School Improvement Framework for Indonesia

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∽   Indonesia is determined to improve the quality of education. Many top-down policies have been issued to direct the necessary improvement, from making education compulsory from grade 1 to grade 9 in 1977, to the withdrawal of the high-stakes exam policy in 2021. However, none of these policies encourages schools to conduct school improvement plans tailored to their needs. Instead, they tend to be directed towards school effectiveness or quality assurance. The present research aims to formulate a school improvement framework of domains and indicators culturally and institutionally suitable for Indonesian settings. The study implements a systematic literature review methodology to extract and synthesise the most pertinent and prevalent domains from a corpus of relevant literature on school improvement frameworks. Four overarching domains of recommended focal points for school improvement efforts are determined: (1) Teaching and Learning, (2) Leadership and Management, (3) Assessment, and (4) Community and Culture. The research underscores the foundational role of pertinent data collection in these domains. Furthermore, the study discusses the implications of these emerging domains for the academic community and policymakers, highlighting how the proposed framework can significantly contribute to refining school improvement practices and policies in Indonesia. Detailed subdomains and domain indicators serve as theoretical implications to be elaborated in further research.

Keywords: school effectiveness, quality assurance, school improvement, framework, systematic literature review

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Okvir za izboljšanje šol v Indoneziji

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∿ Indonezija je odločena izboljšati kakovost svojega izobraževanja. Za usmerjanje potrebnih izboljšav so bile izdane številne politike od zgoraj navzdol, od uvedbe obveznega izobraževanja od prvega do devetega razreda leta 1977 do umika politike preverjanj znanja s pomembnimi posledicami za učence (na podlagi njihove uspešnosti) leta 2021. Nobena izmed teh politik pa ne spodbuja šol k izvajanju načrtov za izboljšanje šol, ki bi bili prilagojeni njihovim potrebam. Namesto tega so običajno usmerjene v učinkovitost šol ali zagotavljanje kakovosti. Namen te raziskave je oblikovati okvir za izboljšanje šol, ki bi obsegal področja in kazalnike, kulturno in institucionalno primerne za indonezijsko okolje. Študija uporablja metodologijo sistematičnega pregleda literature, da bi iz korpusa na to tematiko vezane literature o okvirih za izboljšanje šol izluščila in strnila najbolj relevantne in prevladujoče domene. Določena so štiri osrednja področja priporočenih glavnih točk za prizadevanja za izboljšanje šol: 1) poučevanje in učenje; 2) vodenje in upravljanje; 3) ocenjevanje; 4) skupnost in kultura. Raziskava poudarja temeljno vlogo ustreznega zbiranja podatkov na teh področjih. Poleg tega študija obravnava posledice teh nastajajočih področij za akademsko skupnost in oblikovalce politik ter poudarja, kako lahko predlagani okvir pomembno prispeva k piljenju praks in politik za izboljšanje šol v Indoneziji. Podrobni kazalniki podpodročij in področij služijo kot teoretične posledice, ki jih je treba razviti v nadaljnjih raziskavah.

Ključne besede: učinkovitost šole, zagotavljanje kakovosti, izboljšanje šol, okvir, sistematični pregled literature

Introduction

Research on school quality and school improvement in Indonesia remains fragmented and needs more comprehensive coverage. Some studies advocate enhancing capacity building to elevate education quality (Sumintono et al., 2012, 2014), while others promote community involvement, including active engagement from parents (Pradhan et al., 2014) and emphasise a conducive school climate to cultivate a quality improvement culture (Budiharso & Tarman, 2020). Some scholars highlight local wisdom to instil a commitment to quality improvement (Hayudiyani et al., 2020), foster the critical role of evaluating school management practices (Bandur et al., 2022; Iswan et al., 2021; Marpaung et al., 2023; Siahaan et al., 2023), or even harness the necessity to re-evaluate the policy of accreditation (Susetyo et al., 2022).

In Indonesia, two governing bodies oversee education: the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA). Together, they are responsible for the management of 399,376 schools and madrasahs (Finaka, 2023), 56.63% of which are private schools and madrasahs (Annur, 2023; Kemenag, 2024). Reform will therefore be challenging unless the initiative includes a bottom-up drive.

Over the years, the Ministry of Education has issued various policies to enhance education quality across Indonesia. In 1977, the Indonesian government achieved a significant milestone by establishing compulsory education for grades 1–6 of elementary school. Subsequently, several programmes were introduced in 1978 to elevate the quality of teachers, curricula, books and educational support systems (Werf et al., 2000). In 1990, teachers were incentivised to attend professional development programmes and training to promote professional growth (Nielsen, 1998). Advancement came in 2001 with the introduction of school-based management to empower schools to enhance student attainment (Bandur, 2018). Further developments include the policy of decentralisation of education, which enables schools to manage their resources (Government of Indonesia, 2004), and a data-based improvement to plan, monitor and evaluate quality improvement in schools (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). Despite these efforts, the latest MOE policy lacks a clear framework for sustainable data-based improvement to guide and focus on the improvement process.

This budding partial attention to improving the quality of education in Indonesia calls for a comprehensive framework to map ideas into one policy recommendation, in order to avoid the 'free-floating' phenomenon whereby ideas float and have only a minimal impact on the implemented policy (Hopkins & Reynolds, 2001). In order to ensure the impact of education quality improvement initiatives, there is also a need for a comprehensive set of domains to

enable schools and policymakers to measure the improvement and response in a relevant way (Reezigt & Creemers, 2005). Unfortunately, there is still minimal research in the area of school improvement. Moreover, many of the policies implemented in Indonesia still focus on either education assurance or education effectiveness, with little to no emphasis on school improvement.

The national exam, as the only standardised end-of-school exam, was discontinued in Indonesia in 2021 (Kemdikbud, 2021). Many high schools subsequently changed their effectiveness measurements from national assessment scores to university acceptance rates: the more students accepted into prestigious state universities, the better the quality of the school. However, the same consideration cannot be applied to elementary and junior high schools, as the government removed the label of elite schools when implementing the zoning policy in 2017 (Wahidi, 2022).

These popularity contests are closer to school effectiveness than to school improvement. School effectiveness is the ability of a school to perform its functions efficiently (Cheng, 2022), while school functions relate to the output and outcomes of school graduates (Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools, 2021). Consequently, using school effectiveness to measure education quality is prone to bias, as many inequalities result in schools' outputs and outcomes (Scherer & Nilsen, 2019).

Similarly, the accreditation programme cannot serve as a foundation for school improvement in Indonesia, as accreditation is more closely related to quality assurance. Quality assurance in education relies on how well schools meet the standards prescribed by policy (Loock & Scherman, 2020), while quality improvement is an iterative process involving goal setting, data collection and evaluation (Schildkamp, 2019). Moreover, in the discussion of school improvement, the goal, data collection and success criteria are set by each school with regard to their needs and educational objectives (Grützmacher et al., 2023). In the long run, these improvements are expected to meet or go beyond the standards of quality set by the related policies.

Each educational context implements different standards for quality assurance (Flavian, 2020; Rosa et al., 2020). In Indonesia, the accreditation process uses the eight *Standar Nasional Pendidikan* (SNP) [Standards of National Education]. Quality assurance provides a unified quality measurement and an easy fix for school effectiveness. However, the set standards cannot be too high, as only a few schools could meet them, which would indicate low standards of education throughout the country; nor can they be too low, as they would lose their primary purpose of increasing the national quality of education.

In an accreditation process, a low-performing school with a limited budget is unable to select its preferred measures for improvement; if its chosen

improvement does not adhere to the prescribed standards, it will not be recognised, even if it is necessary for the school. For example, the school might decide that it needs to improve communication between teachers and parents, so it establishes a new online channel to send school-related information directly to parents. This breakthrough represents essential progress for the school, but since it is not on the list of accreditation standards, it will not be noticed and will not impact the school's accreditation result.

On the other hand, a high-performing school does not have room for improvement once it has met all of the standardised criteria. Once it has achieved an 'A' assessment, there are no more boxes to tick or indicators to fulfil. School assurance is vital to enable policymakers to observe the overall quality of education. However, it is limited by the fact that it does not provide room for schools positioned at the extremes of the quality continuum to show progress, whether they are situated on the far left or the far right of the spectrum.

The only aspect related to school improvement in the Indonesian context is the educational goals of Indonesia, as outlined in Law 20 Year 2003 regarding the System of National Education: "The cultivation of students' potential to foster individuals with faith and reverence towards God, characterised by moral integrity, robust physical health, academic acumen, adeptness, creativity, autonomy, and the embodiment of democratic principles alongside a sense of accountability as citizens" (Government of Indonesia, 2003). These overarching objectives are relevant regardless of any change in the intended curriculum, but without proper details an unnecessary bias is created that hinders any attempt to attain them.

As school improvement closely reflects the implementation of improvement plans, school stakeholders and policymakers need to be able to translate the intended policy and regulations into feasible routines if sound improvement is to be achieved (Nordholm & Adolfsson, 2023). In light of this, the present study offers recommendations concerning school improvement within the framework of Indonesian education.

The study aims to fill the gap in the need for a school improvement framework in Indonesia. An improvement framework is necessary to help design practical approaches to evaluating quality before developing relevant plans to improve the quality of education (Garira, 2020)it can be difficult to obtain such descriptions in an effective manner. This article aims to propose a unified conceptual framework for quality of education in schools to facilitate an understanding of the quality of education. The conceptual framework proposed here is multi-dimensional in nature and based on operational experience by the authors with studying education systems' performance in general, and particularly, quality of education in schools. The unified conceptual framework proposed here is informed by systems theory

and acknowledges the interdependence among the components of quality of education and levels of the education system. In conclusion, we reiterate the importance of a conceptual framework for quality of education that explicates the relationships among the numerous education components (inputs, processes, and outputs. A framework designed for a specific context will yield more targeted improvement results (Reezigt & Creemers, 2005). In addition, the framework must balance global relevance in educational development with a focus on local issues, ensuring that the anticipated improvements address regional challenges effectively while contributing to quality enhancement recognised worldwide. Therefore, the present research introduces a localised perspective that grounds the research findings in context. This approach does not aim to oversimplify complexities, but to demonstrate that the framework is genuinely suited to resolving the problem contextually. While Indonesia still needs to acquire a contextual framework to guide the improvement of school quality, other neighbouring countries and beyond have developed their framework in a context on the level of the nation, the state or even the district. Australia has *School Performance Improvement Frameworks* (SPIF) (Australian Department of Education, 2014); Scotland has the *National Improvement Framework* (NIF) (Forde & Torrance, 2021; Leng, 2019); Washington, USA, has the *Washington School Improvement Framework* (WSIF) (Washington State Board of Education, 2020); and even Lewisham, a district in south-east London, has developed its own context-specific school improvement framework (Lewisham Learning, 2024).

A framework for planned programmes is essential because it provides a common language for discussion related to the issues that may arise in programme planning, implementation or evaluation (Evans et al., 2012). To be precise, the school improvement framework allows policymakers to identify the core component of the school improvement process, support schools through this process, and assess the performance against the domains and indicators of the framework (Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2014). However, the OECD (2020) recommends including only a few domains and indicators in the school improvement framework, in order to avoid turning the evaluation process into a checking-the-box exercise.

The conceptual framework should comprehensively discuss Indonesia's school improvement issues. This discussion is expected to help formulate a framework that encompasses the key domains essential to the school improvement process in countries worldwide and includes subdomains that address local issues specific to Indonesia. Below are the research questions that guide the discussion of the present research.

1.   What are the recommended domains for the school improvement framework for Indonesia's educational context?

2.   What are the recommended subdomains for the domains of the improvement framework for Indonesia's educational context?

Method

The present study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology to investigate school improvement research and frameworks published since the year 2000. The SLR approach is designed to minimise bias in identifying, selecting, synthesising and interpreting relevant literature in order to address the research questions (Mareza et al., 2024; Moher et al., 2015), while also providing evidence-based grounds for further policy studies (Booth et al., 2022). In order to facilitate this process, the study utilises the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework, which provides a structured technique for systematically selecting, reducing and analysing relevant databases by encompassing several critical stages: search strategy, selection criteria, selection process, data collection and analysis (Idris et al., 2022). These stages are systematically categorised into four main phases: identification, screening, eligibility and inclusion, as illustrated in Figure 1.

In the identification stage, the present study utilises the databases *https://www.tandfonline.com/*, *https://journals.sagepub.com/*, *https://eric.ed.gov/*, *https://www.jstor.org/*, and *https://garuda.kemdikbud.go.id/*. The initial intention was to include some frameworks or research on frameworks from Indonesia; however, at the time this article was developed, no relevant record of a school improvement framework for the Indonesian context was found.

In order to maintain a perspective available to the average readership in Indonesia, the research focuses on open-access frameworks, journal articles and reports; not all policy researchers or policymakers have access to restrictive journals to support their intention to develop similar frameworks.

The research employs Boolean search techniques to find relevant articles about the school improvement framework according to the RQs. The search was initiated by implementing two keywords – "school improvement" AND "framework" – in order to focus more on school improvement as opposed to "school effectiveness", while the keyword "framework" was used to focus more on the framework as opposed to the "design" or "plan". On the other hand, the research uses general keywords and is not specifically tailored to the RQs. This is because some articles only mention the domain (RQ 1) but do not mention the subdomain to ensure that the proposed domains are relevant to the local context in Indonesia (RQ 2). However, such articles still fall under the category of the school improvement framework.

Next is the screening stage, as summarised in Table 1. The research only includes articles from the year 2000 onwards, in order to ensure that the shifting trend of framework development is covered. Articles in books, series of books, chapters in books, reports and research articles are included, but weblogs are excluded, in order to ensure that the chosen documents are finalised and timestamped properly. Moreover, the emphasis is on frameworks that focus on education in general, such as K-12 education, while frameworks applied to specific majors (e.g., nursing education) or outside K-12 education (e.g., higher education) are excluded. Frameworks that claim to be aimed at school improvement but in fact only discuss certain qualities in education, such as quality assurance and school effectiveness, are also excluded

School improvement frameworks aim to acquire sustainability of the expected qualities (Askell-Williams & Koh, 2020), so it is essential to carefully develop domains and subdomains that align with the specific context. In this regard, domains and subdomain indicators are extracted from the documents using three lenses, as recommended by Alexander (2013) and Heck (2004), in order to help organise the literature and delimit the scope based on the problems discussed. Alexander (2013) recommends three lenses to examine policy: a rational framework to cover relevant goals, a cultural framework to explore the appropriate cultural background of schools in Indonesia, and an institutional framework to focus on structural factors based on the Indonesian context of school administrations. Heck (2004) then recommends using cultural perspectives to translate the framework into policy processes in the target context, i.e., Indonesia. These limitations reduce the records significantly to 28 documents. Table 1 below provides details of the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the article search.

Table 1

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Timeline	2000–present	Before 2000
Type of article	Book, series of books, chapter in book, report, research article	Weblog
Focus	K-12 education as general	Specific major in education
Discussion	School improvement	Quality assurance, school effectiveness
Language	English	Non-English

Eligibility is the stage that follows the application of inclusion and exclusion criteria. The present study's eligibility stage involved a manual process, whereby manuscripts were reviewed based on their titles and abstracts to ensure relevance. Articles that lack relevance, fail to address the domain and

indicators of school improvement, or are written in a non-English language were removed from the list of articles. Consequently, out of the 21,428 article documents initially identified, only 28 remained eligible after the eligibility stage. These 28 articles will serve as the primary reference for developing the domain (RQ 1) and subdomain (RQ 2) of the school improvement framework. The results of each process are summarised briefly in Figure 1.

Figure 1

The PRISMA flow diagram in the school improvement framework research
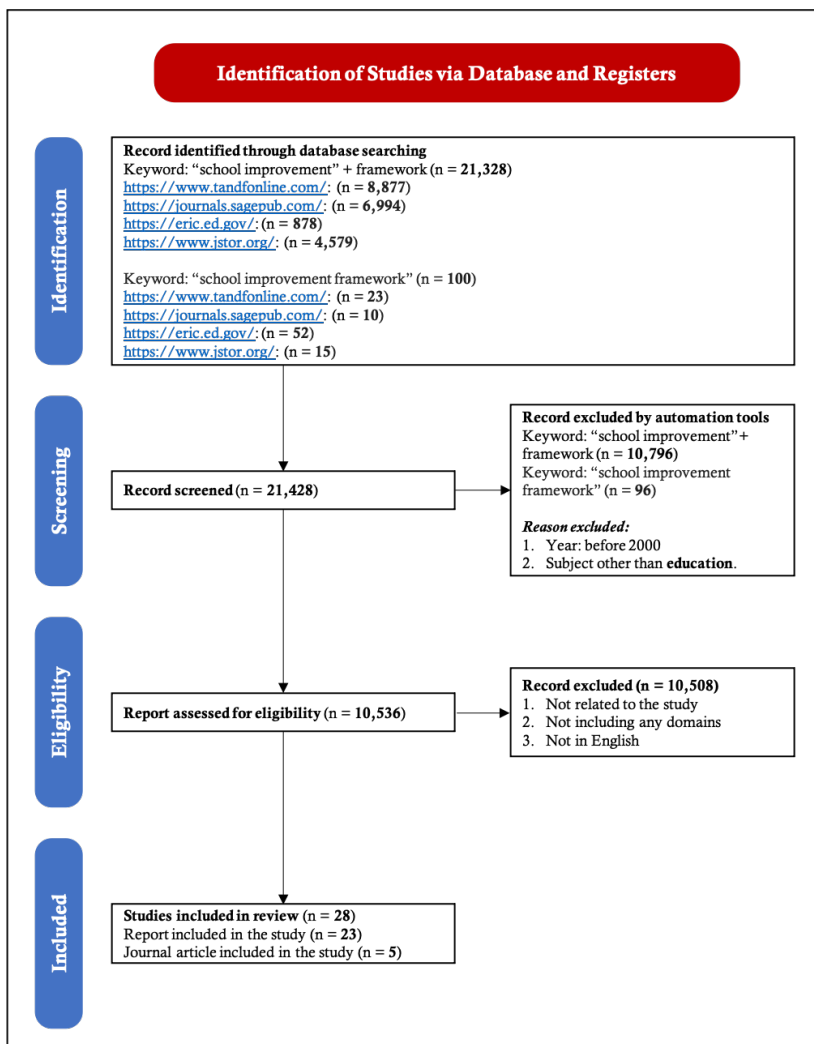
The present research aims to propose a school improvement framework based on a review of previous research findings. In essence, it synthesises data from mixed-design framework research. Therefore, the data analysis technique employed in the research is qualitative thematic analysis. According to Flemming et al. (2019), thematic analysis is the most efficient method for synthesising data from mixed-design research. Additionally, Xu and Zammit (2020) argue that this analysis is similar to synthesising interpretation and explanation.

Consequently, the 28 research findings were meticulously reviewed, focusing on abstracts, findings and discussions. Data addressing RQ 1 and RQ 2 were collected and abstracted for further evaluation. Thematic analysis was then conducted to identify the composition of relevant domain themes and subdomains by noting similarities, counting, grouping and detecting patterns among domains and subdomains. The origin and type of documents used in the research are explained below.

Table 2

Descriptions of the 28 eligible articles

No.	Type of document	Relevant to
1.	Framework document	States in Australia, New Zealand, the USA, Canada, ESI project countries in Europe, Scotland, Wales
2.	Journal article	Across nations
3.	Report on framework utilisation	States in Australia, Kazakhstan, States in the USA

Ethics statement

The research did not access any raw data, nor did it involve human and animal subjects. The reviews on which it was based aggregated studies that had already received ethical approval. Consequently, no additional ethical approval was necessary.

Results and Discussion

The 28 documents selected were divided into categories based on the domains they put forward to characterise improvements. Table 3 shows the four domains of the highest frequency used in all of the records.

Table 3

Four domains with the highest frequency in the 28 documents

Domain	Frequency of occurrence	Percentage of occurrence
Teaching and Learning	21	75.00%
Community and Culture	17	60.71%
Leadership	16	57.14%
Assessment	14	50.00%

The domain selection (RQ 1) was determined based on the frequency within the 28 selected documents, as shown in Table 2, and then the determination of subdomains (RQ 2) was further elaborated directly from the 28 documents, with careful consideration of the Indonesian context. Table 4 below provides a more detailed breakdown of subdomain findings based on the domain above, considering three lenses: goal, cultural and institutional.

Table 4

The subdomains derived from the domains

Domain	Subdomains	Sources
Teaching and Learning	1. Inspiring teacher 2. Excellent teaching 3. Stimulating learning	(ACT Department of Education and Training, 2009; Australian Council for Educational Research, 2023; Australian Department of Education, 2010; Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2014; Department for Education, Children and Young People, 2022; Dimmock, 2002; Education Review Office of New Zealand, 2022; Institute for Educational Research, 2001; Mackey & Alabama State Superintendent of Education, 2020; Masters & Australian Council for Educational Research, 2010; Ministry of Education of Canada, 2013; NSW Government, 2023; Office of School Support and Improvement, 2015; Reezigt & Creemers, 2005; School Improvement Design Unit, 2022; Scottish Government, 2022; Texas Education Agency, 2019; University of California, 2021; Unterman et al., 2023; Welsh Government, 2021; WestEd, 2017)2020; Masters & Australian Council for Educational Research, 2010; Ministry of Education of Canada, 2013; NSW Government, 2023; Office of School Support and Improvement, 2015; Reezigt & Creemers, 2005; School Improvement Design Unit, 2022; Scottish Government, 2022; Texas Education Agency, 2019; University of California, 2021; Unterman et al., 2023; Welsh Government, 2021; WestEd, 2017
Leadership and Management	1. Strategic leadership 2. Resourceful and effective management 3. Transparent and organised administration	(ACT Department of Education and Training, 2009; Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2014; Department for Education, Children and Young People, 2022; Dimmock, 2002; Education Review Office of New Zealand, 2022; Evans et al., 2012; Mackey & Alabama State Superintendent of Education, 2020; Ministry of Education of Canada, 2013; Northern Territory Government, 2016; NSW Government, 2023; Office of School Support and Improvement, 2015; School Improvement Design Unit, 2022; Scottish Government, 2022; Texas Education Agency, 2019; Welsh Government, 2021; WestEd, 2017)2020; Ministry of Education of Canada, 2013; Northern Territory Government, 2016; NSW Government, 2023; Office of School Support and Improvement, 2015; School Improvement Design Unit, 2022; Scottish Government, 2022; Texas Education Agency, 2019; Welsh Government, 2021; WestEd, 2017

Domain	Subdomains	Sources
Assessment	1. Meaningful assessment 2. Constructive feedback 3. Comprehensive assessment data	(Australian Department of Education, 2010; Dimmock, 2002; Education Review Office of New Zealand, 2022; Institute for Educational Research, 2001; Ministry of Education of Canada, 2013; Minnesota Department of Education, 2022; Nahar et al., 2022; OECD, 2020; Office of School Support and Improvement, 2015; Reezigt & Creemers, 2005; School Improvement Design Unit, 2022; Texas Education Agency, 2019; Unterman et al., 2023; Washington State Board of Education, 2020)
Community and Culture	1. Continuous professional development 2. Positive school culture 3. Engaged community	(ACT Department of Education and Training, 2009; Australian Council for Educational Research, 2023; Australian Department of Education, 2010; Education Review Office of New Zealand, 2022; Institute for Educational Research, 2001; Mackey & Alabama State Superintendent of Education, 2020; Masters & Australian Council for Educational Research, 2010; Ministry of Education of Canada, 2013; Minnesota Department of Education, 2022; Nahar et al., 2022; Office of School Support and Improvement, 2015; Reezigt & Creemers, 2005; Scottish Government, 2022; Texas Education Agency, 2019; Unterman et al., 2023; Vermont Agency of Education, 2020; WestEd, 2017)2020; Masters & Australian Council for Educational Research, 2010; Ministry of Education of Canada, 2013; Minnesota Department of Education, 2022; Nahar et al., 2022; Office of School Support and Improvement, 2015; Reezigt & Creemers, 2005; Scottish Government, 2022; Texas Education Agency, 2019; Unterman et al., 2023; Vermont Agency of Education, 2020; WestEd, 2017

The study limits the context of discussion to schools in Indonesia, so subdomains irrelevant to the Indonesian curriculum were excluded from the list. Some examples include the arrangement of school systems that implement the grade division 6–8 and 9–12 as middle school and high school, respectively (Office of School Support and Improvement, 2015), as opposed to the system in Indonesia, which divides grades into 7–9 and 10–12 as middle school and high school respectively. Another exclusion criterion is the role of headteachers (Scottish Government, 2022), which is not known in the Indonesian context. Subdomains that refer to a specific part of the local curriculum are also excluded from the discussion. This includes the implementation of dual credit participation to monitor the progress of school improvement (Washington State Board of Education, 2020) and incorporating local values and beliefs into learning processes (Education Review Office of New Zealand, 2022). Later, indicators closely related to specific standards of education relevant to a particular area are also excluded from the discussion.

The study also considers the eight components of the Indonesian national education standards. Based on the latest documents of education standards in Indonesia, the eight *Standar Nasional Pendidikan* (SNP) [Standards of National Education] in Indonesia are: (1) the standard of school graduate competency, (2) the standard of content, (3) the standard of process, (4) the standard of education assessment, (5) the standard of educational personnel, (6) the standard of facility and infrastructure, (7) the standard of management, and (8) the standard of financing (Government of Indonesia, 2022).

Below is how the SNP is accommodated into the recommended domains of the School Improvement Framework for Indonesia (SIFI).

Table 5

SNP accommodation in the School Improvement Framework for Indonesia (SIFI) domain recommendations

Domains in the SIFI	Related SNP
Teaching and Learning	– Standard of content – Standard of process
Leadership and Management	– Standard of management – Standard of financing
Assessment	– Standard of school graduate competency – Standard of education assessment
Community and Culture	– Standard of educational personnel – Standard of facility and infrastructure

Figure 2

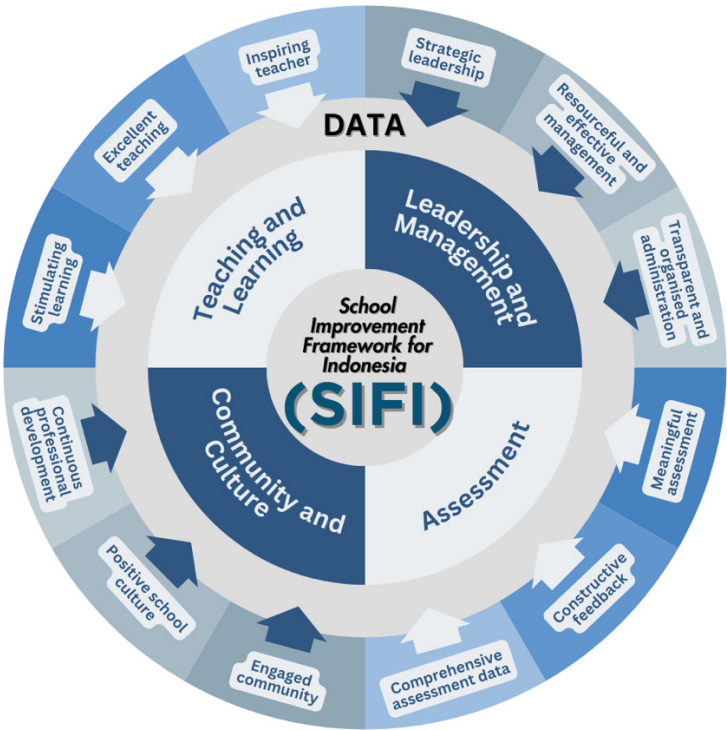*School Improvement Framework for Indonesia (SIFI)*

Figure 2 illustrates how the *School Improvement Framework for Indonesia* (SIFI) integrates key domains to enhance the quality of education within the Indonesian context. All of the related subdomains contribute to the overall progress of school improvement and are monitored through data collected from these processes. Each domain functions not in isolation but in conjunction with others, contributing collectively to the school improvement process, as demonstrated by the data gathered from the subdomains. Below is an elaboration of each part of the domain and the incorporated data that ties all of the domains and subdomains into one framework of school improvement.

Teaching and Learning

The teaching and learning domain focuses on improving the quality of teaching and learning in class. The related subdomains in the documents discuss various topics but can be grouped into three categories: teacher professionalism, classroom instructions and student learning. Teacher professionalism pertains to the inspiring practices of teachers (Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2014), classroom instructions prioritise excellent teaching methods (OECD, 2020), and student learning underscores stimulating learning processes (Masters & Australian Council for Educational Research, 2010).

Teaching and learning are at the heart of school improvement. This domain covers teaching and learning activities and how teachers prepare their professional capabilities to conduct stimulating teaching and inspire students. Teachers who are allowed to conduct personal development training may positively impact overall school improvement plans (Gericke & Torbjörnsson, 2022). In the Indonesian context, the most accessible activity related to this is participating in a subject-teacher association. This kind of association has been promoted since 2003 through law 20/2003 on the national education system; however, to date, there is no official data regarding the overall number of teachers involved in such activities, despite sporadic research about the impact of associations on teachers' professional development (Pajar et al., 2023; Sumiyani, 2023).

The teaching and learning domain encompasses some subdomains, as previously outlined in categories, including inspiring teachers, excellent teaching practices and stimulating learning experiences.

The subdomain inspiring teachers encompasses teachers' capabilities to conduct teaching and learning activities professionally. Teachers need relevant and updated knowledge and skills to do this. Moreover, they also need to conduct collaborative teaching activities to learn from one another (Greatbatch & Tate, 2019).

Excellent teaching focuses on how teachers master the content of the curriculum. The ability to deliver the curriculum effectively is a direct outcome of this mastery, because:

> The school has a coherent, sequenced plan for curriculum delivery that ensures consistent teaching and learning expectations and an apparent reference for monitoring learning across the year levels. The plan, within which evidence-based teaching practices are embedded and to which assessment and reporting procedures are aligned, has been developed and refined collaboratively to provide a shared vision for curriculum practice. This plan is shared with parents and caregivers. (Masters & Australian Council for Educational Research, 2010, p. 11).

Therefore, teachers with relevant and updated knowledge and skills are expected to interpret the curriculum in their classroom in order to create meaningful, differentiated learning to accommodate different learning needs (NSW Government, 2023). These diverse learning needs also entail meticulous considerations, notably concerning managing various types of student literacy behaviours (Masters & Australian Council for Educational Research, 2010).

Stimulating learning points towards the notion that the teacher is the primary actor. In order to achieve stimulated learning, teachers need to have high expectations of what their students can learn. Students can participate in collaborative and inspiring learning through authentic, relevant and meaningful inquiry processes. Furthermore, if feasible, teachers possess the capacity to cultivate learning environments that are intellectually stimulating, conducive to comfort and characterised by civility, and that promote healthfulness (Masters & Australian Council for Educational Research, 2010).

As mentioned in the introduction, national exams once represented a measure of teaching and learning quality within the Indonesian educational landscape. With the cessation of national exams, there is no formal indicator of teaching and learning quality. Many parents have transitioned to regarding the rate of student admissions into higher education institutions as an immediate indicator of quality education (Salfiah et al., 2022; Thoyyibah et al., 2022). Nevertheless, this metric cannot be uniformly applied to elementary and junior high schools, given the government's elimination of the elite school designation subsequent to the adoption of the zoning policy in 2017 (Wahidi, 2022). This indicates that the portrayal of teaching and learning quality in Indonesia still predominately focuses on students' output rather than optimising the components integral to teaching and learning. Conversely, the results of the present research advocate for a shift in school improvement within the teaching and

learning domain towards enhancing these critical components, which entails prioritising teachers who inspire, deliver exceptional learning experiences and encourage learning stimulation.

Focusing on outcomes to capture the actual quality of learning is not inherently problematic, but this perspective is more aligned with school effectiveness than school improvement. School effectiveness is the ability of a school to perform its functions efficiently (Cheng, 2022). School functions relate to the output and outcomes of school graduates (Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools, 2021). Schools that focus on school effectiveness by measuring their output through student attainment in certain assessments are prone to fall into teaching-to-the-test routines (Bellei et al., 2020). The recommendation is therefore for schools not to confine themselves to this perspective of school effectiveness. Schools should dare to take a step forward and engage in school improvement. In other words, the school's role must be broadened beyond merely considering the output and outcome aspects of school effectiveness; it should encompass optimising the elements of teaching and learning as the manifestation of school improvement implementation.

Leadership and Management

The school principal is responsible for providing leadership and direction for the school improvement plans and programmes. Thus, principals must have specific skills and knowledge to ensure that all school stakeholders are ready to contribute to the school improvement plans (Brion, 2020; Yeigh et al., 2019). Liljenberg and Wrethander (2023) even argue the importance of training practice for school principals as a crucial component in school improvement programmes, in order to ensure that principals are equipped for schools to start embracing any school improvement plans.

In this framework, the concepts of leadership and management are articulated through three subdomains: strategic leadership (Evans et al., 2012; Northern Territory Government, 2016), resourceful and effective management (Minnesota Department of Education, 2022; Vermont Agency of Education, 2020), and transparent and organised administration (Evans et al., 2012; Vermont Agency of Education, 2020). Strategic leadership incorporates "substantive decision-making responsibilities, beyond the interpersonal and relational aspects usually associated with leadership" (Finkelstein et al., 2009, p. 17). In the Indonesian context, strategic leadership is influenced by the form of the school, as regular schools are under the management of the MOE while madrasahs (religious schools) are under the management of the MORA. The principal of a madrasah must be able to

differentiate the policy and regulations in the context of the MOE and the MORA, as they are structurally under the MORA but also required to implement certain policies issued by the MOE. On the other hand, principals of regular schools only need to consider the policy released by the MOE.

The next subdomain is resourceful and effective management. In their report, the MOE stated that only 25% of elementary schools and 40% of high schools have suitable conditions to support learning, despite the increased budget for education (Ulya & Djumena, 2020). Principals, teachers and administrations should maximise the available resources to meet education standards and expectations. This subdomain helps schools to pay attention to their facilities and infrastructure, and to plan improvement in order to achieve relevant progress towards meeting the expected goals set by the school rather than the standards.

It is essential to recognise that the fulfilment of standards and the expectations outlined above should not serve as the foundation for claims regarding school improvement. The approach to resources must be stratified, suggesting that the development of school resources adheres to the distinct phases of achievement particular to the school (Vermont Agency of Education, 2020). Given that each school possesses unique phase achievements, the starting points for school improvement in this context may vary accordingly.

A notable area for improvement within the Indonesian educational framework is the propensity for utilising predetermined standards and expectations as definitive benchmarks for evaluating school accomplishments. This approach leads schools to prioritise attaining these benchmarks, often needing to account for their unique stages of development. Furthermore, upon reaching these established standards, schools may perceive themselves as having fulfilled their objectives, thus negating the impetus for ongoing enhancement and progress.

The last subdomain of the Leadership and Management domain is transparent and organised administration. Management and administration concerning schools as an organisation are mentioned in the selected documents (Education Review Office of New Zealand, 2022; Minnesota Department of Education, 2022; Office of School Support and Improvement, 2015). In this context, management and administration concern not only data collection and distributed resource management (Koh et al., 2023), but also actively contribute to discussions on planning school improvement programmes (Brion, 2020).

Transparency is discussed in the SIFI due to Indonesia's school operational assistance fund policy. Principals are expected to involve teachers, parents and staff in planning and reporting on the disbursement of the fund (Rachmawati, 2023; Winaya et al., 2022). However, there needs to be a specific description of how this should be conducted.

Assessment

Only the School Improvement Tool from Australia and Minnesota's Multi-Tiered System of Support Framework from the USA discuss assessment with regard to meeting a standardised assessment expectation (Australian Council for Educational Research, 2023; Minnesota Department of Education, 2022). Other documents discuss various functions of assessment: to help develop differentiated learning (Ministry of Education of Canada, 2013), to improve learning (OECD, 2020; University of California, 2021), and to understand learning needs (Reezigt & Creemers, 2005; Stoll et al., 2009).

In the Indonesian context, assessment is a compliance indicator in the school accreditation process (Susetyo et al., 2022). One data source for this is the *Rapor Pendidikan* [Educational Report], which is provided annually for schools under the MOE based on their national assessment results (Nurkolis et al., 2022). Later, it is used to develop planning and programming (Sudadio et al., 2023). National Assessment is a sampling assessment to measure the overall quality of education in a given school. Madrasahs under the MORA do not have such a report, even though they implement National Assessment. Thus, we recommend using teachers' classroom assessment as one subdomain of the assessment domain.

Assessment plays a vital role in school improvement plans; it is an indicator of the reason an improvement needs to be made. A successful school improvement plan will reflect increased assessment attainment (Vangronigen & Meyers, 2020). On the other hand, a poor assessment result indicates the need for quality improvement.

The present research identifies three subdomains that are particularly relevant to the educational context of Indonesia: meaningful assessment, constructive feedback and comprehensive assessment data. Meaningful assessment encompasses the idea that every assessment must serve a purpose, regardless of the administrator. Well-designed assessments measure how well students meet the expected standards, but they also help teachers plan interventions to improve learning attainment (Danielson, 2002) and provide data to support continuous learning improvement (Summers, 2023). In the Indonesian context, there are still emerging problems with teachers' ability to develop valid and reliable assessments, especially since the latest curriculum, *Kurikulum Merdeka*, requires that assessments encourage higher-order thinking (Kusumaningrum & Abduh, 2022; Saragih & Nasution, 2019).

The second subdomain is constructive feedback. The selected documents discuss and encourage constructive feedback (Ministry of Education of

Canada, 2013; Office of School Support and Improvement, 2015; School Improvement Design Unit, 2022). Feedback is crucial because it signifies a positive relationship between teachers and students within the learning environment. In this context, the School Effectiveness Framework of the Ministry of Education of Canada (2013) states:

> The power of positive teacher-student relationships is critical for learning to occur. This relationship involves showing students that the teacher cares for their learning as a student, can see their perspective, and communicate it back to them so they have valuable feedback to self-assess, feel safe, and learn to understand others and the content with the same interest and concern. (p. 25)

Empirically, students learn more through constructive feedback (Djou et al., 2023; Misbah, 2022; Wang et al., 2019). This subdomain targets teachers' ability to provide constructive feedback and encourage appreciation when relevant. Schools need to take a role in this process, as it reinforces expected behaviour necessary for school improvement.

The third subdomain is comprehensive assessment data. Discussion about using data to direct classroom instruction is present in some educational settings (Summers, 2023; Walte et al., 2022). Indonesia has adopted the policy of the Education Report (*Rapor Pendidikan*), whereby the MOE gathers all of the relevant data about the school in one platform. The data include the results of the National Assessment and various national surveys, such as the inclusiveness and diversity indexes. Aside from this, teachers also need to gather the necessary data from classroom interaction and assessment in order to monitor the progress of school improvement initiatives.

Community and Culture

The last domain proposed in the *School Improvement Framework for Indonesia* is community and culture, which identifies continuous professional development, a positive school culture and an engaged community.

Teachers and administrators must continuously develop professionalism to support quality improvement (Murwaningsih et al., 2022). Exceptional support must be allocated through budgeting or encouragement to join relevant training or workshops. This subdomain prompts schools to plan continuous professional development programmes for teachers and administrators.

Continuously developing professionalism would undoubtedly be in vain without the support of a positive school culture, which is the second subdomain.

This subdomain encompasses a myriad of conditions to support learning, from the common belief that students can learn successfully (Australian Council for Educational Research, 2023; Ministry of Education of Canada, 2013) and the support to develop routines of expected behaviours (Texas Education Agency, 2019), to preserving local culture (Education Review Office of New Zealand, 2022). This subdomain asks schools to own their culture aligning with their vision and mission. Relevant school culture helps create a favourable environment to support learning (Rony, 2021; Sukadari, 2020) and nurture appropriate characters (Samsiniwati, 2022).

The final subdomain in the domain of Community and Culture is engaged community. Community in this context refers to parents and society, as well as policymakers in government offices, all of whom play an essential role in the success of school improvement programmes. In Indonesia, the community's involvement in school has been officially acknowledged since 2016, with Ministry Regulation No. 75/2016 (Kemdikbud, 2016), through the *Komite Sekolah* [School Committee], whose members are parents and local authorities. However, these initiatives have experienced mixed responses, from acknowledging that this provides opportunities for parents to better support education (Fitriani & Istaryatiningtias, 2020), to recent emerging concerns, such as the problem of control (Sadewa & Yuniningsih, 2016). Bohanon et al. (2021) recommend encouraging initiatives to develop awareness that school improvement is an intertwining process in which all stakeholders must participate and improve. Parent involvement helps increase learning motivation (OECD, 2020). Stakeholder engagement in school activities also helps strengthen school culture (Minnesota Department of Education, 2022), while stakeholder partnership is expected to boost student well-being and achievement (Ministry of Education of Canada, 2013).

The role of data

Data play an essential role in the *School Improvement Framework for Indonesia*, as they are used as a baseline during planning and a means to monitor the progress of school improvement programme implementations (Greatbatch & Tate, 2019), while also providing information for the evaluation processes. Data can range from qualitative to quantitative. All data must be collected and managed well in order to document the progress of school improvement programmes. Data from standardised tests or assessments can be an excellent measure of improvement (Heffernan, 2018). In the Indonesian context, where standardised test results are unavailable, schools can use classroom data to picture the progress of improvement in teaching and learning processes. Data are also used to develop

relevant programmes. Classroom assessment data that show no progress in attainment may suggest the need for an intervention, which can be undertaken following regular classroom supervision. When this data is prepared with a more detailed explanation and shows, for example, that the presumed cause is a lack of certain teaching media, the school may allocate funding to procuring teaching media in its next cycle of school improvement plans.

School improvement is an ongoing process that requires diligent data collection in order to observe the attainment within the duration of implementation. From their research across 20 nations, Barber et al. (2010) argue that it takes six years to see an observable improvement in quality at schools with proper intervention. In order to move from fair to good quality, they recommend establishing the foundations of data gathering, organisation, finances and pedagogy. Based on this, the role of data becomes crucial.

The research agrees that the 'one-size-fits-all' approach is unsuitable for school improvement plans. Every school should develop its context for improvement and implement necessary interventions until improvement can be seen. From a data-oriented perspective, each educational institution inherently possesses distinct baseline metrics determined by its unique dataset. It is imperative for each institution to optimally utilise this data, enabling a comprehensive depiction of the institution's developmental trajectory. In addition, Vangronigen and Meyers (2020) suggest that low-performing schools conduct school improvement cycles in shorter lengths, presumably per semester, in order to provide opportunities to alter or adjust initial plans. However, Meyers et al. (2023) note the extra burden placed on the principal to supervise and develop plans in time before the following planning cycle. In order to accomplish this, schools should ideally refer to their institutional data.

Generally, in order to capture school performance well, we need to provide an array of quality measurements, as using just one approach, whether quantitative or qualitative, will not be sufficient to picture the overall progress occurring at schools (Scottish Government, 2022). The result of this measurement becomes the data that will capture the progress of the improvement.

The explicit recommendation of the present analysis for education practitioners is that achieving school improvement cannot rely solely on school effectiveness data, which is prone to bias due to the many inequalities that impact schools' outputs and outcomes (Scherer & Nilsen, 2019); nor can it rely solely on quality assurance data through accreditation per se, where there is no room for further improvement once the predetermined standards are met.

Through the SIFI, practitioners can clearly map data based on domains and subdomains. Furthermore, this data mapping can provide a projection of

the school's future development direction. The SIFI positions data as something valuable that can play a crucial role in determining the direction of a school's development. In other words, the SIFI can help practitioners see data as dynamic, not static. Every piece of data can serve as a reference for continuous progressivity and not merely as a tool to meet established standards that then lose their role and meaning.

Conclusion

School improvement processes involve more than merely striving to meet educational standards. For schools facing significant quality challenges, school improvement programmes must be carefully identified to ensure that all aspects of educational management receive balanced attention. These programmes are then designed and developed according to the school's capacity. For schools that already have a high level of quality, school improvement programmes are no longer aimed at achieving standards that have already been surpassed, but rather at realising the school's vision and mission. The *School Improvement Framework for Indonesia* offers a structured approach for schools to plan quality improvement, not only to meet the national education standards, but to go beyond them. This framework comprises four domains: Teaching and Learning, Leadership and Management, Assessment, and Community and Culture. Each domain is further delineated into three subdomains to provide a comprehensive basis for data collection and implementing improvement strategies in daily school operations.

The next phase of research will focus on formulating achievement indicators for each of the established subdomains. These subdomains are expected to strengthen the position of the SIFI as an empirically-based framework for school improvement programmes in Indonesia. Furthermore, additional research is essential to empirically validate the SIFI as an integral component of programme planning within the school context in Indonesia.

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