

Humanising Classical Management in Primary School Learning: A Contextual Model from Aceh, Indonesia

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ABSTRAK

Classical management remains influential in school administration, yet its assumptions of hierarchy, standardisation, and formal control are often considered insufficient for explaining educational practice in culturally embedded settings. This study examines how classical management principles are adapted and humanised in the management of primary school learning in Aceh, Indonesia. A qualitative case study was conducted at Keude Blang Public Primary School in East Aceh. Data were generated through in-depth interviews with the principal and teachers, direct observation of school and classroom practices, and analysis of lesson plans, annual programmes, organisational documents, meeting notes, and evaluation records. Data were analysed through interactive reduction, display, and verification, followed by thematic reinterpretation around structure, leadership, moral commitment, collegiality, and community participation. The findings show that planning, organising, leading, and controlling continue to provide the formal architecture of learning management. However, these functions are not enacted mechanically. They are softened and reworked through participatory leadership, developmental supervision, religiously grounded motivation, intergenerational teacher collaboration, a familial organisational culture, and community support. The study identifies a persistent tension between administrative compliance and pedagogical improvement, particularly where evaluation focuses more strongly on learning outcomes than on instructional processes and where limited facilities constrain innovation. The article proposes a contextual humanistic classical management model in which structural discipline is made educationally productive through moral legitimacy, collegial relations, and local social capital. The model extends classical management beyond its industrial origins and offers a context-sensitive explanation of school management in a non-Western setting.

Keywords: Classical Management, Humanistic Leadership, Learning Management, Primary School, Contextual Leadership

INTRODUCTION

School management is commonly described through a set of formal functions: defining objectives, arranging resources, directing personnel, and monitoring results. This vocabulary owes much to classical management theory, particularly Henri Fayol's administrative functions, Frederick W. Taylor's concern

with efficiency, and Max Weber's account of rational-legal authority. Although these traditions emerged from industrial and bureaucratic organisations, their concepts remain visible in contemporary education through school plans, job descriptions, timetables, supervision instruments, performance standards, and reporting systems. Primary schools, in particular, depend on routines and coordination because they must align curriculum, teachers, pupils, facilities, assessment, and community expectations within limited time and resources.

The continuing use of classical principles creates a theoretical problem. Schools are not production plants, and teaching is not a standardised mechanical task. Learning involves judgement, care, motivation, emotion, cultural meaning, and relationships. A purely structural account may explain who is responsible for a task, but it does not fully explain why teachers remain committed, how leaders gain trust, how informal collaboration solves problems, or how communities provide legitimacy and resources. Educational leadership scholarship has therefore increasingly stressed instructional, distributed, moral, and culturally responsive dimensions of leadership (Bush, 2020; Hallinger, 2011; Khalifa et al., 2016). These perspectives do not necessarily eliminate classical structure; rather, they suggest that structure becomes effective only when interpreted through educational and social relationships.

This issue is especially important in non-Western and locally embedded school settings. Management theories developed in European and North American industrial contexts often travel into education as universal prescriptions. Yet schools interpret these prescriptions through local norms. In Aceh, religious commitment, respect, deliberation, mutual assistance, and community involvement strongly shape institutional life. Formal authority may therefore operate alongside moral authority, while written procedures may be supported by personal example and collective responsibility. Understanding management in such a setting requires attention not only to whether planning, organising, leading, and controlling occur, but also to how these functions are socially and culturally enacted.

Keude Blang Public Primary School in East Aceh offers an instructive case. The school operates in a semi-rural environment with limited facilities, changing administrative requirements, and increasing expectations for educational quality. Its principal and teachers use lesson plans, annual programmes, task allocation, academic supervision, and evaluation records. At the same time, daily management is marked by consultation, a familial work culture, religiously informed motivation, collaboration between senior and junior teachers, and support from parents and local residents. These features suggest that the school does not merely implement classical management; it adapts and humanises it.

Existing studies of school management in Indonesia frequently examine principal leadership, academic supervision, teacher performance, curriculum

management, or the effectiveness of administrative functions. Such studies are valuable, but many remain application-oriented: they assess whether standard functions have been implemented and identify supporting or inhibiting factors. Less attention is given to the theoretical process through which formal managerial structures are translated into culturally meaningful practice. Consequently, there is a gap between accounts of management as an administrative system and accounts of schools as moral, relational, and community institutions.

This article addresses that gap by asking two questions: (1) How are classical management principles adapted in the management of primary school learning in Aceh? and (2) What cultural, religious, and organisational conditions shape this adaptation? The article argues that classical management at the case school is neither rejected nor applied in a rigid form. It is reconstituted through participatory leadership, developmental control, moral commitment, collegial collaboration, and community social capital. The resulting configuration is conceptualised as contextual humanistic classical management. This concept contributes to educational management research by explaining how structural discipline and humanistic practice can coexist, and by locating the effectiveness of formal management in the relationships that give it legitimacy and flexibility.

Theoretical Framework

2.1 Classical management as organisational architecture

Classical management is not a single theory but a family of approaches concerned with rationality, order, authority, and efficiency. Taylor (1911) concentrated on analysing tasks and improving productivity through systematic methods. Fayol (1949) shifted attention toward administration and identified planning, organising, commanding, coordinating, and controlling as general managerial functions. Weber (1947) explained bureaucracy as a rational form of organisation based on formal rules, specialised roles, hierarchy, record keeping, and authority attached to office rather than personality. Together, these approaches provide a language for understanding the formal architecture of organisations.

In schools, Fayol's functions appear in school development plans, annual programmes, lesson planning, division of duties, leadership and motivation, supervision, assessment, and corrective action. Weberian elements appear in organisational charts, official authority, documentation, standard procedures, and accountability to government agencies. Taylorist influences can be seen in standardised schedules, measurable targets, and efforts to use time and resources efficiently. These mechanisms are not inherently incompatible with education; schools need predictability, role clarity, and accountability. The problem arises when compliance becomes an end in itself and managerial efficiency displaces professional judgement or meaningful learning.

For this reason, the present study treats classical management as an organisational architecture rather than a complete theory of educational action. Architecture provides order, but it does not determine the quality of human interaction within that order. The same supervision instrument, for example, may be used punitively or developmentally. The same hierarchy may generate distance or provide coordination. The analytical task is therefore to examine how formal functions are enacted and what relational mechanisms turn them into educational practice.

2.2 Humanistic and culturally embedded educational leadership

Educational leadership research has long challenged the assumption that administration can be reduced to technical control. Instructional leadership emphasises the leader's responsibility for teaching and learning, while distributed leadership recognises that influence and expertise are shared across organisational members (Hallinger, 2011; Spillane, 2006). Moral and values-based perspectives emphasise purpose, trust, fairness, and responsibility. Culturally responsive school leadership further argues that leadership practices must engage with local identities, community knowledge, and social relations rather than impose context-free routines (Khalifa et al., 2016).

Humanising management does not mean eliminating standards or authority. It means using authority in ways that recognise professional dignity and create opportunities for participation, feedback, learning, and support. Developmental supervision is a clear example. When classroom observation is followed by respectful feedback and practical assistance, control functions as a feedback mechanism rather than punishment. Similarly, task allocation becomes more than administrative assignment when it considers competence, experience, and collective workload.

Culture also shapes motivation. Teachers may be motivated by salary and formal evaluation, but they may also understand teaching as service, worship, and moral responsibility. Such meanings can sustain commitment in resource-constrained settings, although they should not be used to normalise inadequate institutional support. A contextual analysis must therefore recognise both the enabling and potentially compensatory role of moral commitment.

2.3 Toward contextual humanistic classical management

The conceptual proposition developed in this article is that classical functions become educationally productive through three mediating layers. The first is relational leadership: modelling, consultation, respect, and supportive feedback. The second is moral-professional commitment: teachers' understanding of their work as a responsibility toward pupils, families, and God. The third is communal embeddedness: cooperation among staff and participation by parents and local residents. These layers allow formal structures to remain stable while adapting to practical constraints.

Contextual humanistic classical management can therefore be defined as the enactment of formal managerial functions through relational, moral, and communal mechanisms that preserve organisational order while enabling professional agency and contextual adaptation. The concept does not romanticise local culture or claim that harmony eliminates problems. Rather, it directs attention to the productive tension between structure and flexibility, accountability and trust, as well as formal compliance and pedagogical improvement.

Table 1. Analytical framework

Classical function	Formal manifestation	Humanising mechanism	Expected educational effect
Planning	Annual programmes, lesson plans, schedules	Consultation and adaptation to pupil needs	Shared direction with practical flexibility
Organising	Role allocation, hierarchy, coordination	Competence-based assignment and collegial assistance	Role clarity without rigid isolation
Leading	Instruction, motivation, decision making	Modelling, deliberation, respect, encouragement	Commitment, trust, and professional agency
Controlling	Supervision, assessment, documentation	Developmental feedback and collective reflection	Improvement rather than punitive compliance

METHOD RESEARCH

3.1 Research design and setting

The study employed a qualitative case-study design to understand the meanings and practices through which school actors enacted management in a natural setting. The case was Keude Blang Public Primary School, located in Idi Rayeuk District, East Aceh Regency, Indonesia. The setting was selected purposively because it combined formal managerial routines with a strong religious and communal environment and because it represented a semi-rural public school facing resource constraints and administrative demands.

The case-study approach was appropriate because the research focused on a bounded organisational setting and sought an in-depth explanation of process rather than statistical generalisation (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018). The unit of analysis was the management of learning, including school-level planning and supervision as well as teachers' classroom-level managerial practices.

3.2 Participants and data sources

Primary data were obtained from the school principal and teachers who were directly involved in planning, implementing, coordinating, and evaluating

learning. The source thesis documents interviews with the principal and at least eleven teachers conducted during November 2025. For this article, participants are identified by role codes rather than personal names: P for the principal and T1-T11 for teachers. This coding protects confidentiality while preserving differences in position and experience.

Secondary data included lesson plans, syllabi, the school curriculum, organisational structure, annual work programmes, minutes of teacher meetings, supervision files, and learning-evaluation records. Direct observations focused on staff interaction, classroom routines, use of lesson plans, meetings, supervision, documentation, and community involvement. Combining interviews, observations, and documents supported source and method triangulation.

3.3 Data collection and analysis

Data collection was conducted in stages during November 2025. Semi-structured interviews explored planning, division of labour, leadership, supervision, motivation, facilities, policy change, teacher experience, and community support. Observations were used to compare reported practices with visible routines. Document analysis examined whether managerial functions were represented in formal records and how evaluation and follow-up were documented.

The source study used the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. For the present article, the data were re-analysed thematically. First-cycle coding identified material related to planning, organising, leading, controlling, internal factors, and external factors. Second-cycle coding grouped these materials into broader interpretive themes: structured management, relational humanisation, moral-professional commitment, collegial adaptation, community embeddedness, and administrative-pedagogical tension. Explanations were tested across interviews, observation notes, and documents, with attention to negative or limiting evidence.

The analysis sought analytical rather than statistical generalisation. Claims are therefore limited to the case and used to develop a conceptual model that may be examined in other settings. The article also acknowledges that the available dataset was originally generated for an undergraduate thesis; consequently, the reinterpretation remains bounded by the depth and scope of those data.

Table 2. Data sources and analytical use

Data source	Illustrative content	Analytical purpose
Interviews with principal and teachers	Planning, leadership, motivation, supervision, constraints, community relations	Understand meanings, experiences, and perceived mechanisms
Direct observation	Classroom routines, collegial interaction,	Compare accounts with enacted practice

	meetings, files, community activities	
School documents	Lesson plans, annual programmes, organisational charts, meeting notes, evaluation and supervision records	Identify formal structure, continuity, and documentary evidence

RISULT AND DISCUSSION

The persistence of structured management

The school's learning management was anchored in recognisably classical functions. Planning was visible in annual programmes, lesson plans, schedules, and preparatory meetings. The principal described planning as a collective responsibility rather than an individual administrative task. Teachers brought lesson plans to class and generally followed the sequence of activities, while adjusting time and methods when pupils needed additional explanation. Planning therefore provided direction, but implementation retained a degree of professional discretion.

Organising occurred through formal role allocation and practical coordination. Teachers were assigned classroom responsibilities and additional duties according to school needs, including student competitions and other programmes. The division of work reflected Fayol's concern with specialisation and unity of command, but the boundaries between roles were not impermeable. Staff assisted one another when workloads increased, and coordination frequently occurred through meetings or informal discussion. The main weakness was uneven documentation of cross-unit coordination, which made some organisational learning dependent on memory and interpersonal continuity.

Leading was exercised through daily presence, modelling, encouragement, and consultation. Observation notes described warm relations and an absence of pronounced authoritarian distance between the principal and teachers. Teachers reported that problems were discussed collectively and that the principal's early arrival, greetings, and willingness to help created a calm working environment. Formal authority remained clear, but its legitimacy was strengthened through personal example and respectful interaction.

Controlling was implemented through academic supervision, monitoring of pupil achievement, evaluation records, and monthly meetings. The principal maintained supervision files and provided feedback to teachers. Teachers also monitored pupil performance and adjusted their methods when results declined. This control process was generally constructive. Nevertheless, evaluation remained more systematic for learning outcomes than for the quality of instructional processes. The school could show what pupils achieved and whether documents

were complete, but it had a less developed system for analysing the interactional and pedagogical causes of those outcomes.

Humanising formal authority through participatory leadership

The most significant finding was not the existence of formal management, but the manner in which it was enacted. Teachers consistently described leadership as supportive and participatory. One teacher explained that when a problem occurred, staff were not immediately blamed; instead, the issue was discussed and a solution was sought collectively. Another described the principal as a role model who arrived early, greeted staff, encouraged them, and helped resolve difficulties.

Supervision also illustrated this humanising process. A teacher described the principal's criticism as gentle and accompanied by examples of how to improve teaching. In this form, control did not disappear; it changed its social meaning. Supervision became a professional-development practice rather than an inspection designed primarily to expose error. Teachers were more likely to accept correction because feedback was embedded in respect and practical assistance.

This leadership pattern created what participants repeatedly called a family-like atmosphere. The term did not imply the absence of authority or standards. Rather, it referred to psychological safety, mutual recognition, and the expectation that difficulties should be resolved through dialogue. The organisational effect was significant: teachers felt valued, remained willing to communicate problems, and interpreted management as a shared process.

"The principal sets an example for us. She arrives early, greets all teachers, and always gives encouragement. When there is a difficulty, she helps us find a solution." (T8)

"We feel like one family. When there is a problem, we are not immediately scolded; it is discussed together. We are invited to meetings to find a solution." (T3)

Religious motivation and moral-professional commitment

Internal motivation was strongly expressed in religious and moral language. Participants described teaching as more than paid employment. It was understood as worship, service, and responsibility for pupils' knowledge and character. This orientation helped teachers sustain effort despite facility limitations and administrative pressure. It also connected technical management with educational purpose: planning and evaluation were meaningful because they supported a moral obligation toward children.

Religious motivation functioned as an internal control mechanism. Teachers sought to complete duties not only because they were monitored but because they viewed conscientious work as ethically required. This reduced the dependence of the system on continuous external enforcement. At the same time, moral

commitment should not be interpreted as a substitute for resources or professional development. The data showed that commitment enabled adaptation, but it could not eliminate material constraints or policy instability.

Experience further shaped professional judgement. Senior teachers drew on long classroom experience to recognise pupil boredom, loss of focus, and the need to adjust pace. Younger teachers contributed familiarity with technology and new media. Thus, teacher commitment was not merely emotional; it was combined with situated knowledge and practical improvisation.

"For us, teaching is not merely a job; it is worship. When pupils understand a lesson or become more respectful, that is a source of satisfaction." (P)

Collegial collaboration as an adaptive capacity

Observation and interview data indicated regular interaction between senior and junior teachers. Senior teachers shared advice on discipline, classroom management, and teaching strategies, while younger teachers shared technological knowledge and ideas for learning media. This intergenerational exchange compensated for the limitations of formal training and helped the school respond to changing demands.

Collegiality also prevented the division of labour from becoming fragmentation. Classical organising can separate tasks efficiently, but schools require knowledge to move across classrooms and roles. Informal discussion, meetings, and mutual assistance enabled this movement. The school's adaptive capacity therefore rested not only on role clarity but also on the willingness of staff to cross role boundaries when collective goals required it.

The same pattern was visible in resourcefulness. Teachers used simple and locally available materials when ideal learning media were unavailable. Such initiative demonstrates that efficiency in education cannot be reduced to standardisation. In this case, efficiency involved the creative mobilisation of limited resources without abandoning learning goals.

Community participation and social legitimacy

Parents and local residents supported the school through attendance at committee meetings, communication about pupil development, participation in school events, and collective work such as cleaning the school environment. Community members also provided tools, food, and other practical support during activities. This involvement expanded the resource base of the school and strengthened the perception that education was a shared social responsibility.

Community participation affected management in at least three ways. First, it provided material and practical assistance. Second, it increased teacher morale by signalling that their work was recognised. Third, it enhanced accountability through relational closeness: parents asked about children's progress and remained

visible in school activities. This accountability differed from bureaucratic reporting because it was interpersonal and reciprocal.

The school's management system was therefore embedded in a local social network. Formal government authority and documentation remained important, but they were supplemented by community legitimacy. The effectiveness of management depended partly on the school's ability to maintain trust beyond its organisational boundary.

Persistent tensions: compliance, pedagogy, policy, and resources

The findings also revealed limitations that prevent an overly celebratory interpretation. The first tension concerned administrative compliance and pedagogical improvement. Teachers prepared lesson plans and maintained records, but documentation did not automatically guarantee deep instructional reflection. Similarly, supervision was constructive, yet process evaluation was less systematic than outcome monitoring. The risk was that complete files could be interpreted as evidence of quality even when the pedagogical processes behind them required further examination.

The second tension concerned policy change. Teachers reported receiving new instructions on reporting and evaluation with limited preparation time while teaching responsibilities continued. Frequent changes increased workload and could redirect attention from classroom improvement toward administrative adjustment. Participatory leadership helped staff cope with these demands but did not remove the structural source of pressure.

The third tension concerned facilities. Limited media and infrastructure constrained the range of learning activities. Teachers responded creatively, but improvisation has limits. Human commitment can mitigate scarcity, yet sustained improvement requires institutional investment. Contextual humanistic management should therefore be understood as an enabling organisational response, not as justification for accepting inadequate resources.

Table 3. Empirical themes and interpretive claims

Empirical theme	Key evidence	Interpretive claim
Structured management	Plans, role allocation, supervision files, evaluation meetings	Classical functions remain the formal architecture
Participatory leadership	Modelling, consultation, respectful feedback	Authority is legitimised and humanised relationally
Moral-professional commitment	Teaching understood as worship and responsibility	Internal motivation supplements formal control

Collegial adaptation	Senior-junior knowledge exchange and mutual assistance	Collaboration turns division of labour into collective capacity
Community embeddedness	Parent meetings, gotong royong, material and moral support	Local social capital extends resources and accountability
Administrative-pedagogical tension	Outcome-focused evaluation, policy changes, facility shortages	Formal compliance does not automatically produce instructional improvement

Discussion

Classical management was retained but reinterpreted

The case demonstrates that classical management remains relevant to primary schooling, but not because schools resemble factories. Its relevance lies in providing a stable architecture for collective work. Planning clarified direction, organising allocated responsibility, leading coordinated action, and controlling generated feedback. Weberian documentation also supported continuity and accountability. However, these functions were insufficient by themselves. Their practical value depended on how they were interpreted by organisational actors.

This finding supports a contingent reading of management theory. Classical principles should not be treated as universal scripts that produce identical practices across contexts. They are institutional resources that actors translate. At Keude Blang, translation involved converting hierarchy into accessible leadership, control into developmental feedback, division of labour into collaborative responsibility, and formal planning into adaptable classroom guidance. The outcome was neither purely classical nor purely human-relations management; it was a hybrid configuration.

The distinction between architecture and enactment is theoretically useful. Two schools may possess the same organisational chart, lesson-plan requirement, and supervision form but produce very different experiences. The difference lies in relational enactment: whether leaders listen, whether feedback protects dignity, whether teachers share knowledge, and whether procedures remain connected to educational purpose.

Humanisation operated through relational legitimacy

The principal's modelling, consultation, and supportive feedback generated relational legitimacy. Formal position authorised decisions, but everyday conduct made authority acceptable and influential. This is consistent with educational leadership research that views leadership as a social influence process rather than simply a position (Spillane, 2006). It also resonates with culturally responsive

leadership, which emphasises attentiveness to community values and relational expectations (Khalifa et al., 2016).

Relational legitimacy helped control function as learning. Teachers did not describe supervision primarily as surveillance. They described it as correction accompanied by example and assistance. This finding is important because contemporary accountability systems can encourage performative compliance. When control is developmental, it is more likely to generate professional learning; when it is punitive, it may generate concealment and document production without improvement.

The family metaphor requires careful interpretation. Familial culture can support trust, but it can also suppress disagreement if harmony becomes compulsory. The data in this study mainly show positive effects, yet future research should examine whether all staff experience participation equally and whether informal closeness ever weakens transparency or merit-based decisions.

Moral purpose and social capital expanded managerial capacity

The findings extend classical management by showing that motivation and control were partly moral rather than solely contractual. Teachers' religious interpretation of work created self-regulation and persistence. In educational terms, this moral purpose connected management to the formation of pupils rather than only to measurable output. Such commitment resembles professional capital, in which human expertise, social collaboration, and decisional judgement combine to improve practice (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

Community participation also operated as social capital. Parents and residents contributed labour, materials, information, recognition, and informal accountability. These resources were especially important in a semi-rural school with limited facilities. The case therefore challenges organisational models that treat the school as a closed bureaucracy. Management capacity was distributed across the school-community boundary.

However, both moral commitment and community support can become compensatory mechanisms that conceal structural inequality. Teachers' willingness to improvise and communities' willingness to assist should complement, not replace, adequate public provision. The model proposed here therefore includes resources and policy stability as boundary conditions. Humanisation can improve how structures work, but it cannot indefinitely compensate for systemic shortages.

The contextual humanistic classical management model

Based on the findings, the contextual humanistic classical management model consists of four interacting layers. The first layer is structural order: plans, defined roles, schedules, standards, records, and evaluation. The second is relational leadership: modelling, consultation, respectful communication, and

developmental feedback. The third is moral and professional agency: commitment, experience, initiative, and reflective adjustment. The fourth is communal embeddedness: collegial networks, parent participation, and local support. These layers produce adaptive learning management when they remain connected to pedagogical goals.

The model also contains a feedback loop. Supervision and assessment identify problems; collective reflection interprets them; teachers adapt methods; and revised practice informs future planning. This loop is weakened when evaluation measures only final outcomes or document completion. Thus, the model requires process-sensitive evidence, including classroom observation, pupil engagement, teacher reflection, and follow-up action.

The model contributes to theory in three ways. First, it reframes classical management as a formal infrastructure whose effects are mediated by culture and relationships. Second, it adds moral-professional and communal mechanisms that are often peripheral in administrative accounts. Third, it identifies a central tension between compliance and learning, suggesting that the quality of management should be judged not by procedural completion alone but by whether formal processes generate pedagogical improvement.

Figure 1. Contextual humanistic classical management model

STRUCTURAL		ORDER
Planning • role clarity • schedules • standards • documentation		
RELATIONAL		LEADERSHIP
Modelling • participation • respectful communication • developmental supervision		
MORAL-PROFESSIONAL		AGENCY
Religious motivation • commitment • experience • initiative • reflection		
COMMUNAL		EMBEDDEDNESS
Teacher collaboration • parental engagement • community social capital		
ADAPTIVE	LEARNING	MANAGEMENT
Coordinated action • trust • contextual flexibility • continuous improvement		

Implications for policy and practice

For school leaders, the findings suggest that managerial competence should be assessed through both structural reliability and relational quality. Principals need to ensure that plans, duties, and evaluations are clear, while also creating participatory spaces in which teachers can explain difficulties and contribute to solutions. Academic supervision should include demonstration, coaching, and follow-up rather than rely solely on checklist compliance.

For teacher professional development, schools should formalise the productive collaboration already occurring between senior and junior teachers. Peer observation, lesson study, mentoring, and small professional-learning groups can

convert informal exchange into cumulative organisational knowledge. Such arrangements are particularly useful where access to external training is limited.

For education authorities, policy changes should be accompanied by realistic implementation time, clear guidance, and training. Reporting requirements should be reviewed to ensure that they generate information useful for instructional improvement. Investment in facilities remains necessary; creativity should be supported rather than used as a reason to delay resource provision.

For community engagement, schools should maintain open communication and meaningful participation while protecting professional decision making. Community support is strongest when parents and residents understand learning goals and when their participation extends beyond ceremonial attendance to dialogue about pupil development.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how classical management principles were adapted in the management of learning at a primary school in Aceh. Planning, organising, leading, and controlling remained visible as formal managerial functions. Yet their educational effectiveness did not arise from structure alone. Formal routines were humanised through participatory leadership, respectful supervision, moral-professional commitment, teacher collaboration, and community participation.

The article conceptualises this configuration as contextual humanistic classical management. The model explains how structural discipline can coexist with professional agency and cultural embeddedness. It also highlights a continuing tension: schools may be administratively orderly while still needing deeper analysis of instructional processes. Humanistic relationships can make management more legitimate and adaptive, but they cannot fully compensate for unstable policies, excessive reporting demands, or inadequate facilities.

The study is limited to one school and a dataset originally generated for an undergraduate qualitative study. Future research should compare schools across urban, rural, religious, and cultural settings; include pupil and parent perspectives; and examine whether the proposed model predicts differences in teacher learning, instructional quality, and pupil outcomes. Even with these limitations, the case demonstrates that the contemporary relevance of classical management lies not in rigid replication but in contextual reinterpretation. Structure becomes educationally meaningful when it is mediated by trust, moral purpose, professional collaboration, and community responsibility.

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