning to strategic living, a condition in which strategy becomes part of everyday institutional life, not merely a temporary managerial project (Silverman & Smith, 2024). This condition confirms that the success of strategy in education is determined not only by the sophistication of the concept, but by the institution's ability to bring the concept to life in concrete and meaningful practical realities.

The Role of Actors in Strategy Implementation

Within the framework of strategic management in educational institutions, the role of actors is not merely a structural complement, but rather the epistemic core that determines whether a strategy ceases to be a normative document or becomes a living institutional practice. SMA Manggala demonstrates that strategy implementation does not occur mechanically through administrative procedures alone, but rather through a dynamic interaction between leadership, teacher professionalism, middle management governance, and social legitimacy from external stakeholders. From a contemporary perspective in educational management, the success of a strategy is largely determined by the quality of the implementing actors who are able to translate the vision into meaningful collective action (Håkansson & Adolfsson, 2022). Therefore, analyzing the roles of actors is crucial to understanding how the strategy at SMA Manggala operates as a social system, not simply a technical one.

The principal occupies a central position as a strategic leader, serving not only as an administrator but also as an architect of institutional change. In the context of Manggala High School, the principal serves as a sensemaker, articulating the strategic meaning of each policy so that it can be meaningfully understood by the entire school community. Strategic leadership essentially requires the ability to build a collective narrative about the school's future, while simultaneously orchestrating resources to align with that vision (Sandy, 2024). The principal at Manggala High School does not simply issue top-down instructions but practices participatory leadership through deliberation forums, reflective meetings, and open discussions, ultimately strengthening a sense of ownership of the strategy being implemented. This aligns with findings that dialogue-based leadership tends to generate higher levels of organizational commitment than coercive, bureaucratic leadership (Harris, 2021).

Furthermore, the principal also plays the role of a boundary spanner, bridging the school's internal interests with external demands such as government regulations, national education standards, and community expectations. In this context, the principal functions not only as an implementer of state policy but also as an epistemic mediator who interprets policy to make it relevant to the local context of Manggala High School. This approach is crucial because the implementation of educational strategies always takes place in a space of negotiation between normative ideals and social realities (Stensaker, 2022). Thus, the principal at Manggala High School does not position himself as a single, all-knowing actor, but rather as a learning leader who continuously critically reflects on his own leadership practices.

Under the leadership of the principal, teachers, vice principals, and the SPMI Team serve as key implementing actors who operationalize strategies in the realm of pedagogical and managerial practice. Teachers are the primary agents of change because they directly interact with students in the classroom, where educational strategies are put to the test. Teacher professionalism at SMA Manggala is measured not only by pedagogical competence but also by their reflective capacity to adapt learning methods to current demands, including technology integration, project-based learning, and authentic assessment. Recent research shows that teachers who are actively involved in strategic decision-making processes tend to have higher levels of pedagogical innovation (Campos-García & Zúñiga-Vicente, 2022). In this context, SMA Manggala treats teachers not as passive implementers but as co-creators of strategies, contributing ideas and critical evaluation of school policies.

Vice principals, particularly in the areas of curriculum and student affairs, play a crucial role as middle managers, bridging the principal's strategic vision with operational realities on the ground. They act as translators, transforming the abstract language of the vision and mission into concrete work plans, activity schedules, and supervisory mechanisms. In strategic management literature, the role of middle managers is often considered crucial because they ensure consistency between planning and implementation (Reynders et al., 2022). At SMA Manggala, the vice principal not only performs a coordinating function but also serves as a mentor for teachers, especially in addressing curriculum changes and the demands of digital learning. As such, they serve as key actors in building sustainable institutional capacity.

The SPMI Team occupies a unique position as an actor integrating managerial and evaluative dimensions in strategy implementation. The presence of the SPMI Team at SMA Manggala demonstrates that the school does not rely solely on intuition in assessing strategy success, but rather utilizes a data-driven approach and empirical evidence. This team is tasked with compiling quality documents, conducting internal audits, and providing recommendations for systemic improvements. From a contemporary perspective, internal quality assurance is no longer understood as a control instrument, but as an organizational learning mechanism that allows schools to collectively reflect on their own performance (Loh et al., 2023). Thus, the SPMI Team at SMA Manggala serves as a critical friend, helping the school identify its structural weaknesses without falling into a culture of blame.

Interestingly, the role of actors in implementing the strategy at Manggala High School extends beyond the school's internal structure, but also involves the school committee and parents as external supporters who provide social legitimacy to strategic policies. In the educational context, the success of a strategy is determined not only by internal efficiency but also by the extent to which it is accepted and supported by the community. The school committee at Manggala High School serves as a public representation forum that articulates parents' aspirations and is a critical partner in strategic decision-making. Recent studies have shown that parental involvement in school governance is positively correlated with improved quality of educational services and student satisfaction (Goodall, 2021). Thus, the role of the committee and parents is not merely symbolic, but substantive in building a participatory educational ecosystem.

Furthermore, the relationship between the school and parents at Manggala High School is not built on a patron-client basis, but rather on a deliberative partnership. Parents are not only asked to provide financial support but are also involved in discussions regarding the direction of the school's development, particularly regarding character building, discipline, and value development. This approach reflects a new paradigm in educational management that positions schools as public spaces open to citizen participation (Hunter et al., 2022). In this paradigm, educational strategies are no longer viewed as the monopoly of a managerial elite, but rather as the result of social construction involving diverse voices and interests.

Conceptually, the configuration of actor roles at Manggala High School demonstrates that strategy implementation is a collective, relational process, not merely hierarchical. The principal, teachers, middle managers, the SPMI Team, and the committee and parents form a network of interdependent and mutually influential actors. This approach aligns with distributed leadership theory, which emphasizes that effective leadership does not reside in a single individual but is dispersed across social practices involving multiple actors (Hartley, 2023). In the context of Manggala High School, leadership is not monopolized by the principal but is practiced collectively through various roles and functions.

The implication of these findings is that the successful implementation of strategy at SMA Manggala cannot be explained solely through structural factors such as policies or budgets, but must be understood as the result of complex interactions between actors with diverse backgrounds, interests, and capacities. Strategy comes to life because there are subjects who bring

it to life, not because there are documents that write it down. Thus, this study confirms that the essence of strategic management in educational institutions lies not in the sophistication of theoretical models, but in the quality of the social relations that underpin strategic practice itself (Stensaker, 2022). In other words, strategy is not simply a matter of what is planned, but who implements it and how they interpret their role in the shared educational project.

Implementation Barriers and Challenges

In strategic management practices in educational institutions, successful implementation never occurs in a sterile space free from structural and cultural friction. Rather, the analytical value of a strategy lies in its ability to persist and adapt amidst limitations, resistance, and often less-than-ideal communication dynamics. Manggala High School, despite demonstrating positive achievements in various strategic aspects, continues to face a series of systemic and inherent obstacles to educational governance. The three most prominent challenges are budget constraints, resistance to change, and internal communication problems (Evans & Britt, 2023). These three challenges are not merely technical obstacles, but rather epistemic problems that touch the heart of the school's organizational culture.

Budget constraints are the most classic and yet most crucial structural obstacle to implementing educational strategies. At SMA Manggala, the primary funding source remains heavily reliant on School Operational Assistance (BOS) funds and limited community contributions, leaving relatively little fiscal space for developing large-scale strategic programs. From a contemporary public management perspective, budget constraints impact not only the number of programs that can be implemented but also the quality of implementation, as sound strategies require sustained investment in human resources, infrastructure, and information systems (Bryson, 2021). When budgets are inadequate, schools tend to fall into the trap of survival management, focusing solely on maintaining basic operations rather than developing long-term innovations.

Budgetary issues also have symbolic implications for organizational psychology. At Manggala High School, limited funding often forces the school to implement strict prioritization, resulting in not all innovative ideas being realized. This situation indirectly fosters a pragmatic, adaptive mentality, but also has the potential to create latent frustration among teachers and staff who feel their creative ideas are hampered by financial realities. Recent research shows that resource constraints that are not managed transparently can reduce work motivation and trust in leadership (Baquero, 2023). Therefore, budgetary issues are not simply about a lack of money, but also about how those limitations are interpreted and communicated within the organizational culture.

On the other hand, resistance to change is a far more complex cultural barrier rooted in the psychological dimensions and professional identities of educational actors. At SMA Manggala, resistance primarily emerged in the context of digital learning, curriculum changes, and the demands of quality-based administration. Some teachers felt that new strategies increased their workload without being accompanied by adequate recognition or support. This phenomenon aligns with findings that resistance to change in educational organizations often arises not from a rejection of innovation itself, but from a fear of losing competence, status, or professional comfort zone (Hubbart, 2023).

Resistance to change can also be interpreted as a form of pedagogical identity defense. Many teachers who have long taught using conventional methods feel that digital transformation and new learning approaches threaten their symbolic authority as primary sources of knowledge. From a sociological perspective, this type of resistance is not merely a form of conservatism, but rather a reflection of the negotiation of professional identity amidst changing knowledge structures (Mokhachane et al., 2023). At SMA Manggala, resistance is not always expressed openly, but often appears in the form of pseudo-compliance, namely implementing policies administratively without internalizing their strategic meaning.

Interestingly, resistance to change demonstrates that strategy implementation is never ideologically neutral. Each strategy carries specific values, assumptions, and visions about how education should be conducted. When strategies are not communicated dialogically, implementing actors tend to interpret them as external instructions that interfere with their professional autonomy. Recent studies confirm that resistance can be minimized if change is positioned as a collective learning process, rather than a technocratic project imposed from above (Goldschmeding et al., 2024). In the context of SMA Manggala, resistance is an important indicator that strategies need to be accompanied by spaces for reflection, meaningful training, and recognition of teachers' pedagogical experiences.

The third, no less significant obstacle is the problem of internal communication, both vertically and horizontally. At SMA Manggala, despite a relatively clear organizational structure, the flow of strategic information is not always uniform. Important policies are often only fully understood by the leadership and core team, while teachers and staff at the operational level receive information in fragmented form. This creates a gap in understanding that can potentially distort the meaning of strategy. Ineffective communication is a key cause of policy implementation failure in organizational literature, as strategies only work if they are consistently understood by all stakeholders (Cummings et al., 2024).

Internal communication problems are also closely related to the hierarchical culture that remains quite strong within educational institutions. At SMA Manggala, despite efforts to build participatory communication, daily practice still tends to be one-way, particularly in formal situations such as official meetings or policy socializations. As a result, strategies are often perceived as administrative orders, rather than as a collective vision. Recent research shows that educational organizations that fail to foster dialogic communication tend to experience an implementation gap, the gap between what is planned and what is actually implemented on the ground (Rapanta & Felton, 2022).

Weak internal communication also results in poor coordination between work units. At Manggala High School, for example, strategic programs designed by the leadership are not always optimally integrated with teacher work programs or student activities. This demonstrates that communication is not simply about conveying information, but about aligning meaning and purpose. From a strategic management perspective, communication functions as a medium for constructing organizational reality, not simply a technical channel (Andersson, 2025). When communication fails to build shared meaning, strategy loses its transformative power and becomes an administrative routine.

When these three barriers are viewed in an integrated manner, it becomes clear that budget constraints, resistance to change, and communication problems are not isolated phenomena, but rather mutually reinforcing, forming a cycle of implementation challenges (Turoń, 2025). Budget constraints narrow the space for training and dialogue, which in turn increases resistance to change. Poorly managed resistance worsens internal communication, as actors tend to be passive or defensive. Weak communication further exacerbates misunderstandings about the strategy, making the limited budget even less effective (Kemp et al., 2023). In this context, implementation barriers are not simply a lack of resources, but also the quality of social relations within the organization.

Theoretically, these findings reinforce the argument that strategic management in education must be understood as a cultural process, not merely a technical one. Strategies are not simply designed rationally but must be socially negotiated. In other words, strategic failure is often not due to poor planning, but to miscommunication of meaning and weak actor participation (Fullan, 2021). At SMA Manggala, these obstacles actually opened up space for critical reflection, explaining that future implementation success depends heavily on the school's ability to build a culture of dialogue, trust, and continuous organizational learning.

Thus, the analysis of implementation barriers at SMA Manggala should not be read as a mere list of weaknesses, but rather as a map of structural problems that must be addressed strategically. Budget constraints demand collaborative innovation and external partnerships, resistance to change requires reflective leadership and meaningful professional development, while communication challenges require a transformation of the organizational culture toward more open and dialogical relationships. From this perspective, barriers are not the antithesis of strategy, but rather an inherent part of the strategic process itself, as it is through them that organizations learn to understand themselves more honestly and critically (Biesta, 2022).

Initial Impact of Strategy Implementation

The initial impact of strategic management implementation at Manggala High School shows that strategy does not remain an administrative construct, but has begun to transform into a pedagogical reality that simultaneously influences academic quality, teacher professionalism, and the learning climate and school culture. From a contemporary educational management perspective, initial impact is a crucial phase because it indicates whether the strategy has transformative power or merely produces cosmetic changes (Latif & Nawaz, 2025). At Manggala High School, this impact appears to be a gradual process that is not always statistically spectacular, but is culturally significant because it touches the practical dimensions of the school community's daily lives.

In terms of academic quality improvement, the implementation of strategies at Manggala High School has begun to show a positive correlation with student learning outcomes, particularly in core subjects such as mathematics, Indonesian, and science. This improvement is not solely driven by changes in curriculum or evaluation methods, but rather by a restructuring of the learning process, making it more planned, data-driven, and integrated with a quality monitoring system. Strategies that emphasize academic supervision, learning reflection, and the use of learning technology have created a learning environment that is more adaptive to student needs (Rincon-Flores et al., 2024).

Academic quality at Manggala High School has also undergone a shift in meaning, moving from merely achieving quantitative grades to a more meaningful learning process. Teachers are becoming more aware that learning success is measured not only by exam scores, but by students' ability to think critically, argue, and solve problems contextually. This transformation aligns with the contemporary educational paradigm that positions learning as a process of subject formation, not simply the production of cognitive output (Biesta, 2022). In this context, Manggala High School's strategy has opened up a more humanistic pedagogical space, although it is still in its early stages and requires long-term consistency.

The subsequent impact is seen in teacher professionalism, which is strengthened at both the technical competency and reflective awareness levels. Strategy implementation encourages teachers to actively engage in training, pedagogical discussions, and more systematic self-evaluation practices. Teachers are no longer positioned solely as curriculum implementers, but as professional actors who continuously learn and develop themselves. Recent studies confirm that effective strategic management consistently correlates with increased teacher professionalism because strategy creates an organizational learning structure that enables collective reflection (Davis-Singaravelu, 2022).

At SMA Manggala, teacher professionalism began to emerge through shifts in attitudes toward innovation. Teachers became more open to the use of technology, collaborative learning, and alternative assessment approaches. Although some teachers initially showed resistance, the dialogic mentoring and supervision process successfully fostered awareness that change is not a threat, but rather an opportunity to expand pedagogical capacity. Research by Harris shows that teacher professionalism develops significantly when they are involved in communities of practice based on collaboration, not competition (Harris, 2021). In this context, SMA Manggala's

strategies serve as a catalyst for the development of a more reflective professional learning culture.

Interestingly, improving teacher professionalism not only impacts the quality of learning but also their professional identity. Teachers begin to view themselves as lifelong learners, not simply routine workers in the educational bureaucracy. This identity shift is crucial because true professionalism does not arise from formal regulations, but from an internal awareness of the meaning of the pedagogical role (Park & Hong, 2022). At SMA Manggala, this initial impact is evident in increased teacher initiative to attend seminars, write scientific papers, and share good practices in internal school forums.

The third strategic impact, and perhaps the most subtle yet fundamental, is a change in the learning climate and school culture. The learning climate at SMA Manggala has begun to shift from a formalistic atmosphere to a more dialogic, collaborative, and participatory one. Students are no longer solely positioned as objects of learning, but as subjects with a voice and a role in the learning process. Teachers more frequently encourage open discussions, group work, and project-based learning that demands active student involvement. Recent research shows that a participatory learning climate is strongly correlated with increased student intrinsic motivation (Kotera et al., 2023).

The school culture is also undergoing a gradual transformation from a hierarchical pattern to a more egalitarian one. Relationships between teachers and students are becoming more communicative, while relationships between teachers are becoming more collaborative. A culture of deliberation is beginning to replace a culture of one-way instruction. From an educational organization perspective, this kind of cultural change is a crucial indicator of strategic success, as it determines the long-term sustainability of change (Mingaleva et al., 2022). At SMA Manggala, the cultural change is not yet fully established, but signs are already visible in the increased trust between actors and the reduction of psychological distance in working relationships.

A more positive learning climate also impacts the psychological well-being of the school community. Students demonstrate higher levels of participation in both academic and non-academic activities, while teachers feel more valued as partners in the educational process. Recent research confirms that the psychological well-being of both teachers and students is a crucial prerequisite for effective learning (Bardach et al., 2022). In this context, SMA Manggala's strategies impact not only academic performance but also the quality of the learning experience as a human experience.

Theoretically, the initial impacts at Manggala High School reinforce the argument that strategic management in education must be understood as a cultural project, not simply a technocratic one. Successful strategies are not the most structurally complex, but those that transform ways of thinking, relating, and interpreting education itself (Teng & Yue, 2023). Academic quality improves as teachers and students experience a transformation in the meaning of learning, teachers' professionalism is strengthened as they engage in collective learning, and school culture changes as social relationships are built on trust and dialogue.

However, it's important to note that these initial impacts are still potential and fragile. Without consistent policies, resource support, and reflective leadership, the changes could stagnate and become stuck in old routines. Fullan asserts that many educational reforms fail not because of bad ideas, but because of a lack of sustainability in implementation (Fullan, 2021). Therefore, the initial impact at SMA Manggala should be understood as a starting point, not an endpoint, of the strategic transformation process.

Thus, the analysis of the initial impact of the strategy implementation at SMA Manggala indicates that strategic management has real potential to improve academic quality, strengthen teacher professionalism, and build a healthier learning climate and school culture. However, this potential will only become a sustainable reality if the strategy is consistently maintained as a reflective process involving all stakeholders. From this perspective, the initial impact is not simply

evidence of success but also an initial test of the resilience of the school's strategic vision in facing the complexities of contemporary educational realities (Stensaker, 2022).

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of strategic management at SMA Manggala has been taking place as a relatively systematic and sustainable institutional process, although it is still in the strengthening phase. The research question regarding how strategies are formulated, implemented, and interpreted by school actors is answered through the finding that strategic management is not practiced merely as an administrative mechanism, but as a collective praxis involving the leadership of the principal, teacher professionalism, the supervisory function of the SPMI Team, and support from external stakeholders. The main findings indicate that the strategy at SMA Manggala is manifested in the form of more targeted resource allocation, restructuring of organizational roles, strengthening of the learning information system, and the internalization of a quality culture that is beginning to shift bureaucratic work patterns towards reflective and collaborative patterns.

Theoretically, this research reinforces the thesis that strategic management in education cannot be reduced to a rational-technocratic model as is common in business management literature, but must be understood as a socio-cultural process fraught with negotiations of meaning, power relations, and the formation of professional identities. Strategy implementation has been shown to be strongly influenced by the quality of reflective leadership, dialogic communication, and the institution's ability to build organizational learning. Thus, this research contributes to enriching the perspective of educational management that positions strategy not merely as an instrument of control, but as a medium for school cultural transformation.

From a practical perspective, the research findings imply that the success of strategic management in schools is highly dependent on three key factors: the visionary and participatory leadership of the principal, the active involvement of teachers as professional actors, and the existence of an internal quality assurance system that serves as a space for collective reflection. Schools need not simply develop planning documents; they also need to build a culture of open communication, ongoing training, and evaluation mechanisms that are non-punitive but empowering. In the context of SMA Manggala, the strategy has proven effective in improving academic quality, strengthening teacher professionalism, and creating a more participatory learning climate, despite still facing structural limitations.

The main limitation of this research lies in its single-case study scope, requiring caution in generalizing the findings to other school contexts. Furthermore, this research focuses on initial impacts, making it unable to longitudinally measure the long-term sustainability of strategic changes. The limited quantitative data also forces the analysis to place greater emphasis on qualitative and interpretative dimensions.

Therefore, further research is recommended using a comparative design across schools, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches, and examining strategic management implementation over a longer time horizon. Future research should also explore the relationship between strategic management and the psychological well-being of teachers and students, as well as its impact on 21st-century competency-based learning outcomes.

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