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## Knowledge Transfer-Based School Management as a Model for Improving Learning Quality: A Case Study in Elementary Schools

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### ABSTRACT

The increasing demand for improving educational quality requires schools to adopt innovative and collaborative management approaches. This study aims to analyze the implementation of school management based on knowledge transfer at SD Negeri 03 Doro, Pekalongan Regency. The research employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore in depth the processes, mechanisms, and impacts of knowledge transfer in improving school management quality. Data were collected through observations, interviews, and documentation, and analyzed using data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing techniques. The findings reveal that the implementation of knowledge transfer-based management has been carried out systematically through planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating functions. Knowledge transfer occurs through collaborative activities such as mentoring, coaching, co-teaching, and sharing best practices among teachers. This process contributes significantly to improving teachers' competencies, instructional quality, and participatory decision-making. Furthermore, it strengthens school governance and enhances community trust. The novelty of this study lies in integrating knowledge transfer as a structured managerial strategy in primary school management, rather than merely informal knowledge sharing. However, the study is limited to a single research site and constrained by variations in teacher competencies and resource availability. Future research is recommended to expand the scope and apply mixed methods to obtain more comprehensive findings.

## 1. Introduction

Education is a fundamental pillar in developing high-quality and competitive human resources. The success of educational implementation is closely linked to the quality of school management, particularly in the management of educational

institutions. Effective school management plays a strategic role in creating a conducive learning environment, improving the quality of instruction, and producing competent and well-characterized graduates (Mulyasa, 2022). Therefore, strengthening school management has become an urgent necessity in addressing the dynamics and complexities of 21st-century educational challenges.

Conceptually, school management is a systematic process that includes planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling in order to achieve educational goals effectively and efficiently. In the context of modern education, school management is not merely oriented toward administrative aspects but also toward improving the quality of learning and overall organizational performance. Effective school management is characterized by visionary leadership, a supportive organizational culture, and active participation from all school members (Mulyasa, 2022). The implementation of school-based management provides schools with autonomy in managing resources and determining strategic policies according to local needs, which has been proven to improve the quality of curriculum management and educational services (Legi et al., 2022). Even in crisis situations such as the pandemic, strengthening educational management remains a crucial factor in maintaining and improving educational quality (Hakim et al., 2021).

Furthermore, effective educational management requires the integration of strategic management and information systems to support data-driven decision-making (Nasrah et al., 2024). Structured and adaptive curriculum management is also an essential factor in improving the quality of learning, particularly at the elementary school level (Sopia et al., 2025). Thus, effective school management requires a holistic and adaptive approach oriented toward continuous quality improvement. On the other hand, the demand for innovation in education continues to increase, particularly in the utilization of technology and the strengthening of professional collaboration. The use of digital technology in learning has been shown to significantly contribute to improving the quality of the learning process and student engagement (Bond et al., 2020).

In addition, professional teacher communities as collaborative platforms have proven effective in enhancing teachers' competencies and sustaining improvements in instructional quality (Vangrieken et al., 2015). This indicates that innovation and collaboration are essential elements of modern school management. However, various problems in school management practices are still frequently encountered, such as weak managerial capacity of school principals, low evaluation culture, and suboptimal use of data in decision-making. These conditions result in school management being more administratively oriented and not yet fully supporting sustainable quality improvement. Moreover, the lack of effective instructional leadership is also a significant barrier to improving educational quality (Hallinger, 2020).

In response to these challenges, a knowledge transfer approach has emerged as a relevant strategy. Knowledge transfer refers to the process of disseminating knowledge, skills, and experiences from individuals or groups to others within an organization. In the educational context, this process includes both explicit and tacit

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knowledge acquired through experience and social interaction (Argote, 2024). The success of knowledge transfer is highly influenced by organizational factors such as trust, work culture, and leadership (Zhang et al., 2024). Furthermore, knowledge-sharing practices in the Indonesian educational context have been shown to enhance teacher performance through collaboration and innovation (Pamuji et al., 2023). The utilization of digital technology also strengthens knowledge transfer processes by accelerating information exchange and expanding access to learning resources (Aisyah et al., 2025). Therefore, knowledge transfer becomes a key element in creating a learning organization that is adaptive and innovative.

From this perspective, knowledge transfer-based school management is an approach that places knowledge-sharing processes as a primary strategy for improving educational quality. This approach integrates modern management principles with the concept of a learning organization, where schools function not only as formal institutions but also as active learning communities that develop and distribute knowledge. Studies show that organizations that effectively implement knowledge-sharing practices tend to have higher performance and greater adaptability to change (Zhang et al., 2024). In addition, professional teacher communities have been proven to significantly improve instructional quality (Vangrieken et al., 2015).

In its implementation, the school principal plays a strategic role as an instructional leader in promoting knowledge transfer within the school environment. The principal acts not only as an administrator but also as a facilitator, motivator, and change agent who fosters a collaborative and continuous learning culture. Effective instructional leadership focuses on developing teacher capacity and improving the quality of instruction (Hallinger, 2020). Moreover, principals are responsible for providing supporting systems such as discussion forums, training programs, and the use of information technology, including effective academic supervision.

The implementation of knowledge transfer in school management has been shown to have a significant impact on improving educational quality. Through knowledge-sharing processes, teachers can enhance their professional competencies, develop instructional innovations, and continuously improve teaching practices. Professional collaboration and teacher learning communities contribute to improving instructional quality and student learning outcomes (Vangrieken et al., 2015). Additionally, the use of technology in learning has been proven to enhance student creativity and engagement (Aisyah et al., 2025). More broadly, strengthening integrated educational management systems contributes to overall improvements in educational quality (Hakim et al., 2021).

In the context of elementary education, the implementation of knowledge transfer-based school management is particularly important, as elementary schools serve as the foundational stage for developing students' character, knowledge, and skills. The quality of management at this level has a direct impact on students' success in subsequent educational stages. Therefore, schools need to be developed as learning communities that actively and continuously promote knowledge exchange. This phenomenon is also observed at SD Negeri 03 Doro, Doro District, Pekalongan

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Regency. Based on preliminary observations, the school previously faced several management challenges, including weak internal coordination, limited use of data, and an underdeveloped evaluation culture. However, following leadership changes and the implementation of collaboration- and knowledge transfer-based strategies, the school has shown improvements in management practices and student achievement. Based on the above discussion, this study is important to conduct in order to provide a comprehensive description of the implementation of knowledge transfer-based school management as a model for improving the quality of learning in elementary schools.

## **2. Methodology**

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of knowledge transfer-based school management in an elementary school context. A qualitative approach was selected because it allows for the exploration of phenomena in a contextual, holistic, and interpretative manner based on participants' perspectives. Qualitative research design is flexible yet systematic, beginning from the identification of phenomena to the interpretation of data meanings (Creswell & Poth, 2023). Furthermore, a research design serves as a scientific framework that guides the research process logically and systematically from beginning to end (Sugiyono, 2022; Arikunto, 2023).

This study was conducted at SD Negeri 03 Doro, located in Doro District, Pekalongan Regency, Central Java, Indonesia. The research was carried out over a six-month period, consisting of the pre-research phase (June–July 2025), the data collection phase (August–October 2025), and the report-writing phase (November–December 2025). The research site was selected based on the consideration that the school has implemented knowledge transfer-based management practices in both instructional activities and school management.

### ***Research Subjects***

In qualitative research, research subjects are referred to as informants, namely individuals who possess relevant experience and knowledge related to the research focus. Informants were selected purposively based on specific considerations to ensure that the data obtained were in-depth and contextual (Sugiyono, 2022; Arikunto, 2023). The informants in this study included the school principal, teachers, educational staff, students, and the school committee. They were selected because of their direct involvement in the implementation of knowledge transfer-based school management. These informants served as primary data sources, providing empirical information related to the phenomenon under study.

### ***Research Instruments***

The primary instrument in qualitative research is the researcher as a human instrument, who directly collects and interprets the data (Sugiyono, 2022; Creswell

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& Poth, 2023). To support data collection, several auxiliary instruments were used, including: (1) Semi-structured interview guidelines, (2) Observation sheets, (3) Documentation records. These instruments were employed to obtain in-depth, systematic, and contextual data. The use of multiple instruments also aimed to support data triangulation, thereby enhancing the credibility of the research findings.

### ***Data and Data Sources***

The data in this study were qualitative and descriptive in nature, consisting of narratives, opinions, and documentation related to the implementation of knowledge transfer-based school management. The data were obtained from two sources: (1) Primary data, collected directly from informants through interviews and observations. (2) Secondary data, consisting of supporting information derived from school documents, archives, activity reports, and relevant literature. In qualitative research, human informants serve as the primary data source, while documents function as complementary sources to strengthen the research findings (Sugiyono, 2022; Arikunto, 2023).

### ***Data Collection Techniques***

The data collection techniques used in this study included: (1) Observation. Observation was conducted directly and participatively to comprehensively understand the social setting and obtain contextual data (Sugiyono, 2020). The observation focused on the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes of knowledge transfer-based school management. (2) Interviews. In-depth interviews were conducted using semi-structured guidelines. This technique enabled the researcher to explore informants' experiences and perspectives in greater depth and breadth (Moleong, 2021; Sukmadinata, 2020). (3) Documentation. Documentation was used to collect data in the form of written and visual materials relevant to the research focus, such as school programs, activity reports, and instructional archives (Sukmadinata, 2020). The use of these three techniques aimed to obtain comprehensive data and to support triangulation, thereby enhancing data validity.

### ***Data Analysis Techniques***

Data analysis was conducted interactively and continuously from the initial stage of data collection to the conclusion stage. The analysis followed the model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2020), which consists of three stages: (1) Data condensation. The process of selecting, simplifying, and organizing raw data into meaningful information. (2) Data display. The organization of data into narratives, tables, or matrices to facilitate understanding and analysis. (3) Drawing and verifying conclusions. The process of interpreting data to identify patterns and meanings, followed by verification to ensure the credibility of the findings. The analysis was conducted iteratively and reflectively to ensure that the findings are valid and scientifically accountable.

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### 3. Results and Discussion

The findings were analyzed using an interactive model consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. To strengthen the qualitative case study approach, the findings are systematically organized into six major themes: knowledge transfer planning, knowledge transfer practices, evaluation and reflection mechanisms, the principal's leadership role, supporting and inhibiting factors, and impacts on learning quality. Each theme is derived through a process of coding, categorization, and pattern matching across interview, observation, and documentation data.

#### *Knowledge Transfer Planning*

Implementation of knowledge transfer-based school management has been carried out systematically, beginning with the planning stage. At this stage, the school has integrated the concept of knowledge transfer into planning documents such as the School Work Plan (RKS) and instructional programs. However, empirical data show that planning activities are not merely administrative but involve intensive knowledge-sharing interactions among teachers. More specifically, the analysis reveals that planning functions as an initial arena for collective meaning-making, where teachers transform individual experiences into shared pedagogical knowledge. This is evidenced by recurring codes such as "experience sharing," "joint problem solving," and "collaborative design," which consistently appeared across interview transcripts and observation notes.

During KKG meetings, teachers exchange teaching experiences and collaboratively design learning strategies. Observation data revealed that in one KKG session, teachers discussed difficulties in implementing differentiated instruction and jointly formulated alternative strategies. For instance, an observation note recorded: "Several teachers debated how to group students based on ability levels, and one teacher demonstrated a practical strategy using flexible grouping." This indicates that planning also functions as an initial stage of knowledge transfer. The planning process is conducted participatively through teacher meetings and KKG activities, as reflected in the principal's statement: "*Our program planning always involves teachers through meetings and KKG...*". Similarly, a teacher emphasized, "*In KKG, we don't just plan lessons, we learn from each other's experiences.*" This shows that knowledge transfer occurs through collaborative planning interactions, where individual experiences are transformed into collective knowledge that informs instructional design.

#### *Knowledge Transfer Practices*

At the implementation stage, knowledge transfer activities are conducted through both formal and informal mechanisms. Data analysis identified two dominant forms: structured knowledge transfer (through meetings, KKG, and workshops) and spontaneous knowledge transfer (through informal peer discussions and mentoring). These two forms interact dynamically and reinforce each other. Thematic analysis indicates that structured activities serve as formal knowledge

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dissemination channels, while informal interactions function as reinforcement mechanisms that contextualize knowledge in daily practice. This dual pattern reflects a continuous knowledge flow rather than a linear process. Observational data show that teachers actively participate in knowledge-sharing processes. For example, during classroom observations, one teacher was seen adopting a learning media technique previously shared by a colleague in a KKG session, indicating a direct transfer of knowledge into classroom practice. This was documented in the field note: *“The teacher used visual cards similar to those demonstrated in the previous KKG session, and students responded more actively.”* This is supported by a teacher’s statement: *“We often share teaching methods...”*. These findings suggest that knowledge transfer is not only communicative but also performative, as knowledge is enacted and adapted within classroom contexts.

### ***Evaluation and Reflection Mechanisms***

At the evaluation stage, the school assesses the implementation of knowledge transfer through evaluation meetings and academic supervision. Evaluation activities include reflective discussions and supervisory feedback aimed at assessing effectiveness and improving teaching practices. However, cross-data comparison reveals a discrepancy between reflective practices and formal evaluation systems. While reflective discussions are actively conducted, the absence of structured evaluation instruments limits the systematic measurement of knowledge transfer outcomes. As one teacher noted: *“Evaluation is conducted... but there is not yet a specific and well-structured format.”* Another respondent added, *“We usually reflect together, but it is not documented in a standardized way.”* This indicates a gap between implementation and systematic evaluation.

### ***The Principal’s Leadership Role***

The findings also highlight the strategic role of the principal in supporting knowledge transfer. The principal acts as a policy director, facilitator, and motivator. The principal stated: *“I always encourage teachers to share with each other...”*. From a relational perspective, the principal’s leadership reflects a facilitative and participatory model, where authority is exercised through empowerment rather than control. This is evident in repeated patterns of interaction where the principal initiates, supports, and participates in knowledge-sharing activities. Observation data further confirm that the principal is directly involved in several knowledge-sharing forums. For example, during a KKG session, the principal was observed providing feedback and encouraging quieter teachers to contribute, indicating active facilitation of collaborative dialogue. These findings demonstrate a relational leadership pattern that supports the development of a collaborative learning environment.

### ***Supporting and Inhibiting Factors***

Several supporting factors were identified, including a collaborative organizational culture, strong leadership support, and teachers’ intrinsic motivation. Teachers are accustomed to sharing and helping each other, and formal forums such as KKG are

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regularly scheduled, indicating institutional support for knowledge-sharing practices. The analysis shows that these factors are interrelated, forming an enabling ecosystem for knowledge transfer. A collaborative culture strengthens motivation, while leadership support institutionalizes knowledge-sharing practices. On the other hand, inhibiting factors include limited time due to heavy workloads, suboptimal use of technology, and differences in teacher competencies. One teacher stated, *“Sometimes we want to share more, but time is very limited because of administrative tasks.”* Knowledge-sharing activities are still largely conducted face-to-face, with minimal use of digital platforms. Differences in competencies also affect the effectiveness of knowledge transfer processes.

### ***Impacts on Learning Quality***

The implementation of knowledge transfer-based management has a positive impact on improving learning quality. These impacts include increased pedagogical competence, instructional innovation, and the development of a collaborative learning culture. Through pattern matching across themes, it is evident that continuous knowledge transfer contributes to gradual but consistent improvements in teaching practices. This relationship indicates that knowledge transfer acts as a mediating process between teacher collaboration and learning quality. Teachers demonstrate more varied teaching strategies, and classroom observations show increased student participation. For example, observation data recorded: *“Students were more engaged during group activities, and more students participated in discussions compared to previous observations.”* In addition, the school environment becomes more collaborative, as reflected in the principal’s statement: *“Now the school atmosphere is more collaborative...”*. Thus, the findings not only describe improvements but also explain how knowledge transfer mechanisms shape instructional quality through collaborative learning processes.

The findings demonstrate that knowledge transfer-based school management at SD Negeri 03 Doro is implemented through management functions that include planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation in a systematic and continuous manner (Mulyasa, 2021; Senge, 2020). However, the results of this study reveal that each management function simultaneously serves as a space for knowledge transfer. This finding challenges the dominant perspective that positions knowledge transfer as a separate managerial program, by showing that it is inherently embedded in everyday practices (Lutfiartha et al., 2026). Thus, this study shifts the analytical focus from “program-based knowledge transfer” to “practice-based knowledge transfer,” which has been underexplored in previous studies (Susanti & Nugroho, 2022; Wibowo et al., 2021).

In the planning stage, the findings confirm that participatory planning plays a crucial role in improving school effectiveness (Mulyasa, 2021; Hidayat et al., 2022). However, this study further shows that planning also functions as an initial stage of knowledge transfer, where individual teaching experiences are transformed into collective strategies. Compared to Rahmawati and Suryadi (2021), who conceptualize planning primarily as a procedural activity, this study uncovers a deeper social dimension in which planning functions as a dynamic space for

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negotiation, reinterpretation, and the co-construction of pedagogical knowledge. This pattern is further supported by recent findings (Muzdalifa et al., 2025), indicating that planning is not solely data-driven but also fundamentally interaction-driven. Therefore, this study extends the argument proposed by Prasetyo et al. (2022) by emphasizing the centrality of social interaction in shaping planning processes. At the implementation stage, the findings confirm the importance of collaborative strategies such as mentoring, coaching, and sharing of best practices (Argote, 2024; Wibowo et al., 2021). Nevertheless, this study provides a more nuanced contribution by revealing the dynamic interaction between formal and informal knowledge transfer mechanisms. Unlike prior research that tends to privilege formal structures as the primary drivers of knowledge transfer, this study demonstrates that informal interactions such as spontaneous peer discussions play an equally, if not more, decisive role in ensuring the continuity of knowledge exchange, which is also indicated in recent empirical studies (Gunarso et al., 2026). This finding critically questions the over-reliance on formal professional development programs highlighted in previous literature (Hidayat et al., 2022; Lestari et al., 2023).

In terms of evaluation, the findings align with reflective evaluation approaches (Creswell & Poth, 2023; Prasetyo et al., 2022). However, the lack of a structured evaluation system indicates a discrepancy between theory and practice. This finding not only confirms a common gap identified in previous studies but also reveals its practical consequences, namely the difficulty in measuring the effectiveness and sustainability of knowledge transfer, as similarly highlighted in recent studies (Hasrinaldi et al., 2026). In contrast to Senge's (2020) ideal model of a continuous learning organization, this study shows that the learning cycle tends to be fragmented due to weak institutionalization of evaluation mechanisms. This suggests that the institutionalization of evaluation mechanisms remains a key challenge (Lestari et al., 2023).

The role of the principal in this study supports transformational leadership theory (Bass, 2020; Mulyasa, 2021), but also refines it by showing that leadership effectiveness depends on the ability to facilitate interaction and collaboration. More critically, this study indicates that transformational leadership alone is insufficient if it is not accompanied by relational practices that enable active teacher participation, a finding that resonates with recent empirical evidence (Basuki et al., 2025). This finding extends existing leadership models by emphasizing "relational facilitation" as a core dimension of leadership effectiveness in knowledge-based school management (Hidayat et al., 2022).

Supporting factors such as collaborative culture and teacher motivation are consistent with previous studies (Wibowo et al., 2021). However, this study adds a processual perspective by showing that such culture is developed gradually through repeated interactions (Rahmawati & Suryadi, 2021; Prasetyo et al., 2022). This finding contrasts with prior studies that tend to treat organizational culture as a static variable, by demonstrating that culture is continuously constructed and reconstructed through everyday practices of knowledge sharing, as also reflected in recent studies (Basuki et al., 2025).

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Meanwhile, inhibiting factors such as time constraints and differences in competencies confirm earlier findings (Flick, 2022; Hidayat et al., 2022), but this study further demonstrates how these factors specifically disrupt the continuity of knowledge-sharing cycles. More importantly, this study reveals that competency gaps do not merely hinder knowledge transfer but also create asymmetrical participation among teachers, where more competent teachers dominate the knowledge-sharing process, a pattern also identified in recent findings (Triantoro et al., 2026). This finding provides a more critical perspective compared to previous studies, which often treat competency differences as a general barrier without examining their relational implications. This suggests the need for differentiated mentoring strategies (Lestari et al., 2023; Susanti & Nugroho, 2022).

The impact of knowledge transfer implementation supports previous findings regarding its role in improving teacher competence and learning quality (OECD, 2021; Hidayat et al., 2022). However, this study provides stronger empirical evidence at the classroom level, particularly in terms of increased student participation and instructional innovation (Rahmawati & Suryadi, 2021; Wibowo et al., 2021). At the same time, the findings challenge the assumption of a linear relationship between knowledge transfer and learning outcomes, as variations in teacher competencies and engagement levels lead to uneven impacts, which is also supported by recent empirical studies (Lutfiartha et al., 2026). This suggests that knowledge transfer operates as a contingent process rather than a deterministic one.

Overall, this study contributes to the literature by demonstrating that knowledge transfer-based school management is integrative, embedded within managerial functions, and operates through both formal and informal mechanisms. More specifically, this study makes three key contributions: (1) it reconceptualizes knowledge transfer as a practice embedded in daily managerial activities; (2) it highlights the critical role of informal interactions in sustaining knowledge transfer; and (3) it reveals the importance of relational leadership and processual culture in shaping knowledge-sharing dynamics, which are increasingly emphasized in recent empirical literature (Lutfiartha et al., 2026). This finding extends the theoretical perspectives of Nonaka & Takeuchi (2021) and Argote (2024) by providing empirical evidence from a real school context. However, the study also identifies important gaps, particularly in evaluation systems and competency distribution, which need to be addressed to ensure the sustainability of knowledge transfer practices (Senge, 2020; OECD, 2021). These limitations also open opportunities for future research, particularly in developing structured evaluation models and exploring technology-based knowledge transfer to enhance scalability and inclusivity

#### **4. Conclusion**

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the implementation of knowledge transfer-based school management at SD Negeri 03 Doro, Doro District, Pekalongan Regency, has been carried out effectively through management functions that include planning, organizing, implementation, and

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evaluation. The knowledge transfer process is conducted through collaborative activities such as mentoring, coaching, co-teaching, and the sharing of best practices, which contribute to improving teachers' competencies and the quality of learning. Furthermore, this implementation has a positive impact on enhancing the quality of school management, as reflected in data-driven planning, more innovative instructional practices, and increased public trust in the school. The novelty of this study lies in the integration of the knowledge transfer concept into elementary school management practices in a systematic and contextual manner. This study does not merely position knowledge sharing as an informal activity among teachers, but rather as a structured managerial strategy for improving educational quality. In addition, this research provides empirical contributions to the development of a knowledge-based school management model, emphasizing the importance of collaboration, a learning-oriented organizational culture, and transformational leadership in improving the performance of educational organizations.

However, this study has several limitations. First, the research was conducted in a single school, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Second, differences in teachers' competencies, as well as limitations in facilities and time, affect the optimal implementation of knowledge transfer. Therefore, future research is recommended to expand the scope of study locations and to employ a mixed-methods approach in order to obtain more comprehensive results. Moreover, there is a need to develop more applicable models of knowledge transfer implementation, along with policy support from stakeholders to strengthen the sustainability of knowledge-based management practices in schools.

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