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The Role of the School Principal in Improving the Management of Basic Education Data (Dapodik) at SDN 18 Pulau Rimau, Banyuasin Regency

Nur Afiana[1*], Nurulanningsih[2], Darmawan Budiyanto[3]
Universitas Tridinanti Palembang
Corresponding Author: Nur Afiana, afiananur054@gmail.com

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A B S T R A C T

This study examines the principal's role in improving the management of Basic Education Data (Dapodik) at SDN 18 Pulau Rimau, Banyuasin Regency. This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation involving the principal, Dapodik operator, and teachers as research informants. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, including data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, while data validity was ensured through source and technique triangulation. The findings revealed that the principal plays a strategic role in Dapodik management through planning, organizing, implementation, supervision, and evaluation, enabling data management to be conducted systematically, accurately, and sustainably. The main obstacles include limited competence of operators and teachers, application updates, internet and system disruptions, inadequate supporting facilities, delays in data submission, and suboptimal coordination. To address these challenges, the principal improves coordination and communication, provides guidance and motivation, facilitates training, supports adequate facilities, and conducts regular monitoring and evaluation. In conclusion, the principal's active role is essential in ensuring accurate, valid, up-to-date, and accountable Dapodik management to support educational decision-making

INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the strategic sectors in developing high-quality human resources. In the current era of educational digitalization, the government continues to transform educational governance through information technology to improve the effectiveness of educational services (Purwani et al., 2025). One form of this transformation is the implementation of the Basic Education Data System (*Data Pokok Pendidikan* or Dapodik), which serves as an integrated national education database containing information on students, teachers, educational personnel, facilities and infrastructure, and the conditions of educational institutions (Amar et al., 2026). The accuracy and validity of Dapodik data are essential because they serve as a basis for various educational policies, including education operational funding, teacher allowances, school accreditation, and national education planning (Rusnati, 2022).

The successful management of Dapodik is not solely the responsibility of school operators but also requires the active involvement of the principal as an educational leader and manager. Principals are responsible for planning, organizing, directing, supervising, and evaluating school activities, including the management of digital-based educational data. Effective school leadership contributes to the improvement of organizational management through appropriate planning, coordination, supervision, and evaluation (Sutisna et al., 2023). In addition, principals perform strategic functions as educators, managers, administrators, supervisors, leaders, innovators, and motivators in supporting effective school management (Sabila et al., 2023). Therefore, the quality of Dapodik management is closely related to the principal's ability to coordinate school personnel and ensure that educational data are managed systematically and responsibly.

The increasing reliance on digital technology in educational administration requires principals to adapt to technological developments and strengthen the capacity of human resources within schools. Principals are expected to support teachers and educational personnel in developing their competencies in utilizing information technology and digital administrative systems (Wuryandini et al., 2023). Planning also plays an important role in ensuring that educational programs and administrative activities are implemented according to institutional needs and changing conditions (Adam & Oja, 2023). In the context of Dapodik management, this leadership capacity is particularly important because the system requires continuous data collection, updating, validation, synchronization, and monitoring.

Despite its strategic importance, Dapodik management in elementary schools may encounter several challenges. Common problems include delays in updating data, inconsistencies in student and teacher information, limited technological competence among school personnel, weak coordination, inadequate facilities, and insufficient supervision of data validity. Such conditions may reduce the effectiveness of educational administration and potentially affect government programs that rely on Dapodik data. Consequently, principals are required to perform an active role in coordinating,

supervising, and evaluating the management of educational data to ensure that the information produced remains accurate, valid, current, and accountable.

Initial observations at SDN 18 Pulau Rimau, Banyuasin Regency, indicated several challenges in the management of Dapodik. Data concerning students, teachers, and educational personnel were not always updated according to current conditions. Coordination between the school operator and teachers in providing the required information was also not fully optimal, potentially resulting in discrepancies in the data entered into the system. Furthermore, continuous updates to the Dapodik application require school personnel to adapt to technological changes. The supervision and assistance provided by the principal in the validation and updating process also require continuous strengthening. These conditions demonstrate the importance of examining the principal's role in supporting systematic and sustainable Dapodik management.

Previous studies have extensively discussed the role of principals in improving educational quality, teacher performance, school management, and educational programs (Saleh & Arifiani, 2024; Trispiyanti et al., 2023; Waheda et al., 2026). However, studies specifically examining the principal's role in improving the management of Dapodik as a digital-based national education information system remain limited, particularly in elementary schools located in regional areas. This study therefore contributes to the development of educational management knowledge by focusing on principal leadership in digital educational data management. The study specifically explores how principals perform managerial and leadership functions in improving data validity, strengthening coordination among school personnel, supervising Dapodik management, supporting human resource development, and addressing challenges associated with technology-based educational administration.

The novelty of this study lies in its specific focus on the principal's role in improving Dapodik management at SDN 18 Pulau Rimau, Banyuasin Regency. Rather than examining principal leadership in general school management, this study investigates leadership practices in relation to a national educational data system that directly supports data-based educational planning and decision-making. The study is also expected to provide empirical insights into the management of digital educational data in elementary schools, particularly regarding the challenges faced by schools and the strategies implemented by principals to address them. Therefore, this study aims to describe the principal's role in improving Dapodik management at SDN 18 Pulau Rimau, identify the obstacles encountered in the management process, and explain the efforts undertaken by the principal to overcome these obstacles and improve the quality of Dapodik management.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership Theory

Leadership is an important element in achieving organizational goals because it involves the ability of an individual to influence, direct, motivate, and coordinate other members of an organization. In an educational institution, leadership is particularly important because the principal is responsible for

mobilizing teachers, educational personnel, and other school resources to achieve educational objectives. Leadership can therefore be understood as a process through which an individual influences others to work collectively toward the achievement of common goals (Northouse, 2022).

Leadership Theory provides an important foundation for understanding the role of the principal in school management. A principal is not merely responsible for administrative activities but is also expected to provide direction, establish effective communication, coordinate school personnel, and encourage the achievement of institutional objectives. The effectiveness of school leadership is associated with the principal's ability to integrate leadership and managerial responsibilities in responding to organizational needs (Karim et al., 2025).

In the context of Dapodik management, Leadership Theory is relevant because the management of educational data requires collaboration among the principal, school operator, teachers, and educational personnel. The principal is expected to provide direction and establish coordination to ensure that educational data are collected, updated, validated, and reported appropriately. Therefore, the principal's leadership capacity becomes an important factor in supporting systematic and sustainable Dapodik management.

Role Theory

Role Theory is used in this study to explain the responsibilities and expected behaviors associated with an individual's position within an organization. Every organizational position carries specific duties, responsibilities, and expectations that must be performed to support the achievement of organizational goals. In this context, the role of an individual represents the implementation of responsibilities attached to the position held within the organization.

The principal occupies a strategic position in an educational institution and is therefore expected to perform various responsibilities related to leadership, management, administration, supervision, and organizational development. The principal's role involves not only the exercise of formal authority but also the ability to interact with, influence, and coordinate other members of the school organization.

Role Theory is particularly relevant to this study because it provides a perspective for examining how the principal performs responsibilities related to Dapodik management. The principal is expected to coordinate the school operator and teachers, supervise the process of data management, provide guidance when problems occur, and evaluate the implementation of Dapodik management. Therefore, the effectiveness of Dapodik management can be examined through the way the principal performs the roles and responsibilities attached to the position as the leader of the school.

The Principal's Role in Educational Management

The principal has a central role in ensuring that educational programs and school administrative activities are implemented effectively. The principal is responsible for managing available resources and coordinating teachers and

educational personnel to achieve educational objectives. The role of the principal therefore involves both leadership and management functions.

In educational management, the principal performs various interconnected functions. These functions include planning school programs, organizing human and material resources, directing the implementation of activities, supervising the performance of school personnel, and evaluating the results of school programs. Principal leadership is also recognized as an important factor influencing the effectiveness of school organizations and the achievement of educational objectives (Hardianto et al., 2025).

The principal's role can also be understood through the concept of EMASLIM, which includes the principal's responsibilities as an Educator, Manager, Administrator, Supervisor, Leader, Innovator, and Motivator. These roles demonstrate that the principal has multidimensional responsibilities in managing educational institutions. The implementation of these roles is important in supporting effective administration, improving the capacity of school personnel, and responding to organizational challenges.

As an educator, the principal supports the development of teachers and educational personnel. As a manager, the principal performs planning, organizing, and controlling functions. As an administrator, the principal is responsible for the implementation of administrative activities. As a supervisor, the principal monitors and evaluates the performance of school personnel. Furthermore, as a leader, innovator, and motivator, the principal provides direction, develops improvements, and encourages school personnel to perform their responsibilities effectively.

Dapodik Management

The Basic Education Data System (*Data Pokok Pendidikan*), commonly referred to as Dapodik, is an integrated educational data system used to manage important information related to educational institutions. The system includes data concerning students, teachers, educational personnel, facilities and infrastructure, and other educational information required for educational administration and decision-making.

Effective Dapodik management requires a systematic process involving data collection, data entry, updating, validation, synchronization, monitoring, and evaluation. The quality of the data managed through the system depends on the accuracy, completeness, validity, and timeliness of the information provided by the school.

The management of Dapodik cannot be viewed solely as the responsibility of the school operator. Teachers and educational personnel also have responsibilities in providing accurate information, while the principal is responsible for ensuring coordination and supervision throughout the process. The principal's leadership role is therefore important in ensuring that educational data management is integrated into the overall administrative and managerial processes of the school.

However, the implementation of Dapodik management may encounter several obstacles. Based on the focus of this study, these obstacles include limited

competence among school personnel, changes in applications and systems, internet and system disruptions, limited supporting facilities, delays in submitting data, and coordination problems among personnel. These challenges require the principal to perform an active role in developing appropriate strategies and providing support for the personnel involved in Dapodik management.

The Principal's Role in Improving Dapodik Management

The principal plays a strategic role in improving the management of Dapodik because the process requires leadership, coordination, supervision, and continuous evaluation. Based on Leadership Theory, the principal influences and directs school personnel to perform their responsibilities in managing educational data. Meanwhile, based on Role Theory, the principal performs responsibilities attached to the position as the leader and manager of the educational institution.

The principal's role in Dapodik management can be reflected through planning, organizing, implementation, supervision, and evaluation. Planning involves determining activities and strategies for managing educational data. Organizing includes assigning responsibilities and establishing coordination among the school operator, teachers, and educational personnel. Implementation involves ensuring that the processes of data collection, updating, and validation are conducted according to the required procedures.

Supervision is also an essential responsibility of the principal. Through supervision, the principal monitors the implementation of Dapodik management and identifies potential problems related to data accuracy, completeness, and timeliness. Evaluation is subsequently conducted to assess the effectiveness of the management process and identify improvements needed for future implementation.

The principal is also expected to address obstacles that arise during Dapodik management. These efforts may include strengthening communication and coordination, providing guidance and motivation, facilitating training, supporting the provision of adequate facilities, and conducting regular monitoring and evaluation. Such efforts demonstrate the importance of principal leadership in ensuring that Dapodik management can be conducted effectively and sustainably.

Previous studies have demonstrated that the principal performs interconnected leadership and managerial roles in managing educational institutions (Karim et al., 2025). Furthermore, research on principal leadership has consistently highlighted the importance of leadership functions, supervision, coaching, management, and motivation in supporting the effectiveness of school personnel and organizational performance (Firmansyah & Lavignes, 2026). These findings support the relevance of examining the principal's role in the specific context of Dapodik management.

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on Leadership Theory and Role Theory. Leadership Theory explains the principal's ability to influence, direct, motivate, and

coordinate school personnel in achieving organizational objectives. Role Theory explains the responsibilities and expected behaviors associated with the principal's position as the leader and manager of the school.

The combination of these theoretical perspectives provides the foundation for examining the principal's role in improving Dapodik management. The principal's role is analyzed through planning, organizing, implementation, supervision, and evaluation. In performing these responsibilities, the principal encounters various obstacles related to human resources, technological changes, internet connectivity, supporting facilities, data submission, and coordination.

The principal subsequently undertakes various efforts to address these obstacles, including strengthening coordination and communication, providing guidance and motivation, facilitating training, providing supporting facilities, and conducting regular monitoring and evaluation. Through these roles and efforts, the principal is expected to improve the quality of Dapodik management and ensure the availability of accurate, valid, current, and accountable educational data.

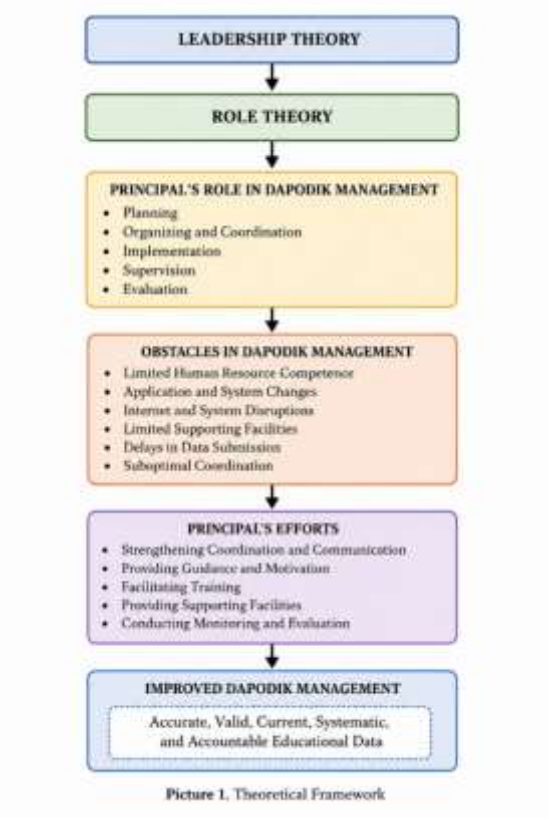


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design to obtain an in-depth understanding of the principal's role in improving the management of Basic Education Data (*Data Pokok Pendidikan* or Dapodik) at SDN 18 Pulau Rimau, Banyuasin Regency. The qualitative case study approach was selected because the study focused on exploring a phenomenon within its natural setting and understanding the experiences, roles, challenges, and efforts of the principal in managing Dapodik. In qualitative research, the researcher serves as

the primary instrument in collecting, interpreting, and analyzing data (Creswell, 2019; Moleong, 2019).

The study was conducted at SDN 18 Pulau Rimau, Banyuasin Regency, South Sumatra, Indonesia. The research activities were carried out from June to September 2026, including research preparation, instrument preparation, data collection, data analysis, data verification, and report preparation. The research location was selected because the school has implemented Dapodik as part of its digital-based educational administration, making it relevant to the focus of this study.

The participants were selected using purposive sampling. This technique was used to select individuals who were considered knowledgeable, directly involved, and able to provide relevant information regarding Dapodik management. The research informants consisted of one principal, one Dapodik operator, and two classroom teachers, resulting in a total of four informants. These informants were selected because they were directly involved in the provision, updating, management, supervision, and utilization of educational data at the school.

The primary research instrument was the researcher, supported by interview guidelines, observation guidelines, and documentation records. The interview instrument was developed based on the focus of the study, particularly the principal's role in Dapodik management. The indicators included planning, organizing, implementation, supervision, and evaluation of Dapodik management. The instrument also explored the obstacles encountered in managing Dapodik and the principal's efforts to address these challenges. The interview questions were adapted to the roles and involvement of the principal, Dapodik operator, and teachers in the management of educational data.

Data were collected through interviews, observation, and documentation. In-depth interviews were conducted with the principal, Dapodik operator, and teachers to obtain information concerning the principal's role, the implementation of Dapodik management, the challenges encountered, and the efforts undertaken to improve the quality of educational data. Observation was conducted through direct examination of Dapodik management activities at the school. Documentation was used to support and strengthen the findings obtained through interviews and observations. The documents included student data, teacher and educational personnel data, facilities and infrastructure data, Dapodik archives, and evidence of data synchronization.

The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, as presented in Sugiyono (2021). The analysis was conducted continuously and interactively until data saturation was achieved. The process consisted of four stages: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. During data collection, information was obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. Data reduction involved selecting, simplifying, and organizing information relevant to the research focus, including the principal's role, the implementation of Dapodik management, and the supporting and inhibiting factors. Data display was conducted by organizing the reduced data into systematic descriptive narratives

to identify patterns and relationships among the findings. Finally, conclusions were drawn and continuously verified against the available data. To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, data validity was examined through source and technique triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from the principal, Dapodik operator, and teachers. Technique triangulation was conducted by comparing and confirming findings obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation. The triangulation process was used to verify the consistency and credibility of the findings and to ensure that the conclusions accurately represented the actual conditions of Dapodik management at SDN 18 Pulau Rimau.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this section, you should describe each step taken to complete your research. You should not include too many descriptive statistical results here; on the other hand, it should be summarized in a more readable table or graph. You should never forget the numbers for each table and chart presented in your paper.

This study presents the findings based on data obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation involving the principal, the Dapodik operator, and teachers at SDN 18 Pulau Rimau, Banyuasin Regency. The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman through data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings are organized according to the three main focuses of the study: the principal's role in improving Dapodik management, the obstacles encountered, and the principal's efforts to overcome these obstacles.

As this study employed a qualitative approach, the findings were not presented through statistical tests or numerical formulas. Instead, the results were summarized in thematic tables based on the patterns and information obtained from the research informants and supported by observation and documentation.

The Principal's Role in Improving Dapodik Management

The findings revealed that the principal played a strategic role in improving Dapodik management through five major management functions: planning, organizing, implementation, supervision, and evaluation. At the planning stage, the principal conducted coordination meetings, established strategies for Dapodik management, determined schedules for data updating and synchronization, and distributed responsibilities among school personnel. At the organizing stage, the principal coordinated the roles of the Dapodik operator and teachers to ensure that each party understood their responsibilities in providing and managing educational data.

During implementation, Dapodik management involved collecting, entering, updating, and validating data related to students, teachers, educational personnel, and school facilities. The principal supported the implementation process by providing direction and ensuring coordination among the personnel involved. Supervision was conducted through regular monitoring, examination of the operator's reports, and coordination when errors or discrepancies were

identified. Evaluation was subsequently carried out to identify problems and determine follow-up actions, including document verification, data correction, validation, and synchronization.

Table 1. Principal's Role in Improving Dapodik Management

Management Function	Principal's Activities	Contribution to Dapodik Management
Planning	Conducting coordination meetings, developing management strategies, determining updating and synchronization schedules	Establishing a structured process for Dapodik management
Organizing	Assigning responsibilities and coordinating the principal, operator, and teachers	Strengthening collaboration and clarifying responsibilities
Implementation	Providing direction and supporting data collection, entry, updating, and validation	Ensuring that data management follows established procedures
Supervision	Conducting regular monitoring, reviewing operator reports, and identifying data discrepancies	Maintaining data accuracy and completeness
Evaluation	Identifying problems, verifying documents, correcting data, validating, and synchronizing information	Supporting continuous improvement and data accountability

The findings demonstrate that the principal's role extended beyond administrative responsibility. The principal acted as a leader who directed, coordinated, supervised, and evaluated the entire process of Dapodik management. Through these functions, the school was able to manage educational data in a more systematic manner and improve the accuracy, completeness, and currency of the information.

Obstacles in Dapodik Management

The findings also identified several obstacles affecting the effectiveness of Dapodik management. These obstacles originated from both human resource and technical factors. One of the main challenges was the limited competence of some school personnel, particularly in adapting to updates in the Dapodik application and changes in government policies.

Technical obstacles included unstable internet connectivity, disruptions in the Dapodik system, and limitations related to supporting facilities and computer equipment. These problems could delay the process of data entry, validation, and synchronization. In addition, delays in reporting changes in data, incomplete supporting documents, and differences in the availability of information created further challenges for the Dapodik operator.

Coordination among the principal, operator, and teachers had generally been established; however, differences in work schedules and individual responsibilities occasionally caused delays in communication and data submission. The triangulation process showed that the principal, Dapodik

operator, and teachers shared relatively similar views regarding the major obstacles encountered in Dapodik management.

Table 2. Obstacles in Dapodik Management

Category	Identified Obstacles	Impact on Dapodik Management
Human Resources	Limited competence of operators and teachers in adapting to application updates	Difficulties in managing changes in the Dapodik system
Technology	Internet and system disruptions	Delays in data entry, validation, and synchronization
Supporting Facilities	Limitations in computer equipment and supporting infrastructure	Reduced effectiveness of data management activities
Data Submission	Delays in reporting changes and incomplete supporting documents	Potential data discrepancies and delayed updating
Coordination	Communication delays caused by different schedules and responsibilities	Slower provision and updating of educational data

These findings indicate that the challenges in Dapodik management were not exclusively technical. Human resource capacity, organizational coordination, technological infrastructure, and the timeliness of information delivery were interconnected factors influencing the quality of educational data management.

The Principal's Efforts to Overcome Obstacles

The findings showed that the principal implemented several strategies to address the obstacles encountered in Dapodik management. The first effort involved providing support, direction, and motivation to the Dapodik operator and teachers. The principal emphasized that Dapodik management was a shared responsibility and encouraged school personnel to maintain their commitment to providing accurate and timely information.

The principal also supported the improvement of human resource competence by facilitating participation in training, technical guidance, and socialization activities related to Dapodik management. These efforts were considered important because the Dapodik application and related government policies are subject to periodic changes.

Another effort involved strengthening coordination and communication among school personnel. Coordination meetings and routine communication were used to improve cooperation between the principal, Dapodik operator, and teachers in providing and updating educational data. In addition, the principal attempted to provide supporting facilities, including computer equipment and internet access, and to maintain the facilities required for Dapodik management.

Regular monitoring and evaluation were also conducted to ensure that the management process followed established procedures. When errors or problems were identified, follow-up actions were undertaken to correct the data and prevent similar problems from recurring.

Table 3. Principal's Efforts to Address Obstacles in Dapodik Management

Identified Obstacle	Principal's Efforts
Limited human resource competence	Providing guidance, training opportunities, technical assistance, and motivation
Application and policy updates	Facilitating training and encouraging adaptation to system changes
Internet and system disruptions	Supporting the provision and maintenance of technological facilities
Limited supporting facilities	Providing computers, internet access, and other necessary infrastructure
Delays in data submission	Strengthening communication and coordination among school personnel
Data discrepancies	Conducting monitoring, document verification, data correction, validation, and synchronization
Coordination problems	Conducting coordination meetings and strengthening collaboration among school members

Overall, the triangulation of information from the principal, Dapodik operator, and teachers demonstrated that successful Dapodik management was influenced not only by the technical ability of the operator but also by the principal's leadership, cooperation among school members, human resource competence, and the availability of adequate supporting facilities.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The findings demonstrate that the principal plays a central role in improving Dapodik management at SDN 18 Pulau Rimau through planning, organizing, implementation, supervision, and evaluation. Effective leadership enables the principal to manage resources, coordinate personnel, and ensure that administrative activities are conducted systematically.

Planning was implemented through coordination meetings, updating schedules, and the distribution of responsibilities, enabling school personnel to understand their respective duties. This finding is consistent with Sutisna et al. (2023), who emphasized the principal's managerial role in planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating school administration. Coordination between the principal, operator, and teachers was also essential because accurate educational data depend on collaboration among school personnel (Sabila et al., 2023).

Supervision and evaluation through regular monitoring and follow-up actions contributed to improving data accuracy and accountability. This supports Amar et al. (2026) and Akhmad (2023), who highlighted the importance of principal involvement and supervision in improving educational administration.

The study also identified obstacles related to limited human resource competence, application updates, internet and system disruptions, inadequate facilities, and coordination problems. These challenges indicate the importance of continuous training and adequate technological infrastructure (Simarmata et al., 2024).

To address these obstacles, the principal provided guidance and motivation, facilitated training, strengthened coordination, supported necessary facilities, and conducted regular monitoring and evaluation. These efforts are consistent with Handayani et al. (2024), who emphasized the importance of human resource competence, stakeholder coordination, and continuous capacity development in effective Dapodik management.

The findings further demonstrate that Dapodik management is a collective responsibility involving the principal, operator, teachers, and other educational personnel. From the perspective of Leadership Theory, the principal influences and coordinates school personnel, while Role Theory explains the responsibilities performed by the principal as the school's leader and manager. Overall, effective Dapodik management depends on leadership, human resource competence, coordination, technological infrastructure, and continuous supervision to ensure accurate, current, and accountable educational data.

SUGGESTION

This study was limited to a qualitative investigation conducted at one elementary school, namely SDN 18 Pulau Rimau, Banyuasin Regency, and involved the principal, the Dapodik operator, and teachers as research informants. Therefore, the findings describe the conditions and experiences within the specific context of the school and cannot be generalized to all schools or educational institutions.

Future research may expand the scope by involving multiple schools with different geographical and organizational characteristics. Further studies may also involve additional stakeholders, such as education office officials or technical personnel responsible for educational data systems, to obtain a broader understanding of Dapodik management. In addition, future research may investigate the relationship between principal leadership, digital competence, technological infrastructure, and the quality of educational data management using different research approaches or mixed-method designs.

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