

DATA-DRIVEN MANAGEMENT IN IMPROVING LEARNING QUALITY

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ABSTRACT

Although regulations regarding data-driven planning have been established, implementation in the field often faces challenges where data use tends to be limited to administrative fulfillment and has not been fully integrated with school management functions. This study aims to analyze the integration of management functions of planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling data-driven planning as a strategic mechanism for improving the quality of learning. Using a qualitative approach with a case study design at SMP Negeri 2 Taman, research informants were determined using a purposive sampling technique involving the principal, curriculum development team, teachers, school administration, and the school committee. Data was collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis. The results showed that the school successfully synergized management functions with the Identification, Reflection, and Improvement cycle. Planning used the Education Report to identify priority problems, organizing utilized data reflection for role allocation, implementation was realized through In-House Training programs and learning communities, and control was carried out through periodic monitoring and evaluation. It was concluded that data-driven management is effective only if supported by teacher data literacy and leadership capable of transforming data into real pedagogical interventions, not just a document formality.

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INTRODUCTIONS

Improving the quality of national education currently demands a paradigm shift in school management from an administrative approach to measurable and evidence-based management (Kiriana, 2023; Schildkamp, 2019). Accordingly, the government has established Data-Based Planning as the primary foundation of school management through recent regulations, with the Education Report serving as a comprehensive evaluation instrument to map the

actual conditions of educational units (Minarso et al., 2024; Widiyawati et al., 2025). This data-driven management approach requires schools to no longer develop programs based solely on assumptions, but rather to systematically identify, reflect, and refine them so that every policy taken has a direct impact on improving the quality of classroom learning (Putri et al., 2025).

Despite a clear regulatory framework, implementation in the field, particularly at SMP Negeri 2 Taman, Pemalang Regency, shows a gap between data achievement and optimization of quality improvement. Based on the 2025 Education Report, the school's learning quality indicator scored 67 (in the good category), but this figure indicates that the academic atmosphere has not yet reached its optimal point and still leaves room for improvement. The main challenge faced is ensuring that the managerial process from planning to controlling is truly integrated effectively, so that data-driven management does not stop just fulfilling documents but becomes a substantive strategy in boosting the quality of learning on an ongoing basis.

Educational management refers to managerial functions including planning, organizing, directing, and controlling that are carried out systematically to achieve predetermined goals. In the modern context, the planning function is emphasized as the starting point that determines the direction of all policies and the use of resources (Nurhikmah, 2024; Ulyani & Zohriah, 2023). Data-based planning theory emphasizes that planning decisions must be rooted in empirical evidence: data must be used to identify problems, reflect on causes and achievements, and then formulate measurable and evaluable corrective steps (Widiyawati et al., 2025; Putri et al., 2025). According to Schildkamp (2019), an effective school is an organization that can collect, analyze, and interpret data systematically not only for administrative reporting but also to identify performance gaps and determine precise strategic steps. In this perspective, management is no longer seen as a mere command function, but as a continuous cycle of inquiry in which school leaders use qualitative and quantitative data to minimize uncertainty in school operational planning. Minarso et al. (2024) emphasized the role of the Education Report Card as an evaluation tool and planning basis that enables schools to move from assumptions to evidence-based decisions, so that planning becomes more accountable and focused on improving the quality of learning.

Data-driven management integrates the managerial cycle with the identify-reflect-improve (IRB) cycle: report card data provides input for setting targets (planning), guides resource allocation and learning strategies (organizing and directing) and serves as a benchmark for monitoring and evaluation (controlling). Synergy between policy instruments and human resource readiness is key in data-driven management. Hidayah et al. (2025) emphasized that the Education Report Card enables a shift in the planning paradigm from mere administrative fulfillment to precise root cause analysis, ensuring that school resource allocation is focused on specific interventions with the highest leverage for student learning outcomes. However, the effectiveness of this mechanism is highly dependent on the executors in the field, where Musakirawati et al. (2023) found that the use of digital platforms in the Identify, Reflect, and Improve cycle will only have an optimal impact if supported by the data literacy capacity of educators and adequate infrastructure, so strengthening teacher competency in translating data into learning strategies is an absolute prerequisite for creating a sustainable quality improvement cycle.

The implementation of data-driven management has proven to be an effective catalyst for improving educational quality. Wulandari (2021) explains that systematic planning, including identification, reflection, and improvement, significantly optimizes budget efficiency and the quality of school programs. The validity of this approach is reinforced by the empirical findings of Van Geel et al. (2016), which show that data-driven interventions can increase student academic achievement growth equivalent to one additional month of schooling. A positive impact that, according to Nnorom, et al. (2023), is highly dependent on the principal's leadership capacity to precisely direct school improvement initiatives based on concrete evidence.

Despite its significant potential for success, the reality of implementation on the ground still faces substantial challenges, as revealed by Mandinach & Schildkamp (2021) regarding fundamental misconceptions that often hinder

data understanding, as well as Nurzen (2022) finding that data use in schools is often trapped in administrative accountability formalities rather than for pedagogical interventions. To bridge this competency gap, Susanto et al. (2025) emphasize the urgency of intensive technology and analytics training for school leaders, a recommendation that aligns with the critical skills development model proposed by Shamsuddin & Razak (2023) to ensure educational leaders can transform raw data into accurate strategic decisions.

The data-driven management in improving learning quality research stems from the need for schools to optimize the systematic and sustainable use of data throughout the learning management process. To date, data use in schools has tended to focus on the initial planning stage or merely for administrative purposes, thus not being fully integrated with school management functions. This research offers an integrative approach that links management functions including planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling with data-driven planning stages consisting of identifying learning problems, critical reflection on data findings, strategy and program improvements, and ongoing implementation control. Through this integration, data is positioned not only as a basis for program development but also as the primary driver in organizing resources, implementing learning, and continuously evaluating the quality of learning processes and outcomes. This approach is expected to produce a comprehensive, contextual, and applicable data-driven management model to support improving the quality of learning in schools.

However, existing implementation often treats data-driven planning as a mere administrative formality, lacking seamless integration with core management functions. There is a scarcity of empirical evidence explaining how schools effectively transform data insights into concrete managerial actions. Consequently, the central problem addressed in this study is the mechanism of operationalizing data reflection into the cycle of planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling. Therefore, this study aims to describe and analyze in depth how these management functions are integrated into data-driven planning as a strategic mechanism for improving the quality of learning. Analytically, it examines how data serves as evidence for identifying needs, how organizing allocates resources based on reflection, how implementation executes data-based strategies, and how control ensures sustainability through continuous monitoring.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design, which aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the integration of management functions of planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling in data-driven planning to improve the quality of learning. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore the process, meaning, and dynamics of data-driven management implementation contextually within the school environment. The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 2 Taman, Pemalang Regency. Data collection was carried out for six months, from June to November 2025. This timeframe was selected to coincide with the school's planning activities, including data reflection and annual program preparation, thereby facilitating observation and document collection. The research subjects involved 5 informants, consisting of the Principal, Vice Principal, Teachers, Administration Staff, and a School Committee member. These subjects were selected purposively based on their direct involvement and knowledge of data-driven management practices.

The focus of the research is directed at the integration of management functions which include: (1) planning, which is analyzed through the process of identifying problems and data-based learning needs; (2) organizing, which is examined through data reflection mechanisms in the division of roles and resource management; (3) implementation, which is examined through the implementation of improvements to data-based learning strategies and practices; and (4) control, which is analyzed through monitoring, evaluation, and follow-up of continuous learning implementation.

Data was collected through three main techniques: in-depth interviews, observation, and document analysis. Interviews were conducted semi-structured to explore the research subjects' understanding, experiences, and practices related to data-driven learning management. Observations were conducted to directly observe the implementation of learning, planning meetings, and the monitoring and evaluation process. Document analysis included school planning documents, learning tools, evaluation reports, and educational data documents used in decision-making. The research instruments included interview guidelines, observation sheets, and document analysis checklists. The instruments were structured based on the research focus and indicators of data-driven management function integration to ensure the link between the collected data and the research objectives. Table 1. Relationship between Objectives, Indicators, and Data Collection Techniques.

Table 1. Relationship between Objectives, Indicators, and Data Collection Techniques

Management Function	Data-Driven Analysis Focus	Key Analysis Indicators	Data Collection Techniques
Planning	Data-driven identification	Types and sources of data used; data analysis process to identify learning problems and needs; alignment of data analysis results with the formulation of learning plans.	Document analysis (Education Report Card, RKAS*, learning tools); interviews with the principal and teachers.
Organizing	Data-driven reflection	Data reflection mechanism in decision making; distribution of roles and responsibilities; organization of resources based on data reflection results.	Interviews with school leadership and the development team; observation of meetings.
Implementation	Data-driven improvement	Implementation of learning strategies resulting from data analysis; consistency of implementation with the plan; teacher involvement in learning improvement.	Learning observation; teacher interviews; analysis of teaching tools/materials.
Controlling	Control and follow-up implementation	Data-based implementation monitoring; use of monitoring and evaluation data; follow-up and adjustment of learning programs.	Analysis of evaluation documents; interviews; observation of the monitoring process.

Source: (Amiruddin & Chardo, 2023; Sudadi & Rasiman, 2025)

Data analysis was conducted thematically through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2014). The analysis process began with open coding to identify units of meaning related to data-driven planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling practices. Next, axial coding was used to group codes into categories representing the stages of data-driven planning: identification, reflection, improvement,

and implementation control. In the selective coding stage, these categories were integrated to develop a central theme regarding the integration of data-driven management functions in improving the quality of learning.

Data validity was maintained through triangulation of sources and techniques, namely by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and document analysis. Furthermore, member checking was conducted by confirming the research findings with the research subjects to ensure the accuracy and appropriateness of the researcher's interpretations to actual conditions in the field. This research was conducted in accordance with ethical research principles, including obtaining approval from the school, maintaining the confidentiality of the research subjects' identities, and ensuring that all data was used solely for academic purposes.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Result

In general, data-driven management at SMP Negeri 2 Taman, Pemalang Regency is presented in Figure 1 below.

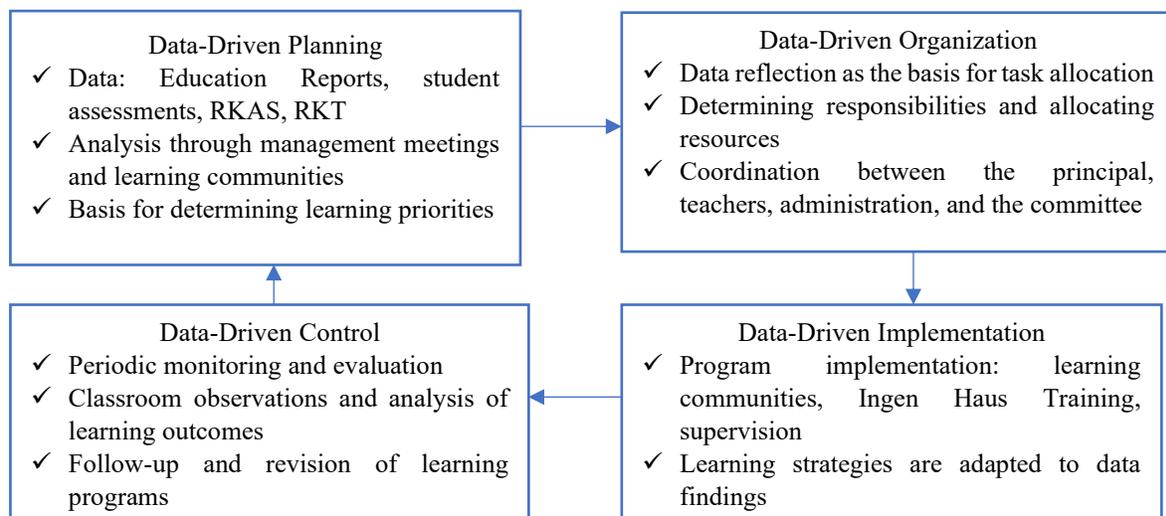


Figure 1. Data-Based Management at SMP Negeri 2 Taman, Pemalang Regency

Data-Driven Planning

Data-Driven Planning Based on interviews with various informants, the data-driven planning function in schools is implemented using various data sources to identify learning problems and needs. The specific views of key stakeholders regarding this process are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Informant Views on Data-Driven Planning

Informant	Statement
Principal (KS, Interview, 2025)	"We always use the Education Report Card to identify achievement indicators that are still low and need to be prioritized in school planning."
Vice Principal (WK, Interview, 2025)	"Education report card data is discussed in school management meetings and continued in teacher reflection forums to identify the causes of learning problems."

Teachers (G, Interview, 2025)	<i>"The results of education reports and student assessments serve as reflection material in the learning community to determine improvements in learning strategies and methods."</i>
Admin Staff (TU, Interview, 2025)	<i>"TU plays a role in preparing, archiving, and presenting education report card data, learning tools, and planning documents as material for annual analysis."</i>
Committee (KM, Interview, 2025)	<i>"The results of school data analysis are submitted to the committee as a basis for providing input on programs and learning support needs."</i>

The data in Table 2 indicates a congruence of views among informants regarding the importance of data as the primary basis for learning planning. The principal emphasizes prioritization based on the Report Card, while the Vice Principal and Teachers highlight the reflection process to identify root causes and strategy improvements. Furthermore, the support from Administration Staff in data preparation and the Committee in providing input demonstrates a collaborative ecosystem in formulating evidence-based school programs.

The triangulation results of the interviews were further supported by observational data and documentation showing that the school has and utilizes the Education Report Card, RKAS, RKT, and learning tools in the planning process. Observations of management meetings and learning community activities show that education report card data and student assessment results are used as a basis for discussions to formulate follow-up plans, such as implementing In-House Training, strengthening teacher learning communities, and academic supervision. School planning documentation also shows that the results of data analysis are systematically formulated into learning plans and school programs, thus confirming the alignment between the results of data analysis and the formulation of data management-based planning oriented towards improving the quality of learning.

Data-Driven Organizing

Data-Driven Organizing Based on interviews with various informants, school organization in data-driven reflection is carried out through a structured mechanism for decision-making and the division of roles. The specific views of key stakeholders regarding this organizing process are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Informant Views on Data-Driven Organizing

Informant	Statement
Principal (KS, Interview, 2025)	<i>"The results of the educational report card data reflection serve as the basis for dividing tasks among the development team and the vice principal according to their respective areas."</i>
Vice Principal (WK, Interview, 2025)	<i>"After the data reflection is conducted, we coordinate the roles of teachers, the curriculum team, and the program manager so that follow-up actions are carried out according to the analysis results."</i>
Teachers (G, Interview, 2025)	<i>"The division of roles within the learning community is based on the results of the data reflection, so that each teacher has clear responsibilities in the learning improvement program."</i>
Admin Staff (TU, Interview, 2025)	<i>"The administration supports the organization process by preparing administration and program needs based on decisions from the data reflection."</i>
Committee (KM, Interview, 2025)	<i>"The school involves the committee in understanding the results of the data reflection so that resource support can be adjusted to the school's priority needs."</i>

The data in Table 3 demonstrates that the organizing function in this school is highly responsive to data findings. The division of labor is not static but dynamic, adjusting to the priorities identified during reflection. The Principal and Vice Principal focus on structural coordination, Teachers align their roles within learning communities,

while Administrative Staff and the Committee ensure that logistical and resource support matches the strategic needs derived from the data analysis.

Data-Driven Implementation

Data-Driven Implementation Based on interview triangulation, the implementation of data-driven improvement involves active participation across various school roles. The specific statements regarding the execution of these data-based programs are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Informant Views on Data-Driven Implementation

Informant	Statement
Principal (KS, Interview, 2025)	<i>"The results of the educational report card are the main reference in developing the annual curriculum program."</i>
Vice Principal (WK, Interview, 2025)	<i>"The report card data is discussed in management meetings and continued in the teacher reflection forum."</i>
Teachers (G, Interview, 2025)	<i>"The results of the report card and student assessments serve as reflection material in the learning community to improve learning strategies."</i>
Admin Staff (TU, Interview, 2025)	<i>"TU prepares and archives report card data and planning documents."</i>
Committee (KM, Interview, 2025)	<i>"The results of the data analysis are submitted to the committee as a basis for providing input on the program."</i>

Table 4 illustrates that data-driven management is a collective effort. The synergy between leadership strategy, administrative support, and the Committee empowers Teachers to translate data insights into concrete pedagogical interventions.

Observation and documentation support strengthen the interview findings: Education Report documents, Annual Work Plan (RKT)/RKAS, meeting minutes, assignment letters, and archives of IHT results are seen to be used as evidence of implementation and references for follow-up, concrete programs directly linked to the results of data analysis include In-House Training, Learning Communities, academic coaching/supervision, and seminars/talk shows to strengthen teaching practices. Monitoring is reportedly conducted quarterly with classroom observations and evaluation of learning outcomes to assess the consistency of implementation against the plan; if impact has not been achieved, the strategy is revised in the following period. Archival documentation and data backup are also said to ensure the availability of evidence of implementation for ongoing evaluation.

Data-Driven Control

Data-Driven Control Based on interviews with various informants, school control in the implementation of data-driven programs is carried out through structured monitoring, evaluation, and follow-up mechanisms. The specific views of key stakeholders regarding this control process are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Informant Views on Data-Driven Control

Informant	Statement
Principal (KS, Interview, 2025)	<i>"Every planned program is always monitored through coordination and periodic evaluation to ensure it remains in line with the initial objectives."</i>
Vice Principal (WK, Interview, 2025)	<i>"Monitoring is carried out routinely through evaluation and supervision meetings to assess program implementation and its impact on learning."</i>
Teachers (G, Interview, 2025)	<i>"Monitoring and evaluation results are discussed together so that teachers know which areas of learning need improvement."</i>
Admin Staff (TU, Interview, 2025)	<i>"TU assists the control process by preparing and managing evaluation documents and activity reports as follow-up materials."</i>

"The school submits program evaluation results to the committee for Committee (KM, Interview, 2025) further input and support."

The data in Table 5 indicates that the control function serves as a quality assurance mechanism rather than just administrative supervision. The Principal and Vice Principal ensure strategic alignment through routine coordination, while Teachers utilize evaluation results for pedagogical reflection. Supported by the Administration Staff in document management and the Committee in external accountability, this control mechanism ensures that the school ecosystem operates in a continuous cycle of improvement based on valid data.

DISCUSSION

The collaborative utilization of Education Report Cards and assessments observed in this study validates the theoretical framework proposed by Hebecker et al. (2022), confirming that the impact of data is contingent upon active teacher involvement in analysis and professional support. Rather than viewing data availability as a standalone solution, this study demonstrates that collaboration is the critical mechanism for transforming raw data into contextual improvement strategies, as posited by Tayem & Bourgeois (2024). This process, however, requires more than just access; it necessitates a governance structure that includes learning process data to strengthen instructional planning, reinforcing the arguments of Hase & Kuhl (2024). Furthermore, the findings support Nurzen (2022) caution that administrative data alone is insufficient. Instead, data-driven planning must be embedded within structured reflection mechanisms and clear follow-up protocols to ensure the focus remains on concrete quality improvements rather than mere document fulfillment.

In the organizational domain, this research highlights that transitioning from individual reflection to a sustainable organizational routine relies heavily on systemic capacity. Consistent with Doğan & Adams (2018), the effectiveness of resource allocation and decision-making is fundamentally linked to organizational capacity and leadership support. Crucially, the integration of educational staff in archiving processes supports Hase & Kuhl (2024) finding that strong administrative capacity is a prerequisite for utilizing diverse data sources. Moreover, the study confirms that Professional Learning Networks (PLNs) function as essential vehicles for distributing tasks and enhancing data literacy, ensuring reflection translates into action (Warmoes et al., 2024). Ultimately, the success of data-driven organizing is proven to depend on the synergy between human resource capabilities, supportive leadership, and documented task-sharing mechanisms (Ardhi et al., 2024; Nurzen, 2022).

The translation of these plans into concrete interventions, such as In-House Training (IHT) and academic supervision, aligns with literature emphasizing the necessity of data-driven coaching to ensure the fidelity of classroom practice (Johnson et al., 2024). This study adds empirical weight to the notion that professional development is most effective when designed sustainably and specifically relevant to identified data needs, thereby directly improving teacher readiness (Ardhi et al., 2024; Irvani et al., 2022). However, the sustainability of these interventions is fragile; consistent with Van den Boom-Muilenburg et al. (2023), this research underscores that formal and informal leadership is vital to maintain the rhythm of reflection forums, preventing them from becoming episodic events. Thus, data-driven implementation requires an integration of structured mentoring and collaborative leadership to document the process as tangible evidence of change.

Finally, regarding quality control, this study illustrates how monitoring transforms accountability into a tool for continuous improvement. By producing valid empirical data on curriculum implementation, the evaluation process confirms Amiruddin & Chardo (2023) assertion that data-driven monitoring is essential for measuring program progress and enhancing school accountability. The findings suggest that evaluation serves not merely as a retrospective check but as a dynamic feedback loop that allows for precise adjustments to learning strategies. Integrating this monitoring back into the planning phase ensures that curriculum decisions remain rooted in systematic data

processing, effectively closing the loop to establish a continuous data-driven management cycle (Damaryanti et al., 2023).

CONCLUSION

Based on the research objective to analyze the integration of management functions in data-driven planning, it can be concluded that SMP Negeri 2 Taman has systematically operationalized the Identification–Reflection–Improvement cycle. This was achieved by utilizing Education Report Cards (*Rapor Pendidikan*), student assessments, and planning documents as a basis for setting priorities. The results of the data analysis were translated into concrete programs such as In-House Training, learning communities, and academic supervision which were then overseen through periodic monitoring and evaluation. These findings confirm that the effectiveness of data-driven management relies not only on data availability but also on the integration of teacher data literacy, collaborative forums, leadership that sustains the habit of reflection, and administrative governance that supports the sustainability of the improvement cycle.

Theoretically, this study contributes by emphasizing the multilevel relationship between individual capacity (teacher literacy and reflection) and institutional capacity (leadership, administrative roles, and monitoring mechanisms) as prerequisites for successful data-driven planning. This study also highlights the strategic role of administrative staff and professional learning networks in bridging the gap between data analysis and the implementation of quality improvement programs. However, given the single case study design, the generalizability of the findings is limited. Therefore, future research should involve multiple schools and integrate quantitative measures of learning outcomes to strengthen external validity and demonstrate the impact on learning quality.

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