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Implementing Data-Based Planning in Elementary School: A Case Study at SD Negeri 2 Pamotan

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ABSTRACT

Data-Based Planning is a national education policy designed to improve school quality through evidence-based decision-making, yet its optimal implementation remains a challenge in many schools due to limited data literacy among principals. This study examines the implementation of PBD at SD Negeri 2 Pamotan, Rembang Regency, focusing on the principal's role, challenges faced, and strategies to optimize the process. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, data were gathered through interviews, observations, and document analysis involving school leaders and teachers. Findings reveal that the principal carried out all stages of the PBD cycle identifying challenges using the Education Report Card, reflecting on performance, and revising programs based on data while fostering collaborative planning, empowering teachers, and supervising program execution in line with school needs. Despite constraints in data management skills and human resources, the school effectively integrated data into decision-making, achieving notable improvements in literacy, instructional quality, and student character development. The study concludes that successful PBD implementation requires both reliable data access and the principal's leadership capacity to guide data-informed planning and drive continuous improvement.

1. Introduction

Education is a fundamental sector in national development, playing a crucial role in producing high-quality and competitive human resources. The Indonesian government continues to pursue various strategic policies to improve education quality, one of which is the implementation of Data-Based Planning (Perencanaan Berbasis Data/PBD). PBD is a strategy for managing education based on accurate and relevant data analysis to produce more targeted policies (Kemendikbudristek, 2023). This policy is reinforced by Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 9 of 2022 concerning the Evaluation of the Education System and Government Regulation No. 57 of 2021 on National Education Standards, which emphasize the importance of using data as the foundation for planning.

Valid data serves as the cornerstone of effective educational planning. In the absence of accurate data, planning often relies on assumptions and speculation, which can lead to misguided policy directions. Utilizing data allows educational institutions to identify actual needs, set activity priorities, and allocate resources effectively and efficiently. Beyond evaluation purposes, data plays a central role in the learning process diagnosing problems, designing interventions, and assessing the effectiveness of teaching strategies.

As part of the *Merdeka Belajar* policy, PBD aims to enhance educational quality through reflection and evaluation grounded in evidence. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) has developed the *Rapor Pendidikan* platform to assist schools in conducting more accurate evaluations and planning. This platform provides information on learning outcomes, school climate, and institutional management. However, the implementation of PBD still encounters several challenges, particularly regarding school principals' competence in understanding and utilizing data effectively (Setianto et al., 2024).

School principals play a pivotal role in implementing PBD. According to Muin (2023), school leaders must be capable of developing systematic data-based planning by: (1) analyzing school data, (2) formulating school policies based on evaluation results, (3) empowering teachers and supervisors in data-driven decision-making, and (4) conducting continuous evaluation of the implemented policies. A study by Azira (2024) at TK Negeri 6 Banda Aceh showed that principals who understand the concept of PBD can develop more relevant policies, although data availability remains a challenge. Similarly, Laksmi (2024) found that PBD improves the efficiency of school financing management, despite educators' limited understanding of PBD.

Ministry Regulation No. 9 of 2022 explicitly states that education planning must be based on evidence through the integration of multiple data sources, including the *Rapor Pendidikan*, National Assessment (*Aasesmen Nasional*), and Basic Education Data (*Dapodik*). Principals are responsible for managing all aspects of this process, including planning, implementation, and evaluation (Government Regulation No. 57 of 2021). Unfortunately, many schools have not yet implemented PBD optimally. The Ministry's Handbook 1 notes that approximately 18% of primary schools remain in the "Special Intervention Needed" category due to low literacy and numeracy performance, indicating weak data utilization. Handbook 2 emphasizes the necessity for principals to develop data literacy skills to analyze and interpret data accurately for strategic planning. The ideal PBD process consists of three main stages: Identification, Reflection, and Improvement (*Benahi*). However, based on the researcher's supervision of ten schools, nine principals had not implemented these stages systematically. Most school programs were merely replications of the previous year's plans, and school budgets were allocated without data references, resulting in poorly targeted educational activities.

SD Negeri 2 Pamotan is one of the elementary schools that has attempted to implement PBD in its planning and development processes. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of this implementation remains uncertain, particularly concerning the

principal's leadership role in utilizing data to make strategic decisions. Based on the 2024 Education Report, the school showed significant progress in literacy and numeracy indicators, each reaching a perfect score of 100, marking a sharp increase from the previous year. Several other indicators also improved, such as character, instructional leadership, and inclusivity climate. However, there were declines in teacher training experience, gender equality climate, and school community participation. The overall average score increased compared to the previous year, but variations across indicators suggest that the implementation of PBD still faces challenges in certain areas.

Given this context, this study aims to analyze how the principal of SD Negeri 2 Pamotan implements data-based planning, the challenges encountered, and the strategies employed to optimize the policy in improving the effectiveness of educational planning, management, and evaluation. Data-Based Planning (Perencanaan Berbasis Data/PBD) is a strategic approach that utilizes data as the foundation for decision-making processes aimed at improving education quality. PBD is expected to serve as an effective tool for enhancing transparency, accountability, and the overall quality of education within schools. According to Setianto et al. (2024), PBD involves using data to design targeted policies and strategies by identifying key issues based on the analysis of collected data. The data is used not only to assess student learning outcomes but also to plan appropriate interventions and evaluate existing policies. Kemendikbudristek (2023), through the *Rapor Pendidikan* platform, states that PBD assists schools in identifying priority issues, setting measurable goals, and designing evidence-based programs using valid data from national assessments, character surveys, and other data sources. This approach aligns with Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 9 of 2022, which emphasizes the importance of planning based on clear and measurable evaluations of the education system.

School principals play a vital role in the implementation of PBD. As educational leaders, they are responsible for leading and managing the planning process based on available data. Muin (2023) argues that school principals must possess strong managerial capabilities to plan, organize, implement, and supervise data-based educational planning within schools. They must be able to analyze data effectively, design evidence-based programs, empower teachers, and evaluate outcomes to ensure successful implementation. A study by Mahendra et al. (2021) shows that principals with a deep understanding of the PBD concept are more effective in optimizing school programs. The study highlights the importance of instructional leadership in ensuring the sustainable implementation of PBD.

Despite the significance of PBD as a national policy, its implementation in schools faces numerous challenges. Setianto et al. (2024) identify several barriers, including limited understanding among school principals regarding quality indicators in the *Rapor Pendidikan* and insufficient human resource capacity to manage data. Research by Elpin et al. (2024) also reveals that although PBD has great potential, the primary challenge lies in data processing and utilization both by school principals and teachers. The implementation of PBD in schools generally involves three key stages: identification, reflection, and improvement of planning and

implementation. The first step, *Identification*, involves collecting and analyzing data from the *Rapor Pendidikan* to determine the school's primary challenges. The next stage, *Reflection*, focuses on analyzing the root causes of problems identified through data. The final stage, *Planning Improvement (Benahi Perencanaan)*, involves revising or designing strategies and policies based on the available data (Kemendikbudristek, 2023).

Following the planning stage, principals are required to organize resources and coordinate teams to ensure effective implementation of PBD. This includes defining activities, grouping them, delegating tasks, and establishing working relationships. Robbins and Coulter (2018) emphasize that data-based organization enables managers to allocate resources more efficiently and purposefully. In addition, supervision is a critical component of PBD implementation. According to Indarti (2020), supervision involves measuring performance and comparing outcomes with predetermined standards. Data-based supervision ensures that implementation remains aligned with initial plans and contributes positively to improving educational quality in schools.

As educational leaders, principals are also responsible for overseeing the implementation of PBD. Kompri (2015) notes that effective supervision involves setting standards, measuring performance, and taking corrective action when deviations occur. This is highly relevant in the PBD context, where school principals must continuously monitor and ensure that data-based policies are implemented efficiently and aligned with the intended objectives. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine how the principal of SD Negeri 2 Pamotan implements data-based planning, identify the challenges encountered during its implementation, and analyze the strategies employed to optimize PBD for improving the effectiveness of educational planning, management, and evaluation at the school.

2. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to explore in depth the phenomenon of implementing Data-Based Planning (Perencanaan Berbasis Data/PBD) by the principal at SD Negeri 2 Pamotan. This approach was chosen because the study aimed to understand the experiences, perceptions, and strategies used by the school principal in applying PBD at the elementary school level. According to Sugiyono (2023), qualitative research focuses on the natural depiction and interpretation of phenomena, utilizing data obtained from interviews, field notes, official documents, and other sources. This approach allows the researcher to uncover the deeper meaning behind events occurring in the field. In addition, qualitative research emphasizes inductive data analysis, which means that data is collected first and then conclusions are drawn based on emerging patterns and findings.

The research was conducted at SD Negeri 2 Pamotan, located in Pamotan Subdistrict, Rembang Regency. The research activities were planned to take place

from February to August 2025, comprising the stages of preparation, implementation, data collection, data analysis, and report writing. The subjects of this study consisted of the school principal, teachers, and education personnel involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of data-based programs. The subjects were selected through purposive sampling, namely choosing individuals considered to possess relevant information in accordance with the research focus. The school principal was selected as the main informant due to their strategic role in decision-making, while teachers served as the implementers of school-level policies.

Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews with the principal and teachers to obtain information regarding data-based planning practices and the challenges faced during implementation; direct observation to witness firsthand how PBD policies were carried out in classroom and school management settings; and document analysis involving a review of the *Rapor Pendidikan*, meeting notes, planning documents, and other relevant administrative records. To ensure data validity, this study employed triangulation, which involved collecting data from multiple sources (principal, teachers, supervisors) and various types of data (interviews, observations, and documents). This triangulation strategy was used to enhance the credibility of the findings and reduce potential bias.

The data analysis process used an inductive approach, beginning with the collection of data through interviews, observations, and document reviews; followed by data reduction, which involved selecting and organizing relevant data in accordance with the research focus; then data presentation in the form of narrative descriptions, matrices, or tables to facilitate interpretation; and finally, drawing conclusions based on the patterns and themes that emerged during analysis. The researcher also applied a coding process to identify key themes and subthemes throughout the analysis. This process enabled a comprehensive understanding of the interrelationships among data and allowed the research questions to be answered effectively.

The primary instrument in this study was the researcher. In qualitative research, the researcher plays a central role in directly collecting and analyzing data in the field. To ensure systematic and objective data collection, interview guides and observation sheets were also employed to support consistency and focus. The sources of data in this research consisted of two categories: primary data sources, which included the principal, teachers, and education personnel directly involved in implementing PBD at SD Negeri 2 Pamotan; and secondary data sources, such as the *Rapor Pendidikan*, field notes, and other administrative documents.

This study was carried out through the following stages: identifying the research problem by determining the study's focus on the principal's role in the implementation of PBD at SD Negeri 2 Pamotan; planning the research by designing methods, instruments, and activity timelines; collecting data through interviews, direct observations, and document analysis; analyzing the data inductively to identify patterns, themes, and relationships; and preparing the final research report consisting of the research findings, analysis, and interpretation.

3. Results and Discussion

This study aimed to evaluate the principal's role as a manager in strengthening data-based planning at SD Negeri 2 Pamotan. Based on data collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis, several key findings emerged. First, regarding the school profile and data management, SD Negeri 2 Pamotan established in 1985 has a clear vision to become an excellent institution in achievement grounded in faith and piety. The school is committed to improving the quality of education through data-based planning that serves as the foundation for formulating educational policies and teaching programs.

Second, in terms of the principal's role in implementing PBD, it was found that the principal holds a central role in managing the data-based planning process. The implementation begins with identifying the outcomes presented in the Education Report (*Rapor Pendidikan*), which are used to determine key areas in need of improvement. Interviews with the principal and teachers revealed that this identification process does not solely rely on the *Rapor Pendidikan* but also incorporates input from teachers, the school committee, and parents. The principal proactively identifies declining indicators such as literacy and instructional quality which are prioritized for improvement. Subsequently, the principal facilitates reflection sessions with teachers to diagnose root causes and formulate relevant, data-informed solutions to improve learning outcomes.

Third, regarding planning and budgeting strategies, the principal and teachers collaboratively conduct reflection sessions based on the Education Report results. Problem identification is carried out collectively, where each teacher is encouraged to share classroom challenges. While teachers are given autonomy to manage learning according to the specific characteristics of their classrooms, they are guided by the insights obtained from data analysis. Budget planning for education programs is also guided by recommendations from the Education Report and further informed by suggestions from teachers and the school committee. Programs related to learning quality and literacy improvement are prioritized, particularly through the allocation of regular and affirmative BOS (School Operational Assistance) funds.

Fourth, in relation to collaboration and reflection in the planning process, the entire data-based planning cycle is conducted in a participatory manner, involving the principal, teachers, and the school committee. Reflection and identification based on the Education Report are conducted in school meetings, allowing each teacher to express their opinions and propose solutions. This approach ensures that planning is not merely administrative in nature, but also reflects strong collaboration among school stakeholders. The principal ensures that reflections lead to concrete follow-up action plans that are relevant to the actual needs on the ground. This is evident from the implementation of data-driven programs and ongoing classroom monitoring.

Despite these efforts, several challenges persist in the implementation of PBD. One major issue is the limited capacity of teachers in data management and analysis.

Moreover, there is often a discrepancy between the recommendations in the Education Report and the actual conditions in the field, requiring further adaptation during implementation. Another challenge is the lack of a dedicated team responsible for analyzing and implementing data-based planning. Nevertheless, the principal utilizes the existing school structure and promotes collaboration among teachers to overcome these constraints.

Furthermore, evaluation and monitoring of PBD implementation are carried out systematically and continuously. The principal leads routine evaluation meetings to assess whether the programs are being implemented as planned and to determine whether the intended goals are being achieved. These evaluation activities include teacher reflections on encountered obstacles and the identification of necessary improvements. The principal demonstrates adaptive leadership by conducting evaluations with sensitivity to real-time dynamics and changes in the school environment.

The impact of implementing data-based planning can be seen in the improved educational outcomes, particularly in literacy skills and instructional quality. According to the Education Report data, these two indicators have shown significant improvement. Moreover, the application of PBD has contributed to the emergence of a collaborative work culture in the school, where all members share responsibility for improving education quality. Overall, the principal at SD Negeri 2 Pamotan has successfully led the implementation of PBD by fostering a collaborative environment built on reflection and ongoing evaluation. Through this approach, the school has managed to make sustainable improvements in education quality despite challenges and limited resources.

A key indicator observed in this study is that the principal has effectively fulfilled their role as a manager in implementing PBD through a systematic, collaborative, and results-oriented approach aimed at enhancing school quality. The principal's strategies covered all stages in the IRB cycle Identification, Reflection, and Improvement (*Benahi*) accompanied by both administrative and personal supervision of data-driven programs and policy implementation. These findings are summarized in the following table 1:

Table 1. Research Findings

No	Sub-Focus	Field Findings	Data Sources
1	Data-Based Program Planning	The principal leads the IRB process (Identification, Reflection, Improvement) using the Education Report and other data sources. Planning is still constrained by the absence of a dedicated data analysis team.	Interviews with principal and teachers, IRB documents, Education Report
2	Task and Team Organization	No specialized team for analyzing performance indicators exists. Data management and program planning are primarily handled by the principal and selected teachers.	Principal interviews, observations, organizational structure documents

No	Sub-Focus	Field Findings	Data Sources
3	Program Implementation and Leadership Strategy	The principal actively motivates and provides personal mentoring to teachers. The IRB-based implementation is in place, though some teachers still struggle with interpreting Education Report indicators.	Classroom observations, interviews with teachers and principal
4	Data-Based Supervision and Evaluation	Supervision is conducted intensively and directly by the principal. Data-based evaluations are carried out but are not yet fully systematic due to limited training and human resources.	Interviews, principal's monitoring notes, annual Education Report evaluations

Data-Based Planning

In terms of planning, the principal demonstrated strategic leadership by utilizing data from the *Rapor Pendidikan* as a basis for school policy formulation. The principal identified indicators showing either improvement or decline and encouraged participatory reflection with teachers. These steps follow the IRB stages (Identification, Reflection, Improvement) recommended by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek, 2023), and are aligned with Regulation No. 9 of 2022, which emphasizes the importance of educational system evaluation as a foundation for planning. This approach also aligns with Mandinach et al. (2006), who define Data-Driven Decision Making (DDDM) as a process that integrates data into decision-making with the primary goal of improving student learning outcomes. In this context, the principal does not rely solely on intuition but instead uses clear and measurable data to formulate precise school policies. Furthermore, Padrón et al. (2017) emphasize that data-based planning involving performance analysis and critical reflection can result in more effective and relevant educational policies. Accordingly, the principal at SD Negeri 2 Pamotan exemplifies the application of a comprehensive and evidence-based data analysis model aimed at enhancing education quality through more accurate and targeted strategies.

Organizing for PBD Implementation

In the organizing phase, the principal led the distribution of responsibilities based on teacher competencies and programmatic needs. The principal established a data-based program implementation team that works collaboratively, ensuring cross-functional coordination among teachers and staff. This process aligns with Robbins and Coulter (2018), who state that organizing involves the arrangement of resources to effectively and efficiently achieve organizational goals. Effective organizing includes identifying activities, grouping tasks, delegating authority, and creating harmonious working relationships among all involved parties. These components are essential for achieving school goals in a systematic and structured manner. Supporting this view, Hargreaves et al. (2018) found that school leaders who are effective in organizing can build solid teams to implement data-based programs consistently. Additionally, the principal introduced coordination mechanisms among teachers to ensure that each program is executed effectively. This finding

aligns with Hallinger et al. (2019), who emphasize that clear organization contributes significantly to improved data-based education management.

Implementing PBD in Schools

During implementation, the principal acts as the driving force ensuring that the program is executed according to the plan. The principal not only issues directives but is also directly involved in guiding teachers to understand the indicators found in the Education Report and in supporting them in developing classroom learning strategies. This implementation is carried out adaptively, with the principal facilitating both individual and group discussions to ensure that teachers tailor their strategies according to their classroom conditions and needs. These findings are consistent with the study by Grissom et al. (2018), who note that principals who assist teachers in executing data-driven policies play a critical role in achieving educational objectives. Similarly, Andrews and Sutherland (2016) assert that principals who are actively involved in supporting teachers during the implementation of data-driven education policies significantly contribute to improved learning and classroom management outcomes.

Monitoring and Evaluating PBD

In the stages of monitoring and evaluation, the principal conducted regular assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of PBD implementation. This evaluation involved analyzing key performance indicators, such as literacy, numeracy, and student character development. It also involved reflective discussions with teachers to assess whether the implemented policies were functioning as intended. The results of these evaluations were used as the basis for refining future planning, reflecting the principle of *continuous improvement* outlined in Government Regulation No. 57 of 2021 concerning National Education Standards. Ongoing evaluation allows the school to adapt and address shortcomings, thereby significantly enhancing the quality of education outcomes. The principal's evaluation practices align with Leithwood et al. (2020), who emphasize that regular and reflective data-based supervision plays a crucial role in improving instructional quality and overall school management.

Furthermore, Jeynes (2017) argues that effective supervision is essential for maintaining the sustainability of PBD implementation and ensuring that evaluations are conducted objectively and comprehensively. This study reinforces that principals with strong data literacy and transformative managerial leadership are capable of significantly improving the quality of education. The success achieved in this case shows that effective PBD implementation is not solely dependent on data availability, but rather on the principal's ability to manage the entire education management process comprehensively. As an instructional leader, the principal is able to integrate data into school decision-making and policy formulation. Therefore, this research makes a meaningful contribution to understanding how school principals play a pivotal role in enhancing educational quality through a data-driven approach

4. Conclusion

The implementation of Data-Based Planning (PBD) at SD Negeri 2 Pamotan, Rembang Regency, demonstrates the principal's central role as a manager across the stages of planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision. In the planning stage, the principal applied strategic leadership by utilizing Education Report Card (Rapor Pendidikan) data to identify institutional strengths and weaknesses, determine priorities, and design targeted programs. This process was carried out systematically through the IRB cycle (Identify, Reflect, Improve), based on evaluations of performance indicators showing both progress and areas requiring improvement. In organizing, the principal optimized human resources by assigning responsibilities according to teachers' competencies and adopting a participatory management approach that engaged all stakeholders, thereby strengthening the school's organizational capacity to execute data-based programs.

During implementation, the principal acted as the primary driver of change, providing direction and support to teachers through mentoring and collaborative reflection forums. Programs were implemented adaptively, taking into account class-specific needs and student characteristics, enabling instructional adjustments to suit real classroom contexts. In the monitoring and evaluation stage, the principal conducted regular, data-driven reviews of educational quality indicators, which served as the basis for refining policies and improving learning strategies. Overall, this study affirms that the success of PBD is strongly influenced by the principal's ability to integrate data literacy with effective managerial practices. The notable improvements in SD Negeri 2 Pamotan's performance indicators from 2023 to 2024 provide concrete evidence that strong school leadership can transform national policy into meaningful quality gains, driving sustainable educational improvement at the elementary school level.

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