Southeast Asian Journal of Global Trends and Issues in Education
E-ISSN 3110-6714 | Print ISSN 3110-679X, Volume 2, Issue 1 (2026), DOI: 10.64420/sajgtie.v2i1
Journal homepage: https://ojs.aeducia.org/index.php/sajgtie

Analysis of the Role of Administrative Staff in Supporting the Smooth Operation of Junior High School Administration

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This article is available online via the following issue link:
https://doi.org/10.64420/sajgtie.v2i1

How to Cite this Article:
Sakdiyah, E. (2026). Analysis of the Role of Administrative Staff in Supporting the Smooth Operation of Junior High School Administration. *Southeast Asian Journal of Global Trends and Issues in Education, 2*(1), 20-27. https://doi.org/10.64420/sajgtie.v2.1.504

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Article Information

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First Publication Right:
Southeast Asian Journal of Global Trends and Issues in Education

Article info:
DOI: https://doi.org/10.64420/sajgtie.v2i2.504

Word Count: 4845

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https://ojs.aeducia.org/index.php/sajgtie/about

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Contents lists available at ojs.aeducia.org

Southeast Asian J. Glob. Trends Issues Educ.

Volume 2, Issue 1 (2026), DOI: 10.64420/sajgtie.v2i1

Journal homepage: https://ojs.aeducia.org/index.php/sajgtie

SAJGTIE

E-ISSN 3110-6714

P-ISSN 3110-679X

Research Article **Read Online:** https://doi.org/10.64420/sajgtie.v2i1.504 **Open Access**

Analysis of the Role of Administrative Staff in Supporting the Smooth Operation of Junior High School Administration

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ARTICLE HISTORY

Submitted: February 22, 2026
Revised: March 21, 2026
Accepted: April 25, 2026
Published: April 30, 2026

KEYWORDS

Administrative staff;
School administration;
Educational management;
Administrative services;
School effectiveness.

ABSTRACT

Background: This study is grounded in the importance of school administration as a key support for the effectiveness of educational processes, in which administrative staff play a strategic role in ensuring smooth operational activities. **Objective:** The objective of this study is to analyse the role of administrative staff in supporting school administration at SMPN 1 Jambesari and to identify the challenges and strategies implemented. **Method:** This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, and analysed using the Miles and Huberman model. **Results:** The findings indicate that administrative staff play a significant role in managing student data, handling correspondence, maintaining archives, and providing administrative services for teachers and students. However, several challenges were identified, including limitations in human resources, infrastructure, and technological competence. **Conclusion:** The study concludes that administrative staff play a vital role in supporting the effectiveness of school administration, despite facing various constraints. **Originality/Value:** This study provides novel empirical insights in the field of educational administration and management by revealing the strategic role of school administrative personnel alongside tangible operational constraints regarding human resources, infrastructure deficits, and technological competence regarding administrative service effectiveness in the context of junior high school operations (SMPN 1 Jambesari), which has received limited attention. These findings enrich empirical evidence and serve as a strategic reference for designing targeted capacity-building programs for non-teaching staff and formulating policies to optimize school office digitalization.

1. INTRODUCTION

Effective school administration represents an ideal condition in the implementation of education, as it functions as a primary support system for the continuity of the learning process. Within the framework of educational management, administration is not limited to technical activities such as recording, storing, and archiving documents, but also encompasses broader processes, including program planning (Waruwu et al., 2024), resource organisation, activity implementation, as well as continuous supervision and evaluation (Ahmad, 2024). A well-organised administrative system enables the availability of accurate, integrated, and easily accessible data, thereby supporting informed decision-making by school principals and related stakeholders (Patimah & Sugandi, 2025). In addition, professional administration contributes to greater accountability and transparency within educational institutions, ultimately strengthening public trust in schools.

The urgency of administrative staff extends beyond merely functioning as executors of administrative tasks; they also act as adaptive agents in response to contemporary developments, particularly in the era of educational digitalisation (Khasana & Herzegovina, 2025). The transition toward information technology-based administrative

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systems has become an unavoidable necessity, in line with increasing demands for efficiency, service speed, and data accuracy (Hidayatullah, 2025). The use of various applications, such as school information systems, cloud-based data management, and digital archiving, has become a key indicator of administrative modernisation in education (Nugroho, 2025). In this context, administrative staff are expected to possess digital competence, managerial capability, and effective communication skills to provide responsive, high-quality services to all educational stakeholders, including teachers, students, parents, and external parties.

However, the field indicates that school administration has not yet fully achieved these ideal conditions. Various issues persist, particularly related to the limited availability of human resources with adequate administrative and technological competencies, insufficient supporting infrastructure, and workloads that are not proportional to the number of available staff (Ilmiyah et al., 2021; Putri & Haifaturrahmah, 2025). These conditions often result in less effective administrative processes, including delays in data processing, errors in recordkeeping, and suboptimal user services. Furthermore, adaptation to digital systems remains a challenge for some administrative staff, leading to the continued dominance of manual administrative practices in certain areas.

These issues indicate a significant gap between the ideal conditions of school administration and the actual practices occurring in the field. This gap not only affects work efficiency but also has the potential to influence the overall quality of educational services. When administration does not function optimally, supporting processes for learning, such as the provision of academic data, financial management, and school activity reporting, are also hindered (Mulyati et al., 2025). Therefore, it is essential to identify in depth the factors contributing to this gap, as well as to formulate relevant, context-specific solutions to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of school administration.

Educational administration is understood as the process of managing all educational resources to achieve educational goals effectively and efficiently (Bijani et al., 2024; Lestari et al., 2025). This concept emphasises the importance of integrating management functions, namely planning, organising, implementing, and supervising, within a unified system. In addition, organisational behaviour theory explains that the effectiveness of an institution is greatly influenced by the quality of human resources, organisational structure, and the supporting work systems in place (Darim, 2020). In this context, administrative staff hold a strategic position as the unit responsible for managing information and administrative services, and their success in these roles significantly determines the school's smooth operation.

Several previous studies have examined the role of administrative staff in supporting educational administration and consistently show that they make a significant contribution to the effectiveness of school services (Fadilah et al., 2024; Noto et al., 2025). Other studies have found that effective administrative services can enhance institutional professionalism, streamline workflows, and indirectly support learning activities (Ismi et al., 2025; Rika et al., 2024). Additional research also highlights the importance of leadership among administrative heads in managing task distribution, improving coordination, and ensuring the quality of administrative services (Hasanah et al., 2024; Halawa & Daulay, 2025). However, most of these studies remain general and do not specifically examine the practical dynamics at particular school levels.

Based on this review, there is a research gap that requires further attention: the lack of in-depth analysis that integrates the roles, challenges, and strategies of administrative staff within a comprehensive and contextual framework. In addition, studies examining how administrative staff adapt to the challenges of digitalised administration at the junior high school level remain relatively limited. Therefore, this study aims to conduct an in-depth analysis of the role of administrative staff in supporting the smooth operation of school administration at SMPN 1 Jambesari, identify the challenges they face, and examine the strategies implemented to address them. The findings of this study are expected to provide practical contributions to improving the quality of school administrative services and to enrich academic discourse in the field of educational administration.

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative, descriptive design. This approach was selected because the study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the role of administrative staff in supporting the smooth operation of school administration at SMPN 1 Jambesari, rather than to test hypotheses or to measure quantitative relationships between variables. The descriptive design allows the researcher to comprehensively describe ongoing administrative practices, including their dynamics, challenges, and strategies, in the real context of SMPN 1 Jambesari. Thus, this study focuses on exploring processes, meanings, and the experiences of participants in carrying out administrative tasks within the school environment.

2.2 Research Object

The subjects of this study are individuals directly involved in administrative activities at SMPN 1 Jambesari, namely administrative staff, teachers, and the school principal. Subjects were selected through purposive sampling, based on their active involvement and understanding of the school administration system. Administrative staff serve as primary informants due to their direct involvement in administrative tasks. In contrast, teachers and the principal serve as supporting informants, providing additional perspectives on the effectiveness of administrative services. The object of this study includes all school administrative activities at SMPN 1 Jambesari, such as student data management, correspondence, document archiving, and other administrative services.

2.3 Data Collection

Data collection was conducted using three main techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted directly at SMPN 1 Jambesari to examine staff's daily administrative activities, providing factual insights into current administrative practices. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format with administrative staff, teachers, and the principal to obtain in-depth information regarding roles, challenges, and strategies in managing school administration. Documentation was conducted by collecting various administrative records from SMPN 1 Jambesari, including student registry books, correspondence archives, attendance lists, and school activity reports. The use of these three techniques aims to obtain comprehensive and complementary data.

2.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study uses the interactive model of Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman, which consists of three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was conducted by selecting and focusing on data relevant to the research objectives concerning the role of administrative staff at SMPN 1 Jambesari. Data display was presented in a systematic descriptive narrative to facilitate understanding of patterns and findings. Finally, conclusions were drawn by interpreting the data to identify meanings, relationships, and patterns related to the roles and challenges of administrative staff. To ensure data validity, this study employs source and technique triangulation by comparing findings from observation, interviews, and documentation at SMPN 1 Jambesari, thereby enhancing the credibility and reliability of the research results.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

Based on data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation at SMPN 1 Jambesari, the findings indicate that administrative staff play a highly significant role in supporting the smooth operation of school administration. These roles include data management, administrative services, and support for decision-making. However, the effectiveness of these responsibilities remains constrained by several factors, particularly human resources and technology. To maintain the continuity of administrative processes, administrative staff also implement several adaptive strategies that align with existing conditions.

Table 1. The Role of Administrative Staff in Supporting School Administration at SMPN 1 Jambesari

No	Role Aspect	Activity Description	Impact
1	Student data management	Recording student identity, attendance, and transfers	Data is well organized and accurate
2	Correspondence	Managing incoming and outgoing letters	Administrative communication runs smoothly
3	Document archiving	Systematic document storage	Documents are easily accessible
4	Administrative services	Providing services for teachers and students	School activities become more efficient
5	Report preparation	Preparing activity and financial reports	Supports school accountability

The results show that administrative staff serve as the central administrative service unit, managing the entire flow of information within the school. The availability of accurate and well-organised data directly contributes to the effectiveness of school activities, including the learning process and decision-making by school leaders. Therefore, the role of administrative staff is strategic and inseparable from the overall school management system.

Table 2. Challenges in the Implementation of School Administration at SMPN 1 Jambesari

No	Type of Challenge	Description	Impact
1	Limited facilities	Limited computer equipment and supporting tools	Work processes become slower
2	Technological competence	Low proficiency in digital applications	Administration is handled manually
3	Limited human resources	Insufficient number of staff	Workload increases
4	Digital adaptation	Difficulties in using digital systems	Work efficiency is not optimal

The findings also reveal that the main challenges lie in limited facilities and the competence of human resources. These conditions result in administrative processes that are not yet fully optimal, particularly in terms of speed, accuracy, and efficiency. In addition, limited ability to utilise technology slows the transition toward a digital-based administrative system.

Table 3. Administrative Staff Strategies in Overcoming School Administration Challenges at SMPN 1 Jambesari

No	Strategy	Implementation	Impact
1	Task distribution	Division of work among staff	Work becomes more structured
2	Routine coordination	Communication with teachers and the principal	Work becomes more synchronized
3	Use of simple technology	Use of basic applications such as Excel	Efficiency increases
4	Competency development	Internal staff training	Work capability improves

The strategies implemented demonstrate the administrative staff's adaptive efforts to overcome existing limitations. Although not yet fully based on advanced technology, the use of simple technological tools and improved internal coordination has proven effective in maintaining the smooth operation of school administration. This finding highlights that administrative effectiveness does not depend solely on facilities, but also on managerial capability and the work strategies applied.

Overall, the findings indicate that administrative staff play a highly significant role in supporting the smooth operation of school administration at SMPN 1 Jambesari. Despite facing various challenges, they can carry out their functions through adaptive and contextual strategies. Therefore, improving the quality of human resources and optimising the use of technology are key factors in enhancing the effectiveness of school administration in the future.

3.2. Discussion

The findings reveal that administrative staff at SMPN 1 Jambesari hold a highly strategic role in supporting the smooth operation of school administration. This role encompasses various administrative activities, including managing student data, handling correspondence, maintaining document archives, and providing administrative services to teachers and students. These results confirm that administrative staff not only perform technical functions but also serve as a central unit for information management that underpins school operations. Effective administrative staff ensure the availability of accurate, well-structured data, thereby supporting the continuity of the learning process and informed decision-making by school leadership.

These findings are consistent with the concept of educational administration, which positions administration as a systematic process of managing educational resources to achieve goals effectively and efficiently (Yuliastuti, 2026). Within this framework, administrative staff carry out management functions including planning, organising, implementing, and supervising (Nugraha, 2025). These functions are evident in daily practices such as document preparation, archive management, and the provision of necessary data for various stakeholders within the school (Nwanakezie & Ogona, 2021). Thus, administrative staff play a crucial role in ensuring that all educational activities are well organised and properly directed.

From an organisational behaviour perspective, the effectiveness of administrative staff is strongly influenced by human resource competence, organisational structure, and a supportive work environment (Rahmad et al., 2021). The findings show that limitations in technological competence and staff numbers are the main factors affecting administrative performance. This condition indicates that individual quality and organisational system support play a crucial role in determining effectiveness. In other words, without competent human resources and adequate work systems, administrative processes cannot operate optimally.

The results also reveal a causal relationship between limited infrastructure and low administrative efficiency. Limited technological resources, such as computers and access to digital systems, result in many tasks still being

performed manually. This leads to slower data processing, a higher risk of errors, and less optimal administrative services. In addition, high workloads due to insufficient staff contribute to decreased productivity (Osaro & Chima, 2014). Therefore, limitations in facilities and human resources directly affect the quality of school administrative services.

On the other hand, the findings indicate that the administrative staff at SMPN 1 Jambesari demonstrate adaptive capacity in addressing these limitations. Strategies such as clear task distribution, routine coordination, and the use of simple technology serve as practical solutions for maintaining administrative efficiency. From a management theory perspective, these efforts reflect the effective application of organising and controlling functions. Furthermore, efforts to enhance competence through internal training indicate an awareness of the importance of human resource development as a key factor in improving organisational performance.

These findings are also consistent with previous studies indicating that effective administrative services can improve the quality of educational services and institutional professionalism (Aithal & Maiya, 2023; Yidana et al., 2023; Polishchuk & Horbatiuk, 2023). Prior research emphasises that administrative success is determined not only by systems but also by individual capabilities and coordination among organisational units. However, this study contributes additional insight by demonstrating that even under conditions of limitation, administrative staff can still perform their functions effectively through adaptive and contextual strategies. This highlights that flexibility and internal initiative are critical factors in maintaining administrative effectiveness.

The novelty of this study lies in the integrated analysis of roles, challenges, and strategies of administrative staff within a unified framework grounded in real field conditions. This study does not merely describe administrative functions but also uncovers the practical dynamics encountered and the solutions implemented at the school's operational level. In addition, it provides a new perspective on how administrative staff adapt to technological limitations in junior high school settings. Therefore, this study not only reinforces existing theories but also offers empirical contributions relevant to the development of educational administration research.

4. IMPLICATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

4.1 Research Implications

The findings of this study have practical and policy implications for school administration, particularly by strengthening the role of administrative staff as a strategic element in educational management. Schools need to enhance human resource capacity through continuous training, especially in mastering digital administrative technologies, and provide adequate facilities and infrastructure to support work efficiency. In addition, schools should implement clear task-distribution systems and strengthen internal coordination to reduce imbalanced workloads. Another implication is the need for support from educational policymakers through competency development programs for administrative personnel and the development of integrated, technology-based administrative systems.

4.2 Research Contributions

This study contributes both theoretically and empirically to the development of educational administration research, particularly regarding the role of administrative staff at the junior high school level. Theoretically, it underscores the importance of integrating educational management and organizational behaviour theories to explain the effectiveness of school administration. Empirically, it provides a contextual overview of the roles, challenges, and strategies of administrative staff in real situations, which has been limited in previous studies. In addition, this study offers a practical model based on field experience that can serve as a reference for other schools seeking to improve the quality of administrative services adaptively and sustainably.

5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

5.1 Research Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research was conducted only at SMPN 1 Jambesari, limiting the findings to a specific context and not broadly generalizable to schools with different characteristics. Second, the descriptive qualitative approach emphasizes an in-depth understanding of phenomena and does not provide quantitative measurements of administrative effectiveness. Third, time constraints limited the observation of administrative dynamics, preventing full coverage of all school activity cycles. In addition, the data relied heavily on informant perceptions, which may introduce subjectivity, although triangulation was applied to enhance data validity.

5.2 Recommendation for Future Research

Future research is recommended to expand the scope by involving multiple schools to allow for more comprehensive comparisons of the roles and effectiveness of administrative staff across different educational contexts. The use of mixed methods approaches can provide deeper insights by combining qualitative and quantitative analyses, enabling more objective measurement of administrative effectiveness. Further studies may also focus on the implementation of digital-based administrative systems, including analysis of human resource readiness, technological infrastructure, and their impact on work efficiency. In addition, it is important to examine the influence of administrative leadership and school organizational culture on administrative performance. Future research may also explore sustainable competency development models for administrative staff to produce more applicable recommendations for improving the quality of educational administrative services.

6. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that administrative staff play a crucial role in ensuring the smooth operation of school administration at SMPN 1 Jambesari. Their roles include managing student data, handling correspondence, maintaining document archives, providing administrative services, and supporting the preparation of school reports. The presence of effective administrative staff has been shown to support school operations and contribute to data-based decision-making. Therefore, administrative staff are a strategic component within the educational management system and are inseparable from the success of educational implementation.

Despite their significant role, the implementation of school administration still faces various challenges, particularly related to limited human resources, low technological competence, and inadequate supporting facilities and infrastructure. These constraints affect work efficiency and the quality of administrative services. However, administrative staff at SMPN 1 Jambesari demonstrate adaptive capacity through strategies such as clear task distribution, routine coordination, and the use of simple technology to support administrative processes.

Overall, this study confirms that the effectiveness of school administration is strongly influenced by the quality of human resources and the availability of adequate work systems. Therefore, improving the administrative staff's competence and optimizing the use of technology are key factors in enhancing the quality of administrative services. These findings provide an important foundation for the development of more effective educational administration policies and practices, as well as opening opportunities for future research on innovation in school administration management in the digital era.

Acknowledgments

The author expresses gratitude to all parties who supported the implementation of this study, especially the school principal, administrative staff, and teachers at SMPN 1 Jambesari, who participated as informants and provided the necessary data and information. Appreciation is also extended to the university and academic supervisors for their guidance, direction, and constructive feedback throughout the research and writing process. Their support has significantly contributed to the successful completion of this study.

CRediT Authorship Contribution Statement

The author declares that the entire research and writing process for this article was conducted independently. The author assumes full responsibility for all data associated with this research. No other individual contributed as a co-author or made any significant contribution to the content of this work.

Declaration of Generative AI (GenAI) Usage in Scientific Writing

The author declares the use of artificial intelligence technology (Grammarly) during the preparation of this manuscript, solely to assist with grammar checking, language structuring, sentence refinement, and copyediting. All core ideas, data analyses, interpretations, and conclusions are entirely the author's original work, and the author takes full responsibility for the content of the publication. All instances of Generative AI usage in this article were conducted by the authors in accordance with the SAJGTIE GenAI Tool Usage Policy, with the authors assuming full responsibility for the originality, accuracy, and integrity of the work.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest in this study, whether financial or non-financial, that could influence the results and interpretation of the research. The entire research process was conducted objectively and independently.

Funding Statement

The author received no financial support from any external funding agency for this study.

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