

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EDUCATION QUALITY AND STUDENT TRANSFER RATES

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ABSTRACT

Education quality is a crucial element in the sustainability and reputation of schools, while student transfers can serve as indicators of dissatisfaction with the educational services provided. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the factors influencing education quality and its relationship with student transfer rates at Pelangi Kasih School, North Jakarta. This study employs a qualitative approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with the school principal, educators, and students who had transferred out of the school, involving a total of nine informants. To analyze the data, the researcher used NVivo 12 Pro software to assist in processing and examining the interview results. The findings reveal that factors such as the quality of teaching, teacher–student relationships, school facilities, and school management significantly influence perceptions of education quality. Additionally, external factors such as distance to school and academic pressure also contribute to students' decisions to transfer. The study suggests the need to strengthen school management strategies, improve teaching quality, and adopt a holistic approach to student well-being in order to maintain education quality and reduce student transfer rates. The implications of this research are expected to provide valuable insights for school administrators in designing policies that support sustainable education quality.

KEYWORDS Education Quality, Transfer Rates, Principal, Management



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INTRODUCTION

The implementation of educational institutions worldwide is regarded as a program of high strategic value. The underlying assumption is that the educational process is a deliberate and systematically designed effort with the primary goal of advancing the intellectual development of a nation (Leithwood, 2019). Through education, it is expected that competent and high-quality individuals will emerge, becoming the backbone of human resources in national development (Kopnina, 2020). High-quality schools generally share several key characteristics, including a safe and supportive learning environment, effective leadership, and high educational standards (Syafuruddin et al., 2023). Effective leadership, particularly from principals and managerial staff, plays a vital role in setting a clear vision, supporting teachers, and involving parents in the educational process (Muttaqin, 2018).

Educational institutions play a crucial role in enhancing the quality of national education to remain competitive in the rapidly evolving modern era. In this context, the role of leadership cannot be overlooked (Kada'di, 2021). The principal acts as a central figure—serving as a leader, manager, and steward of the school's vision and interests. As the driving force of educational institutions, principals are expected to perform optimally and effectively (Mariana, 2021). However, a paradigm shift in the approach to improving educational quality has reshaped priorities. In recent decades, the focus of education has moved beyond merely delivering knowledge to developing critical thinking skills and adaptability in an ever-changing

world. A *UNESCO* report emphasizes that quality education is key to addressing global challenges such as poverty, inequality, and climate change (UNESCO, 2017).

The leadership of school principals and effective school management significantly influence the quality of education, particularly in relation to student transfer rates (Dawam et al., 2022; Sri Laksmi et al., 2019; Sukayana et al., 2019; Susanto, 2013; Zubaidah, 2017). At present, it is undeniable that many students choose to transfer schools. The student transfer rate in several schools is notably high, indicating issues in school management and leadership that require immediate attention (Franklin & Harrington, 2019). A decline in student enrollment or a pattern of students leaving and transferring often signals deeper problems that need to be identified and resolved. This phenomenon may result from various factors, such as declining education quality, inadequate facilities, an unsupportive school environment, or the lack of engaging programs that meet students' interests (Damanik & Aldridge, 2017).

No scientific studies have been found that specifically analyze the model of principal leadership and school management in relation to education quality and student transfer rates. A relevant prior study by Abdullah (2018) highlights that the management of education quality in schools is significantly influenced by principal leadership, teacher professionalism, and community participation. Abdullah (2018) concluded that these three elements are critical to improving education quality. The success of educational programs is difficult to achieve without alignment among principals, teachers, and the community regarding the goals and values of education. Therefore, collaboration among these stakeholders is essential for achieving educational goals and shaping a generation that excels in knowledge, skills, attitudes, and moral values.

Building on previous studies, this research provides added value by addressing a gap in the literature. To date, no study has focused on the model of principal leadership and school management in relation to education quality and student transfer rates. Based on the issues outlined above, this study seeks to answer the following research question: *What factors influence education quality and its relationship with student transfer rates at Pelangi Kasih School, North Jakarta?*

This research aims to provide insights into how principal leadership and school management theoretically influence education quality. It contributes to understanding the mechanisms linking these elements and their impact on overall educational outcomes.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study was designed using a qualitative research method. Qualitative research is an approach aimed at understanding social phenomena and human behavior through the collection of descriptive and in-depth data, often conducted through interviews, observations, or document analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This approach emphasizes understanding participants' perspectives and experiences within their specific contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The study was conducted at one of the schools in North Jakarta, *Pelangi Kasih School (SPK)*, a secondary school located in an area with a high density of educational institutions.

The study involved the school principal, several teachers and/or staff members, and students who had previously attended the school but decided to transfer. The selection of these research subjects was intended to gather a wide range of relevant and accurate data. The

research subjects consisted of one school principal, three teachers and/or staff members, and five students. These five students were selected as representatives of those who had left or transferred from the school where the research was conducted. All research participants agreed to take part in the interviews.

The primary data collection method used in this study was interviews. Through interviews, the researcher was able to explore the respondents' views, experiences, and knowledge in depth—insights that cannot always be obtained through questionnaires (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The data were processed using *NVivo 12 Pro* software, an effective tool for analyzing qualitative data. It enables researchers to organize, categorize, and extract themes from complex information. *NVivo 12 Pro* provides features for coding data, identifying patterns, and establishing relationships between different categories, thereby facilitating the generation of deeper insights. Additionally, the researcher collected secondary data, including reports or documents that had been compiled and processed by other parties prior to the study.

In this qualitative research, several interview procedures were established to ensure ethical conduct. These included maintaining the confidentiality of participants' identities, obtaining informed consent, and allowing participants the freedom to withdraw at any time without negative consequences. These procedures were implemented to ensure that the research was conducted ethically and that the rights of the informants were respected.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The interpretation of the word cloud highlights the frequency of the 50 most commonly occurring words. By setting the criteria that each word must have 3–10 letters, the most dominant words include *school*, *principal*, *teacher*, *student*, *Pelangi*, *SPK*, *system*, *aspiration*, *thinking*, *needs*, *facilities*, *activities*, *time*, *decision*, *focus*, *bored*, *supportive*, *change*, *transfer*, and *work*, among others. These words reflect key elements in the dynamics of school leadership, school management, and educational quality, which influence student turnover rates. The prominence of terms such as *principal*, *teacher*, and *student* underscores the importance of interpersonal relationships and the central roles of school leaders and educators in fostering a comfortable and supportive learning environment.

Meanwhile, words like *aspiration*, *needs*, and *facilities* emphasize the importance of addressing students' expectations and how such factors influence their decisions to remain or transfer. Additionally, terms like *system*, *time*, and *decision* highlight the structural and operational dimensions of school management that affect students' learning experiences. The effectiveness of the school's systems and time management plays a critical role, particularly in responding to student aspirations, such as the availability of facilities or relevant programs. Words such as *bored* and *supportive* reveal student perceptions about the limited variety of school activities, which may negatively impact their engagement in the educational process. This analysis is further illustrated in the following word cloud:



Figure 1. Word Cloud Frequency

Principal

The analysis shows that the principal at *Pelangi Kasih School* applies a *guided democracy* leadership model, which merges active leadership with collaborative decision-making. In this model, the principal ensures that school policies are shaped through input from various stakeholders, particularly teachers and staff. However, the success of this approach depends on effective communication between management and teaching staff, as well as the principal's capacity to reconcile differing viewpoints.



Figure 2. Principal Interview Project Map

The role of teachers and staff in school management decision-making is also an essential aspect emphasized by the principal. Teachers and staff participate in small group or departmental discussions to provide input on pre-designed concepts. This approach enables the contribution of ideas and constructive criticism; however, the challenge lies in ensuring that

the feedback is effectively implemented. Through this involvement, the principal aims to create more inclusive policies that align with the needs of both teachers and students, ultimately enhancing the quality of education at the school.

Regarding educational quality, the principal evaluates it using several indicators, such as teacher quality, graduate achievements, and the development of a Cambridge-based curriculum tailored to local values and Christian philosophy. These evaluations highlight the school's focus on strong academic development while also emphasizing values consistent with the school's identity. Strategies to retain students include improving facilities, providing teacher training, and offering extracurricular programs designed to maintain inclusivity and offer students opportunities for holistic development. Nonetheless, the principal acknowledges that factors such as limited facilities and academic challenges can affect student satisfaction, potentially increasing the likelihood of students transferring to other schools.

As stated earlier, the leadership model implemented at Pelangi Kasih School is guided democracy, wherein the principal combines a leadership role with collaborative discussion mechanisms. This approach facilitates the participation of various stakeholders in decision-making, fostering a sense of ownership over implemented policies. In interviews with the principal, it was shared that teachers and staff participate in small group or departmental discussions to provide feedback on pre-designed concepts. Furthermore, the quality of education at Pelangi Kasih School is measured using various indicators, including teacher quality, graduate achievements, and the development of a Cambridge-based curriculum adapted to local values and Christian philosophy. These measurements reflect the school's efforts to maintain high academic standards while respecting cultural and faith-based values. This is illustrated in the following project map:



Figure 3. Project Map of the Leadership Model Implemented

The role of teachers and staff in school management decision-making is carried out through small group or departmental discussions to provide input on pre-designed concepts. This approach allows teachers and staff to contribute to the planning and implementation of policies. However, the challenge lies in ensuring that the input provided is translated into tangible actions that support students' needs. Nevertheless, this active participation fosters a

greater sense of involvement in the decision-making process, which positively influences the learning environment. This is illustrated in the following project map:

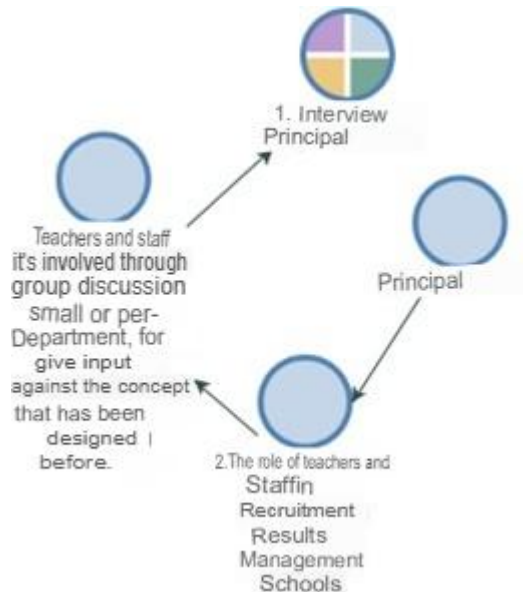


Figure 4. Project Map of Teacher and Staff Roles in School Management Decision-Making

The quality of education at *Pelangi Kasih School* is measured using various indicators, such as teacher quality, graduate achievements, and the development of a *Cambridge*-based curriculum adapted to local values and Christian philosophy. These measurements reflect the school's efforts to maintain high academic standards while respecting values relevant to the school's culture and beliefs. The focus on teacher quality and a curriculum integrated with local values demonstrates that the school prioritizes not only academic achievement but also character building and student integrity in alignment with the school's educational philosophy. This is detailed in the following project map:

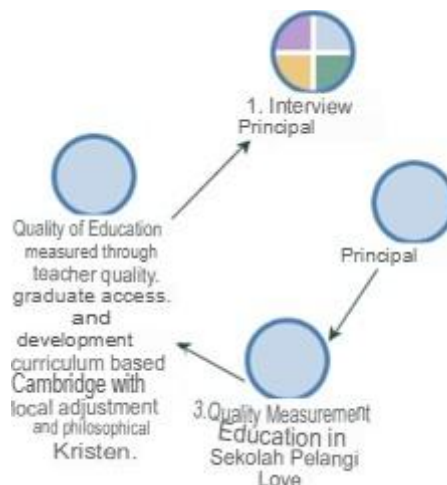


Figure 5. Project Map of Education Quality Measurement at the School

To retain students, Pelangi Kasih School implements various strategies, including improving facilities, providing teacher training, and developing extracurricular programs that cater to students' needs. Adapting the curriculum to maintain inclusivity is also part of the

strategy to ensure that all students feel valued and engaged in learning activities tailored to their needs and interests. This is illustrated in the following project map:

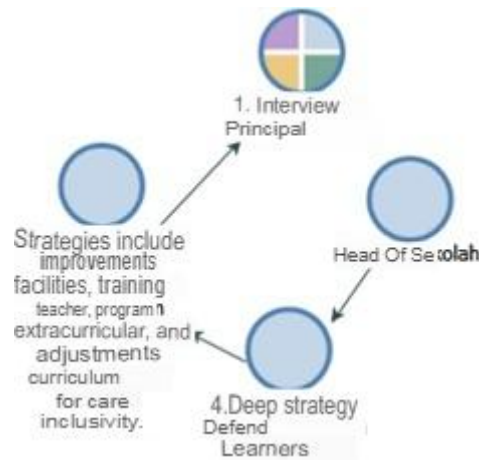


Figure 6. Project Map of Strategies for Retaining Students

The role of school management in improving educational quality and reducing student turnover is crucial. School management is responsible for revitalizing infrastructure, managing finances efficiently, recruiting qualified teachers, conducting internal training, and developing performance assessment systems. All these aspects are interconnected to create an environment that supports high educational quality. This is illustrated in the following project map:

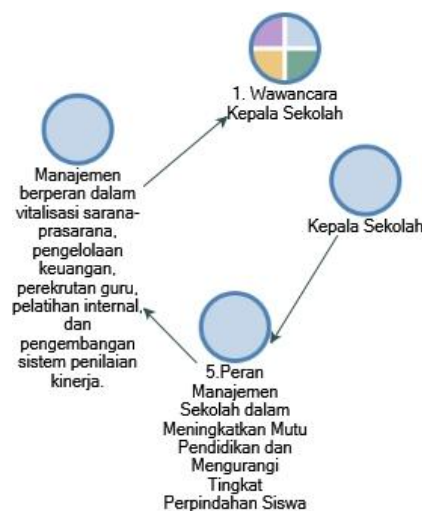


Figure 7. Project Map: The Role of School Management in Improving Education Quality and Reducing Student Turnover

Factors contributing to student transfers from *Pelangi Kasih School* are linked to several key aspects that affect their learning experience. According to the principal, boredom is a primary factor, as students feel that the lack of variety in activities and teaching approaches leaves them unchallenged. Limited facilities are also a significant concern, especially when compared to other schools offering more comprehensive amenities. Furthermore, although teacher quality is recognized, the high level of academic difficulty is not always suited to the capabilities of all students, causing some to feel overwhelmed and choose schools with teaching methods better aligned to their learning styles. These interrelated factors highlight the

need for the school to continuously adapt and address areas of concern. This is illustrated in the following project map:

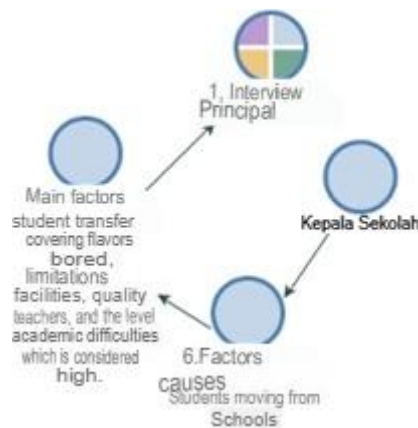


Figure 8. Project Map: Factors Contributing to Student Transfers

Teaching Staff

The role of the principal in improving educational quality is crucial, particularly in motivating teachers and maintaining strategic communication with the school foundation. The principal is expected to provide more structured and decisive guidance, even within specific areas. However, the principal must also act as a supportive leader for teachers—not only professionally but also personally. This approach fosters a more positive environment that supports teacher development and enhances the quality of learning at the school.

Teacher involvement in decision-making is another critical factor in improving educational quality. Teachers participate in discussions regarding their responsibilities, such as student guidance and discipline, although responses to their input have not always been proactively initiated by the principal.

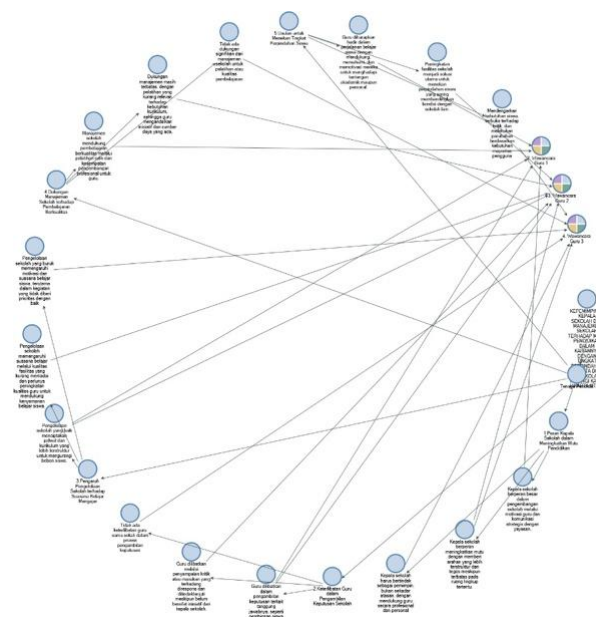


Figure 9. Project Map: Teaching Staff Interviews

Analysis of teacher interviews highlights that the principal plays a significant role in improving educational quality at *Pelangi Kasih School*, particularly in motivating teachers and engaging in strategic communication with the school foundation. The principal acts not only as a superior but also as a leader who supports teachers both professionally and personally. Teacher involvement in school decision-making is considerable, especially in areas such as student guidance and discipline. However, responses to teacher input are often perceived as suboptimal, with some criticisms not promptly addressed. This indicates that teacher involvement in decision-making has not been fully initiated by the principal, who should adopt a more responsive approach to feedback. This is illustrated in the following project map:

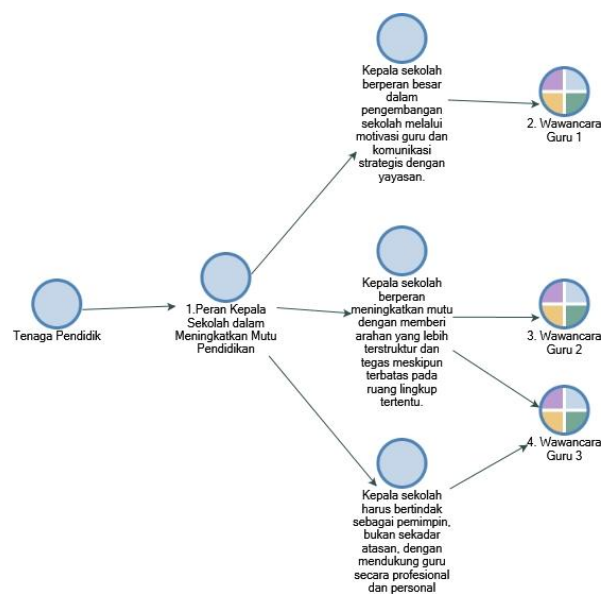


Figure 10. Project Map: The Role of the Principal in Improving Education Quality

Teacher involvement in school decision-making is significant, especially in areas like student guidance and discipline. However, responses to teacher input are still considered suboptimal, with some criticisms not promptly acted upon. This suggests that the principal's initiative in facilitating inclusive decision-making needs improvement. A more inclusive and responsive approach to teacher suggestions can enhance the work environment and improve overall education quality. This is illustrated in the following project map:

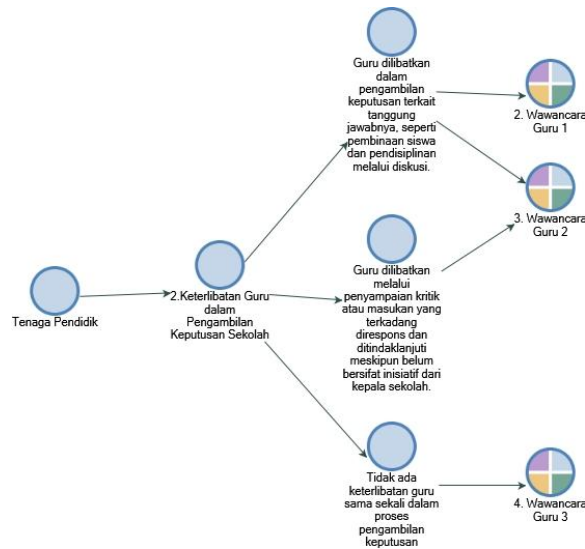


Figure 11. Project Map: Teacher Involvement in School Decision-Making

Effective School Management Greatly Influences the Teaching and Learning Environment

Inadequate facilities often hinder students' comfort during learning. Additionally, improving teacher quality is essential to support a better learning atmosphere. Proper management creates a more structured environment with schedules and curricula better suited to students' needs. Conversely, poor management, such as neglecting important activities, can reduce student motivation and negatively impact their learning experience, ultimately increasing student turnover rates. This is illustrated in the following project map:

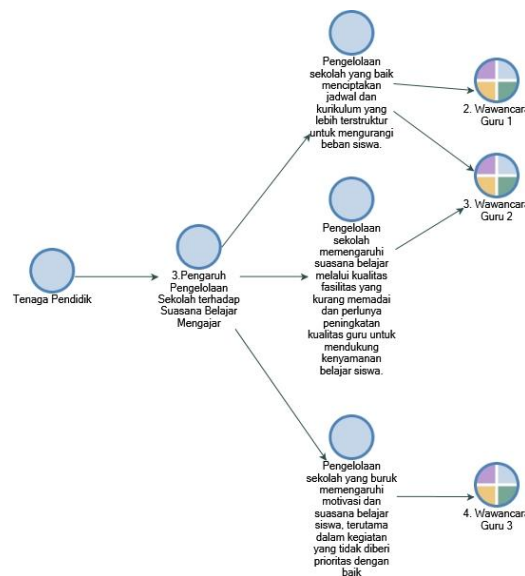


Figure 12. Project Map: The Impact of School Management on the Teaching and Learning Environment

School Management Support for Quality Education Remains Limited

Although there are regular teacher training sessions, they are often less relevant to the evolving curriculum needs. As a result, teachers rely on their own initiative and available resources to improve the quality of teaching. To reduce student turnover, teachers are expected

to be more actively involved in students' learning journeys by offering support, understanding, and motivation to help them overcome academic and personal challenges. Listening to students' needs, being open to criticism, and implementing changes based on the majority of students' feedback can significantly enhance their learning experience.

Additionally, improving school facilities is one of the primary solutions proposed to reduce student turnover, as many students compare the facilities at *Pelangi Kasih School* with those of other schools offering more comprehensive amenities. This is illustrated in the following project map:

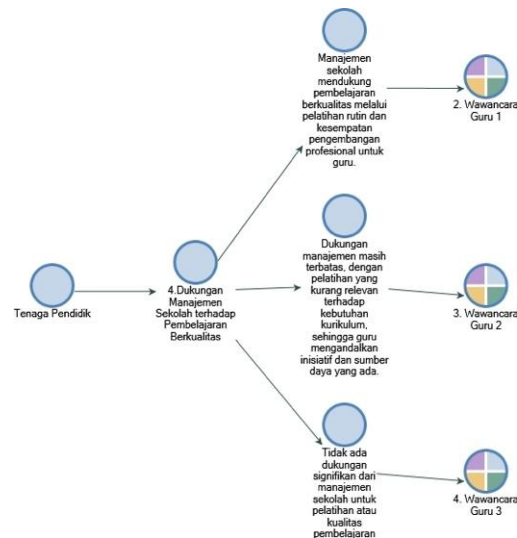


Figure 13. Project Map: School Management Support for Quality Education

Finally, to reduce student turnover, teachers are encouraged to be more engaged in students' learning journeys by offering support, understanding, and motivation to help them overcome challenges. Listening to students' needs, being open to criticism, and making changes based on their feedback can significantly improve the learning experience. Furthermore, enhancing school facilities remains a primary solution to retain students, as many compare the current facilities at *Pelangi Kasih School* with other schools offering more advanced amenities. This is illustrated in the following project map:

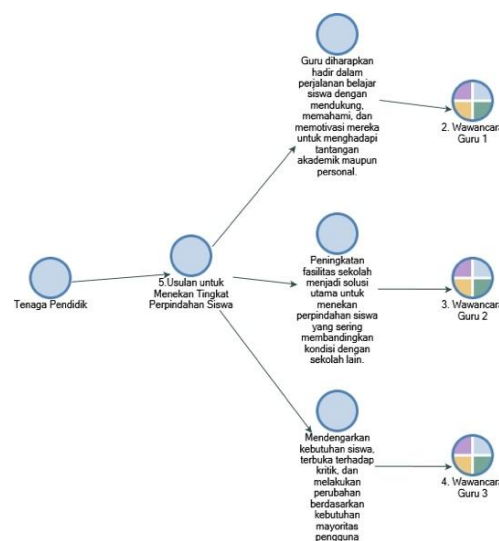


Figure 14. Project Map: Proposals to Reduce Student Turnover Rates

Students

The reasons behind student transfers from *Pelangi Kasih School* stem from various external and internal factors. A major reason is relocating homes, which makes access to a new school more convenient. However, many students also transfer in search of new experiences, different environments, and challenges that support their personal development. Some students seek schools with more comprehensive facilities and non-academic opportunities, while others look for chances to interact with peers from diverse cultural backgrounds, as offered by their new schools. This demonstrates that social factors and the desire for new experiences significantly influence students' decisions to transfer.

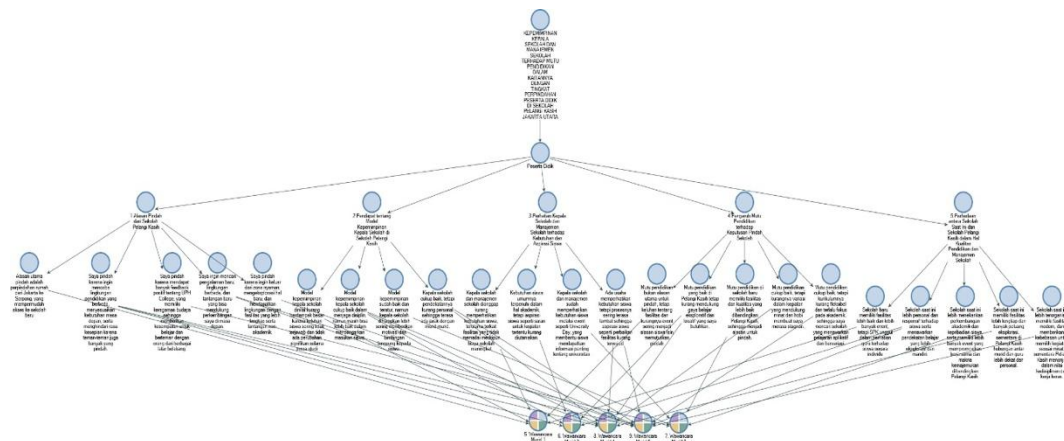


Figure 15. Project Map: Student Interviews

Furthermore, regarding the principal's leadership, while many students perceive the principal as effective in maintaining discipline and order at the school, they feel the approach lacks a personal touch and is not sufficiently responsive to their complaints or input. Many students express a desire for the principal to provide more direct motivation and to listen to their aspirations. While the structured and organized leadership model is appreciated, it requires improvement in fostering familiarity and direct communication with students to build a closer bond between them and the school leadership.

The attention of the principal and school management to the needs and aspirations of students is also a significant topic. Although efforts have been made to address students' academic needs, the process often feels slow, particularly regarding the improvement of facilities desired by students. Students also feel that school management has not fully responded to their suggestions or aspirations concerning non-academic activities. While events like *University Day* help students plan for their future, issues related to inadequate facilities and the lack of significant changes in support programs are key reasons many students seek alternatives at other schools offering better facilities and programs.

The primary reasons for students transferring from *Pelangi Kasih School* are diverse, with the most significant factor being relocating homes, which makes accessing new schools more convenient. Additionally, many students choose to transfer in search of new experiences, greater challenges, and environments with more comprehensive facilities. They seek atmospheres that allow them to explore new opportunities and step out of their comfort zones. Some students also look for chances to meet peers from more diverse backgrounds, which they

believe can provide valuable experiences for their personal and social development. This is illustrated in the following project map:

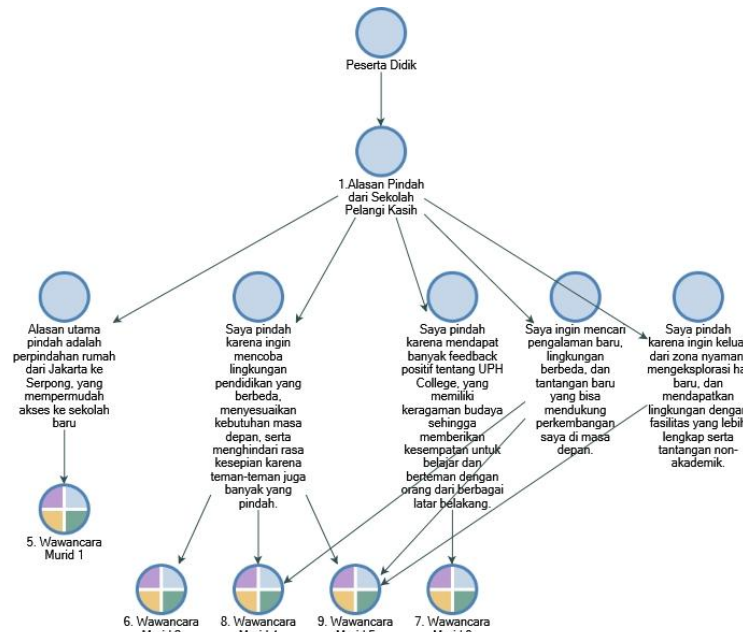


Figure 16. Project Map: Decisions to Transfer from the School

Although the principal at Pelangi Kasih School is considered effective in maintaining discipline and order, many students feel the approach is impersonal. This creates a gap between the students and the principal, who should be more approachable to hear their concerns or aspirations. While a structured leadership model is important for stability, students hope the principal will actively provide motivation and direct guidance, fostering a closer and more responsive relationship to their needs. This is illustrated in the following project map:

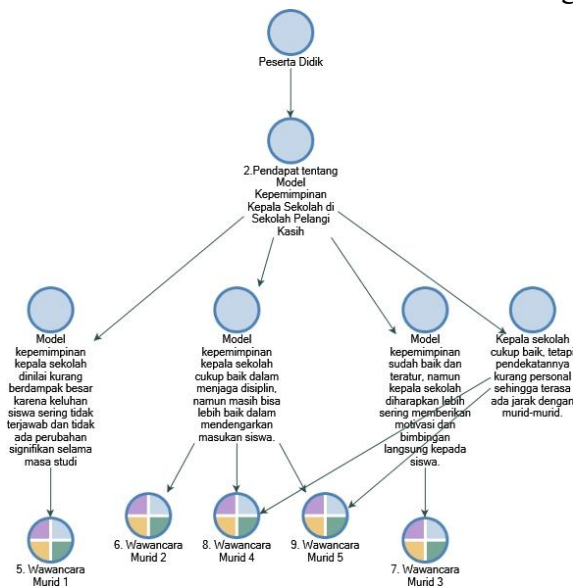


Figure 17. Project Map: Principal's Leadership Model

The attention of the principal and management to the needs and aspirations of students at Pelangi Kasih School is also highlighted in the Project Map. Although there are efforts to

address students' needs, many feel the process is often slow and insufficiently responsive to their aspirations, particularly concerning facility improvements. While students' academic needs are more frequently met, suggestions for non-academic activities or better facilities are often not prioritized. This reveals a gap in communication between school management and students that needs to be addressed to ensure students' aspirations are more valued and acted upon more swiftly. This is illustrated in the following project map:

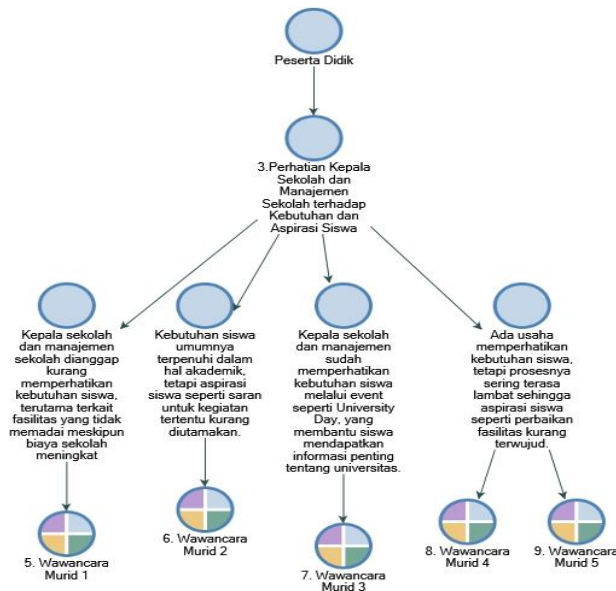


Figure 18. Project Map: Principal and Management's Attention to Students' Needs and Aspirations

Although the quality of education at Pelangi Kasih School is quite good, many students transfer to other schools because they feel the existing facilities do not support their needs. Additionally, complaints about the lack of variety in activities that cater to students' interests and hobbies are a major reason for leaving. While the academic curriculum is solid, many students desire a more flexible learning approach that allows them to explore their interests outside of academics, such as practical classes or more in-depth creative activities. This is illustrated in the following project map:

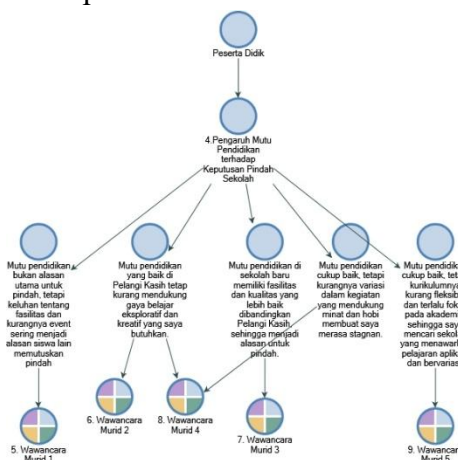


Figure 19. Project Map: Impact of Educational Quality on School Transfer Decisions

Students' opinions on the principal's leadership model at *Pelangi Kasih School* are also frequently discussed. Although the principal is regarded as effective in maintaining discipline and order, some students feel there is a lack of personal connection in the approach to students. Many hope the principal will be more actively involved in providing direct motivation and listening to their aspirations. A lack of responsiveness to student complaints—such as those regarding facilities or support activities reinforces the perception that the leadership model could be improved to have a greater impact on student well-being and satisfaction.

Meanwhile, topics less frequently discussed stem from the principal's perspective, such as the *guided democratic* leadership model and the role of teachers in decision-making. Although the principal emphasizes the importance of involving teachers and staff through small group discussions, the implementation does not appear to resonate with students. This indicates a gap between the management approach as designed and the actual day-to-day experiences in the field.

CONCLUSION

The leadership model at *Pelangi Kasih School*, which adopts a *guided democracy* approach, plays a significant role in shaping the quality of education through disciplined governance and shared decision-making. By involving teachers and staff in discussions, the principal fosters a sense of collective responsibility in policy implementation. However, the model has limitations, particularly in its responsiveness to students' needs and aspirations—especially regarding facilities and extracurricular activities. Despite a well-structured leadership system, there is a need for a more personal and student-centered approach to improve satisfaction and create a more inclusive learning environment. Additionally, the school's management—focusing on curriculum development and teacher training—has contributed positively to academic standards. However, inadequate facilities and slow responses to feedback hinder the delivery of a holistic educational experience. The study highlights a clear connection between the principal's leadership model, school management, and the student turnover rate. Despite efforts to improve teacher competencies and implement a curriculum based on *Cambridge* standards, issues such as limited facilities and a lack of extracurricular opportunities lead to student dissatisfaction. These factors prompt students to transfer in search of better opportunities, indicating that the school's management has not fully addressed the diverse needs of its students. To improve educational quality and reduce student turnover, a more responsive and innovative management approach is required. Applying theories such as *Maslow's hierarchy of needs* and *customer satisfaction theory* could help identify and meet student and parental expectations, ultimately enhancing both the school environment and the overall quality of education.

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