

The Role and Challenges of the Deputy Principal for Student Affairs in Developing Student Interests and Talents in High School

Aulia Salsa Nur Aqrima, Muhammad Wildan Shohib, Saddam Husein, Sifa Lutfiyani Atiqoh

^{1,2}University Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Indonesia

³International Islamic University Malaysia, Malaysia

⁴University of Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom

e-mail: G000200043@student.ums.ac.id, mws543@ums.ac.id, sh.husein@live.iium.edu.my,
2712790s@student.gla.ac.uk


Submitted: 17-03-2024

Revised: 07-04-2024

Accepted: 11-05-2024

ABSTRACT. This research specifically aims to highlight the role and challenges of the deputy principal for student affairs in developing students' interests and talents in high school. The research was conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Simo Boyolali using a qualitative approach to highlight the role and challenges of the deputy principal for student affairs in developing students' interests and talents. Through in-depth interviews, it was found that the active involvement of the student affairs sector in student planning, managing new student admissions, and organizing extracurricular programs was the key to success. Obstacles such as limited finances and infrastructure are the main challenges faced. Support from the education department provides legitimacy and incentives for developing students' interests and talents. The implication is the need to increase innovation in education programs, improve the quality of facilities, and cross-sector collaboration to achieve quality and inclusive education for all students.

Keywords: *Extracurricular programs, students' interests and talents, student affairs*

 <https://dx.doi.org/10.32678/tarbawi.v10i01.9925>

How to Cite Aqrima, A.S.N., Shohib, M.W., Husein, S., & Atiqoh, S.L. (2024). The Role and Challenges of the Deputy Principal for Student Affairs in Developing Student Interests and Talents in High School. *Tarbawi: Jurnal Keilmuan Manajemen Pendidikan*, 10(01), 43–50.
<https://doi.org/10.32678/tarbawi.v10i01.9925>

INTRODUCTION

In an era of increasingly developing education, student management at the secondary school level has become an important aspect that influences students' academic, social and emotional development (Craggs & Kelly, 2018; Aldrup et al., 2018; Hepburn et al., 2021; Vestad & Tharaldsen, 2022). Amid demands for improving the quality of education and holistic individual development, schools need to recognize and optimize students' potential according to their interests and talents (Maspupah, 2022; Muhibbudin et al., 2022; Renzulli, 2023). However, there is still a tendency to ignore or emphasize certain aspects of educational management. In reality, many schools prioritize academic achievement exclusively, even sacrificing students' social and emotional development (Pramanik & Dhir, 2020; Huang & Zeng, 2023).

Student management in secondary schools is the main focus in achieving holistic educational goals (Sista & Sodiqin, 2022; Zulkifli et al., 2023; Alawiyah et al., 2023). In an effort to support overall student growth and development, it is important to understand and overcome the challenges faced in student management. One of the main challenges schools face is optimizing students' potential according to their interests and talents (Dhani et al., 2023). However, its

implementation often faces challenges, such as prioritizing academic achievement alone and little attention to comprehensively developing students' interests and talents (So et al., 2023).

Developing student talents in the secondary school environment is crucial in creating an inclusive and achievement-oriented educational environment (Hertzog, 2017; Stadler-Heer, 2020). However, managing these talents can be a complex challenge and is often overlooked (Khatri et al., 2010). One factor is the difficulty in recognizing talents that may be hidden or underrepresented in the school curriculum. Therefore, individual differences in interests, backgrounds, and needs complicate efforts to develop effective and inclusive programs for developing student talents in high school.

Several studies, such as Liljenberg and Andersson (2020), Irvine (2022), and Haglund and Glaés-Coutts (2023), highlight the importance of support and direction provided by deputy principals in identifying, managing, and directing student potential. Meanwhile, research by Dhani et al. (2023) highlights challenges such as limited resources, lack of special training, and academic pressure that can hinder efforts to develop students' interests and talents. However, existing research tends to focus on general aspects of talent management, such as talent recognition, class placement, or the use of appropriate evaluation methods. There are still gaps in knowledge that need to be filled. A detailed analysis of the role and challenges of the vice principal in student affairs in the high school context is limited. Therefore, this research specifically aims to highlight the role and challenges of the deputy principal for student affairs in developing students' interests and talents in high school.

METHOD

The method used in this research is a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the role and challenges of the deputy principal for student affairs in developing students' interests and talents in high school. This research was carried out by collecting data through in-depth interviews with selected deputy principals, teachers and students. The research was conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Simo Boyolali. The research procedure begins with identifying relevant participants and setting up an interview and observation schedule. Data was collected through structured interviews and participant observation. Data analysis was carried out through a thematic approach, where the main themes and patterns that emerged from the data were identified and analyzed to reveal the role and challenges of the deputy principal for student affairs in developing students' interests and talents.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Based on the findings of this research, the involvement of the student affairs sector in the student affairs planning process begins with involvement in meetings. This meeting was held for student planning with the four deputy principals for student affairs, administration and teams. After the meeting is held, the results of the program and its flow are presented. The school's deputy principal for student affairs and other stakeholders determines the number of students accepted. For the student admission quota each year, SMA Negeri 1 Simo is determined by the head office, and this year, there is an additional Special Sports Class (SSC), where there are 36 students in one class. It was stated by the deputy principal for student affairs at SMA Negeri 1 Simo that: *"The agency has determined the quota for student admissions, and this year the SSC was opened, but this year there is no longer a science major and social. Then, in involving the student affairs sector in the student affairs planning process, we first met with the four vice principals and the administration and team. Only then is it informed that everything must be discussed with stakeholders. When finished, it will be narrowed down to the core and then released."*

In accepting new students at SMA Negeri 1 Simo, the deputy principal for student affairs is chairman of the committee for implementing new student admissions. The process was explained by the school's deputy head for student affairs: *"In the process of admitting new students, the student affairs department becomes the chairman of the committee so that a committee is created. After the committee is created, guidelines are created and carried out openly; nothing is hidden. No one uses a domicile certificate; we use it purely according to the agency."*

The involvement of the deputy principal for student affairs at SMA Negeri 1 Simo in determining classes has been plotted by the education office as stated by the deputy principal for student affairs, *"First, for student involvement in class classification. We no longer use science and social studies classes because they are plotted and have been plotted since the beginning of the year. So, the determination of science and social studies in the independent curriculum has been plotted; we have scholastics in the sense of selecting this talent interest for those who want to continue to college. Second, in classifying based on interests, we do majors. For class 12, we direct which college to attend and help children achieve their dreams."*

Several special programs are implemented in the student affairs sector to develop students' interests and talents, including through extracurricular programs. Simo 1 Public High School requires all students to participate in extracurricular activities provided by the school in around 15 extracurricular branches. Each extracurricular activity is given a professional trainer brought in from outside the school and within the school. SMA Negeri 1 Simo organizes various forms of extracurricular activities, including: Intra-School Student Organization (ISSO), Class Representative Council (CRC), taekwondo, theater, choir, heritage flag-raising troops, scouts, youth Red Cross, *pencak silat*, EFC, aspala, ITC, quiz competition, and wall magazine. Apart from extracurricular activities, there are also special programs to develop achievements according to students' talents and interests, namely the opening of SSC, as stated by the vice principal for student affairs as follows: *"In developing interests and talents we have extracurricular activities, we have 15 extracurricular branches. This is one way to develop children's potential. We develop children's potential through extracurricular activities and provide trainers -the best coaches in every extracurricular branch. Furthermore, we also have a desire, like last year, our extracurricular won the national and provincial champions this year. Apart from extracurricular activities, we also open a special program, the KKO class (Special Sports Class), which prioritizes performance sports; the hours also vary. Sports practice is held in the morning, from 6 to 8 o'clock, and after that, regular lessons are held until 2 p.m. Then sports lessons are held from 3 to 5 o'clock."*

The deputy principal for student affairs at SMA Negeri 1 Simo conveyed the improvements and several targets: *"We have experienced improvements in special programs, namely Special Sports and Extracurricular Classes, in the sense of improvements to existing facilities, with the number of classes available. Every year, there is an increase. Although not all extracurricular activities have experienced an increase, like yesterday's *pencak silat* extracurricular program, it has reached the provincial level. As for targets, we have several. One of science targets is the National Selection to Enter State Universities (in the Bahasa, SNMPTN) so that there is a graduation standard, which will increase if the SNMPTN goes up. For example, 46 students were accepted into State Universities last year. Moreover, this year, our target is 60 students who can be accepted into state universities. The second target is in the field of achievement, such as in the national science Olympiad for third place in the province. The important thing is that we win the branch first."*

According to the deputy principal, development related to special programs in the context of developing students' interests and talents at SMA Negeri 1 Simo has increased yearly. Mr. Diasmoro conveyed the increase here as deputy principal and said that the increase was related to existing facilities, existing extracurricular activities, and achievements that had been achieved. Then, there are several targets to be achieved, including those in science and sports.

Regarding educational programs and support from the education office, the deputy principal for student affairs explained: *"The trainer carries out control and evaluation. So, every time there is an additional trainer, the trainer must create a program and conduct an evaluation. So when the program does not work, we hold a follow-up program. If the education department is very supportive, we must report monthly, and there is*

a reward. Later, whoever wins will be given an incentive to the students and become a motivation." Every extracurricular supervisor is required to create a program plan every year. After the program is designed, a follow-up will be held on why it was not implemented well this year. So, there is a follow-up evaluation to determine which program is already running. The Department of Education is very supportive of the program already running.

Regarding obstacles, the Deputy Principal for Student Affairs explained: *"If the obstacles are clear, the first is financial. Because finances only come from two sources, namely funds from the boss and the student's guardians, there are no third parties or parents, so the difficulty is when plans have been made but cannot be implemented. The second obstacle is the lack of facilities and infrastructure. For example, we were given six broken balls for our volleyball, even though one cost 150,000. Then extracurricular archery also requires much equipment. We also do not have an indoor field for pencak silat and taekwondo extracurricular activities."*

In the interview conducted by the Deputy Principal, it was stated that the program had several obstacles to developing students' talents and interests. The first is finance. The school's funding only comes from school operational assistance funds. The second is Facilities and Infrastructure. The school does not yet have facilities in the form of an indoor field for extracurricular activities. So far, extracurricular activities have been carried out in the school hall.

The research found that SMA Negeri 1 Simo has implemented an inclusive and structured approach to school management and developing student potential. Through the active involvement of student affairs in the planning process, including determining classes and student quotas, the school is committed to ensuring that decisions reflect all stakeholders' needs and aspirations. A diverse extracurricular program, supported by professional teachers, allows students to explore their interests and talents with adequate support. However, obstacles are found at the school, such as limited finances and infrastructure, which must be overcome to increase the effectiveness and accessibility of educational programs at SMA Negeri 1 Simo. The support provided by the education department and ongoing evaluation efforts of school programs is an important step in creating a quality and inclusive educational environment.

Discussion

SMA Negeri 1 Simo Boyolali shows a strong commitment to the active participation of all stakeholders in the planning and decision-making process. The involvement of student affairs in planning meetings indicates a participatory approach that ensures every voice is heard and considered. This step is consistent with the principles of participatory management, which has been proven effective in improving the quality of decisions and has received broad support from all relevant parties (Semianovskiy, 2018; Gunherani, 2023). By involving the four deputy principals for student affairs and the administration team, the school confirmed its commitment to realizing a transparent and data-based decision-making process. It reflects best practices in school management, which considers academic needs and aspects of students' personal development.

Student management is a crucial aspect of school management (Hertzog, 2017; Craggs & Kelly, 2018; Stadler-Heer, 2020; Hepburn et al., 2021), which includes a series of planned and continuous training and ongoing guidance so that students can experience real and productive education throughout their existence at school (Naylor et al., 2021). This concept covers the process from student admission to training management while at school, intending to create an environment that supports students in optimally developing their potential. It is very relevant to the achievements achieved by SMA Negeri 1 Simo Boyolali, which has achieved a reputation as a superior school. Student achievement can vary in various fields, such as verbalization, sports, manufacturing, and science, and can be measured through academic and non-academic achievements. In addition, extracurricular activities also have an important role in supporting

students in exploring their interests and talents, thereby enriching their educational experience at school.

The provision of more than 15 extracurricular branches reflects the school's commitment to facilitating the development of student's interests and talents in various fields. The presence of professional trainers brought in from outside the school and within the school adds added value to the extracurricular program. It shows the school's seriousness in providing quality extracurricular experiences to students by bringing in experts in their fields to provide optimal guidance and training. With these extracurricular programs, students can develop their potential outside the academic environment, supporting character formation and additional skills important for future success. In 21st-century education, where the emphasis is on students' comprehensive development, extracurricular programs like this have become very relevant and necessary. It aligns with research from Bradley and Conway (2016), which states that extracurricular activities can improve students' academic achievement and develop non-cognitive skills such as motivation and self-efficacy, which can benefit students beyond academic abilities.

An interview with the head of student affairs revealed that SMA Negeri 1 Simo Boyolali emphasizes developing students' interests and talents through extracurricular programs and special sports classes. This program provides opportunities for students to develop abilities, interests, capacities and energy outside regular class hours. The main focus of this effort is to improve academic achievement and shape student character. This character development is encouraged through sports training, an integral part of extracurricular activities at SMA Negeri 1 Simo Boyolali. The goal is to ensure that students have good academic performance and the skills, interests and abilities necessary to compete in the future.

Extracurricular coaches have an important responsibility in designing and implementing extracurricular programs that suit students' needs and interests (Abildsnes et al., 2017; Onyura et al., 2021). Extracurricular supervisors are responsible for preparing annual program plans and ensuring that each activity is well-planned (Kosarikov & Davydova, 2022). In addition, regular program evaluations are carried out to determine the effectiveness and success of the extracurricular programs that have been implemented. It includes analysis of student participation, achievement of program goals, and feedback from all related parties. With a systematic evaluation, schools can identify the strengths and weaknesses of existing programs, as well as make necessary improvements to increase the quality and relevance of extracurricular programs in the future.

One of the main obstacles faced is financial limitations, where schools only rely on BOS funds and student guardians as a source of funding. Limited school finances hinder the school's ability to implement educational programs optimally, especially in terms of providing facilities and training. It is in line with the research findings of Chingos (2013), Gardner Yelton et al. (2021), and Farmer and Weber (2022) that financial limitations in schools hinder educational programs. Apart from that, constraints on facilities and infrastructure are also a serious challenge, such as limited indoor fields for certain extracurricular activities. Efforts to overcome this obstacle include steps such as increasing the efficiency of fund management, increasing collaboration with external parties, and seeking funding sources through additional sponsors or donors. Apart from that, schools are also actively looking for alternative solutions, such as using available facilities optimally or optimizing the use of existing resources.

Support from the education department covers various aspects, from technical assistance to financial assistance. Incentives such as imbalances for students who achieve certain achievements provide additional motivation for students to excel. It creates an environment that motivates students to develop themselves and reach their maximum potential. Apart from that, support from the education department also provides legitimacy to educational programs implemented by schools, thereby helping to build trust among the community and other stakeholders.

Even though SMA Negeri 1 Simo Boyolali faces several obstacles in developing student achievement, the principal has developed various strategies to overcome them so that these obstacles do not become obstacles to student development. One of the key factors in this process is the role of parents and educators in recognizing the potential of the younger generation and providing assurance of the greatness and competence possessed by students. Apart from that, the empathy and understanding of parents and educators towards students' thoughts, feelings and behavior is also important in creating a supportive learning environment. Providing opportunities for students to express their viewpoints and feelings is also a necessary step in building positive relationships between students and educators. Lastly, encouragement from parents and teachers to develop student's mentality and interests through various extracurricular activities is a concrete effort to motivate students to explore their interests and talents.

CONCLUSION

Developing students' interests and talents at SMA Negeri 1 Simo Boyolali relies on extracurricular programs and special sports classes as the main means. Effective student management, close collaboration between schools, parents and communities, and support from local governments and related institutions are needed to create an educational environment that supports students' holistic development. As a suggestion, it is necessary to continue to increase innovation in educational programs, improve the quality of facilities and support, and cross-sector collaboration to ensure quality and inclusive education for all students.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abildsnes, E., Rohde, G., Berntsen, S., & Stea, T. H. (2017). Fun, influence and competence—a mixed methods study of prerequisites for high school students' participation in physical education. *BMC Public Health*, 17, 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-017-4154-6>
- Alawiyah, T., Handayani, F., R Rossa, A. T., Syaefuridjal, A., & Gaffar, A. (2023). Management of Transformational Leadership in Improving the Quality of Student Learning at Islamic Boarding Schools. *Tarbawi: Jurnal Keilmuan Manajemen Pendidikan*, 9(01), 27–36. <https://doi.org/10.32678/tarbawi.v9i01.7254>
- Aldrup, K., Klusmann, U., Lüdtke, O., Göllner, R., & Trautwein, U. (2018). Social support and classroom management are related to secondary students' general school adjustment: A multilevel structural equation model using student and teacher ratings. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 110(8), 1066. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/edu0000256>
- Bradley, J. L., & Conway, P. F. (2016). A dual step transfer model: Sport and non-sport extracurricular activities and the enhancement of academic achievement. *British Educational Research Journal*, 42(4), 703-728. <https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3232>
- Chingos, M. M. (2013). Class size and student outcomes: Research and policy implications. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 411-438. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pam.21677>
- Craggs, H., & Kelly, C. (2018). School belonging: Listening to the voices of secondary school students who have undergone managed moves. *School Psychology International*, 39(1), 56-73. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034317741936>
- Dhani, A. R., Lestari, I. B., Vidia, V. E., & Ananda, D. O. (2023). Permasalahan sekolah modern dan tantangan yang dihadapinya. *Tsaqofah*, 3(5), 842-849. <https://doi.org/10.58578/tsaqofah.v3i5.1475>
- Farmer, S., & Weber, R. (2022). Education reform and financialization: Making the fiscal crisis of the schools. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 46(6), 911-932. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.13137>
- Gardner Yelton, S. E., McCaw, J. M., Reuland, C. J., Steppan, D. A., Evangelista, P. P. G., & Shilkofski, N. A. (2021). Evolution of a bidirectional pediatric critical care educational

- partnership in a resource-limited setting. *Frontiers in Pediatrics*, 9, 738975. <https://www.doi.org/10.3389/fped.2021.738975>
- Gunherani, D. (2023). Improving vocational school's learning quality through school-based management. *Journal for Lesson and Learning Studies*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.23887/jlls.v6i1.58617>
- Haglund, B., & Glaés-Coutts, L. (2023). Leading and supporting: principals reflect on their task as pedagogical leaders of Swedish school-age educate. *School Leadership & Management*, 43(1), 8-27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2022.2137725>
- Hepburn, L., Beamish, W., & Alston-Knox, C. L. (2021). Classroom management practices commonly used by secondary school teachers: results from a Queensland survey. *The Australian Educational Researcher*, 48(3), 485-505. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-020-00402-y>
- Hertzog, N. B. (2017). Designing the learning context in school for talent development. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 61(3), 219-228. <https://www.doi.org/10.1177/0016986217705712>
- Huang, C., & Zeng, X. (2023). Social and emotional development of disadvantaged students and its relationship with academic performance: evidence from China. *Frontiers in psychology*, 14, 1170656. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1170656>
- Irvine, J. (2022). Practice and theory: Ten lessons that i have learned about being a vice principal. *Journal of Practical Studies in Education*, 3(3), 7-16. <https://doi.org/10.46809/jpse.v3i3.46>
- Khatri, P., Gupta, S., Gulati, K., & Chauhan, S. (2010). Talent management in HR. *Journal of management and strategy*, 1(1), 39. <https://www.doi.org/10.5430/JMS.V1N1P39>
- Kosarikov, A. N., & Davydova, N. G. (2022). Extracurricular activities programs as a resource for sustainable development. *Prospects*, 52(3), 503-512. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11125-021-09583-5>
- Liljenberg, M., & Andersson, K. (2020). Novice principals' attitudes toward support in their leadership. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 23(5), 567-584. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2018.1543807>
- Maspupah, U. (2022). Management of talent and interest development of students. In *Proceeding of Saizu International Conference on Transdisciplinary Religious Studies* (pp. 91-109). <https://doi.org/10.24090/icontrees.2022.232>
- Muhibbudin, M., Qomar, M., & Aziz, A. (2022). Implementation of the principal's strategy in development talents and interests of students (Multi-site study at MTsN 3 Nganjuk and MTsN 2 Kediri City). *International Journal of Education and Literature*, 1(1), 43-53. <https://doi.org/10.55606/ijel.v1i1.17>
- Naylor, R., Dollinger, M., Mahat, M., & Khawaja, M. (2021). Students as customers versus as active agents: Conceptualising the student role in governance and quality assurance. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 40(5), 1026-1039. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2020.1792850>
- Onyura, B., Lass, E., Lazor, J., Zuccaro, L., & Hamza, D. M. (2021). Vitalizing the evaluation of curricular implementation: a framework for attending to the “how and whys” of curriculum evolution. *Advances in Health Sciences Education*, 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10459-021-10083-6>
- Pramanik, A., & Dhir, S. (2020). Student's emotion: The power of emotioneducation in school. *Emotion and Information Processing: A Practical approach*, 145-160. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-48849-9_9
- Renzulli, J. S. (2023). Schools for talent development: A practical plan for total school improvement. *Possibility Studies & Society*, 1(1-2), 198-205. <https://doi.org/10.1177/27538699221128219>
- Semianovskyi, V. M. (2018). Participative management: a model for governance of territorial communities. *Statistics of Ukraine*, 80(1), 47-51. [https://doi.org/10.31767/su.1\(80\).2018.01.06](https://doi.org/10.31767/su.1(80).2018.01.06)

- Sista, T. R., & Sodikin, A. (2022). The implementation of student management in discipline guidance at modern Islamic boarding schools Gontor. *Tarbawi: Jurnal Keilmuan Manajemen Pendidikan*, 8(01), 103–112. <https://doi.org/10.32678/tarbawi.v8i01.5879>
- So, J. C. H., Ho, Y. H., Wong, A. K. L., Chan, H. C., Tsang, K. H. Y., Chan, A. P. L., & Wong, S. C. W. (2023). Analytic study for predictor development on student participation in generic competence development activities based on academic performance. *IEEE Transactions on Learning Technologies*. <https://www.doi.org/10.1109/tlt.2023.3291310>
- Stadler-Heer, S. (2020). Douglas, Susan (Hrsg.): Creating an Inclusive School Environment. London, 2019. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 51(7), 1094-1096. <https://www.doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2020.1810430>
- Vestad, L., & Tharaldsen, K. B. (2022). Building social and emotional competencies for coping with academic stress among students in lower secondary school. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 66(5), 907-921. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2021.1939145>
- Zulkifli, Z., Vu Phi Ho, P., Sholeh, M. I., & Sahri, S. (2023). Enhancing student achievement in senior high school through curriculum management in Indonesia. *Tarbawi: Jurnal Keilmuan Manajemen Pendidikan*, 9(02), 267–278. <https://doi.org/10.32678/tarbawi.v9i02.9345>