

Student Recruitment Management in Improving the Quality of Educational Institutions

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Abstract

This study explores the role of student recruitment management in enhancing the quality of educational institutions, with a case study conducted at SMP Negeri 4 Awangpone, Indonesia. Utilizing a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through structured interviews, observation, and documentation. The findings reveal that the recruitment process is systematically managed through four key phases: planning, organizing, implementation, and monitoring. The effectiveness of these processes significantly contributes to institutional improvement, particularly in student intake quality. Moreover, the study identifies several institutional quality drivers, including leadership commitment to quality, continuous teacher training, internal organizational support, effective communication, recognition and rewards, and routine evaluation practices. The results suggest that structured recruitment management not only streamlines student admission but also serves as a strategic tool to elevate educational quality. These findings have implications for school management practices in similar educational contexts.

Keywords: student recruitment, educational management, school quality

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INTRODUCTION

Education plays a critical role in shaping human capital and driving national development. As a lifelong process, education must adapt continuously to the evolving needs of society, ensuring that individuals are equipped with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to succeed in the modern world. One key determinant of educational effectiveness is the institutional capacity to manage inputs, processes, and outcomes strategically, especially during the early stages of student intake (OECD, 2018).

Among the various institutional functions, student recruitment is a vital component that directly influences the overall quality and performance of a school. Recruitment is not merely about attracting large numbers of students, but about ensuring alignment between prospective students and the institution's educational goals. A fair and structured recruitment system promotes equal access and enhances the school's ability to cultivate highperforming cohorts (Bush, 2011).

Recruitment management involves administrative and strategic tasks such as planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating student admission procedures. These management functions help ensure that student intake is transparent, accountable, and in line with institutional quality assurance standards. Effective recruitment management supports the formation of a conducive academic environment and contributes significantly to school improvement (Leithwood et al., 2020).

In many developing regions, especially in public junior high schools, student recruitment processes face multiple challenges—ranging from inadequate resources and unclear procedures to minimal stakeholder engagement. These obstacles can hinder the institution's ability to attract capable students and compromise quality goals (UNESCO, 2021). A comprehensive understanding of recruitment management in these contexts is needed to guide effective policy and practice.

While existing literature has explored recruitment from various perspectives such as the role of technology (Fitriana, 2020), teacher motivation (Hanifah, 2021), and performancebased intake (Sartika, 2021) there remains a lack of empirical research that directly links recruitment management processes to school quality enhancement, particularly within underresourced schools.

This study addresses that gap by examining student recruitment management at SMP Negeri 4 Awangpone, a junior high school in Bone Regency, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. By exploring how recruitment is planned, organized, implemented, and supervised, this research aims to understand the extent to which these practices contribute to institutional quality improvement. The study also explores the influence of leadership, internal coordination, and continuous evaluation in supporting recruitment outcomes.

The findings of this research are expected to contribute to the broader field of educational leadership and management by offering insights into recruitment practices within a public education context. Additionally, the study may serve as a practical reference for school administrators and policymakers seeking to improve educational quality through more effective recruitment strategies.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to explore how student recruitment management contributes to the improvement of educational quality at SMP Negeri 4 Awangpone. Qualitative research is suitable for understanding social phenomena in depth, especially within the natural setting of educational institutions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The approach allows the researcher to capture detailed insights from participants involved in the recruitment process, including school leaders, administrative staff, and committee members.

Data were collected using three primary techniques: semistructured interviews, direct observation, and document analysis. Interviews were conducted with the principal, vice principal, and members of the student recruitment committee to gather perspectives on the planning, execution, and supervision of the recruitment process. Observations focused on recruitment activities and the school environment, while documentation included admission forms, announcements, and official reports related to student enrollment. Data triangulation was applied to ensure validity and reliability, combining information from multiple sources to corroborate findings (Patton, 2015).

The data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. This process was iterative and continued throughout the research, enabling the researcher to refine emerging themes and construct a coherent narrative. Ethical considerations were maintained by obtaining informed consent from all participants and ensuring confidentiality throughout the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The management of student recruitment at SMP Negeri 4 Awangpone is conducted systematically through four main stages: planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision. These stages are executed annually and are critical to ensuring a smooth and equitable student intake process. The school's commitment to managing recruitment effectively serves as the foundation for improving the quality of education provided.

The planning stage involves early preparation by the school, including forming a student recruitment committee, determining admission pathways, setting requirements, and establishing the registration location and timeline. The committee organizes meetings to discuss procedures such as application form distribution, registration deadlines, and documentation needed for prospective students. This stage ensures that all relevant aspects of the recruitment process are clearly defined and communicated.

In terms of organizing, the school establishes a formal recruitment structure consisting of a principal as the coordinator, vice principal as chairperson, and designated staff as secretary, treasurer, and members. Each role is clearly defined to avoid overlaps and ensure accountability. Tasks are distributed efficiently among the team to manage registration forms, verify documents, and communicate with applicants and parents.

The implementation phase includes the actual execution of recruitment activities, beginning with the publication of announcements and registration schedules. The school uses three official admission pathways: zonation, achievement, and affirmative action. Registration takes place in the school's administration office, where applicants submit documents such as school leaving certificates and proof of eligibility for specific admission routes.

The selection process at SMP Negeri 4 Awangpone focuses primarily on administrative verification, ensuring that all candidates meet the eligibility criteria. While no academic testing is conducted, the school evaluates documentation and distributes seats based on predetermined criteria and available capacity. Students who meet the requirements are accepted and announced through public notice boards.

Once the list of admitted students is finalized, the school proceeds with reregistration, which includes orientation, uniform distribution, and collecting additional documentation. The entire process is carefully monitored by the committee to ensure fairness and transparency. The use of physical records and structured followup enhances the school's ability to track and support incoming students.

Supervision plays a critical role in maintaining quality and addressing potential weaknesses. The principal and committee leaders conduct evaluations of each recruitment cycle, examining aspects such as the number of applicants, registration accuracy, and staff performance. If any discrepancies or inefficiencies are found, corrective measures are taken immediately. Monitoring also includes performance reviews of the recruitment team.

In terms of impact, the recruitment management practices contribute to institutional quality by ensuring that student intake is wellregulated and aligned with the school's capacity and standards. However, challenges remain, including inadequate laboratory facilities, limited library resources, and the mismatch of teacher qualifications with their assigned roles. These issues highlight the need for integrated quality improvement beyond recruitment alone.

Despite the limitations, the leadership at SMP Negeri 4 Awangpone demonstrates a strong commitment to continuous improvement. The principal actively participates in training programs and encourages teaching staff to engage in professional development. The school also implements reward systems for students and teachers to motivate performance. Through structured recruitment and supportive institutional culture, the school gradually builds a foundation for longterm educational quality.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the structured management of student recruitment at SMP Negeri 4 Awangpone plays a pivotal role in enhancing institutional quality. The implementation of the four core management functions planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising demonstrates the school's commitment to establishing a transparent and efficient admission system. These findings are consistent with the argument by Leithwood et al. (2020) that effective school leadership and organizational practices are central to fostering sustainable school improvement.

The planning and organizing stages of recruitment serve as critical foundations for clarity, coordination, and efficiency. The assignment of specific roles and responsibilities among recruitment committee members aligns with Bush's (2011) emphasis on the importance of structured leadership and role clarity in school management. This organization reduces uncertainty during execution and enhances accountability among staff, which in turn contributes to the trust and credibility of the school among prospective students and their families.

Furthermore, the recruitment system at SMP Negeri 4 Awangpone incorporates multiple admission pathways zonation, achievement, and affirmative action which reflects a commitment to equity and inclusivity. This approach is supported by UNESCO (2021), which emphasizes the need for inclusive admission strategies that recognize diverse backgrounds and promote access for disadvantaged students. While the administrative selection model used by the school may lack academic rigor, it ensures equal opportunity and transparency, key elements in building institutional trust.

The role of supervision in the recruitment process is particularly significant. The school's emphasis on monitoring the performance of recruitment staff and evaluating the results of each intake cycle is in line with the quality assurance frameworks suggested by OECD (2018). Through continuous assessment and feedback, the school is able to refine its procedures and address shortcomings, thereby establishing a culture of continuous improvement.

However, while the recruitment process is wellmanaged, the study also reveals persistent institutional challenges that hinder quality enhancement such as underequipped laboratories, insufficient library resources, and the misalignment of teacher qualifications. These findings highlight that recruitment alone is not sufficient to achieve high educational standards. As argued by Fullan (2007), school improvement must be holistic, involving not only structural and procedural changes but also investment in professional capacity and resource development.

Despite resource limitations, leadership at SMP Negeri 4 Awangpone appears to adopt a proactive and qualityoriented approach. The principal's engagement in leadership training and support for teacher development activities aligns with the literature on transformational leadership in schools, which is characterized by visionbuilding, motivation, and capacity enhancement (Day & Sammons, 2016). Additionally, the use of rewards and recognition for both students and teachers reflects a motivation strategy that can enhance performance and foster a positive school culture (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

In sum, this study contributes to the growing body of research emphasizing the strategic role of student recruitment management in educational quality. While recruitment is often treated as an administrative routine, this research shows that when executed with managerial precision and ethical considerations, it can serve as a leverage point for institutional development. However, sustained quality improvement requires a broader ecosystem of support, including adequate infrastructure, pedagogical resources, and stakeholder engagement.

CONCLUSION

The This study highlights the strategic importance of effective student recruitment management in improving the overall quality of educational institutions. At SMP Negeri 4 Awangpone, the recruitment process is implemented through a wellstructured framework involving planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision. These managerial steps not only ensure transparency and fairness in student intake but also reflect a proactive effort to align institutional operations with quality goals.

While the recruitment system contributes positively to school governance and intake regulation, institutional quality improvement remains constrained by resource limitations such as inadequate learning facilities and misaligned staff deployment. Therefore, student recruitment management should be integrated into a broader strategy that includes infrastructure development, professional capacity building, and community engagement.

Ultimately, the case of SMP Negeri 4 Awangpone demonstrates that when student recruitment is managed strategically and ethically, it serves as a foundational element in school improvement. However, sustainable educational quality requires a holistic approach that addresses both administrative efficiency and pedagogical enrichment.

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