



Implementation of SOAR analysis in school development at SDN Pelambuan 4 Banjarmasin

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Abstract

The implementation of strategic management in elementary schools is still dominated by problem-based approaches such as SWOT, while studies on the application of SOAR Analysis (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results) as an appreciative and strength-based approach remain limited. Furthermore, previous research has not extensively explained how the four dimensions of SOAR are systematically applied in school development. This study aims to analyze the implementation of SOAR Analysis in school development at SDN Pelambuan 4 Banjarmasin. The study employs a qualitative approach using a case study design. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis involving five informants: one school principal, two teachers, one school staff member, and one school committee chairperson. Data validity was ensured through triangulation of sources, methods, and time, as well as member checking. Data analysis utilized the Miles and Huberman interactive model, with findings grouped according to the four SOAR components. The research findings indicate that the strengths dimension is reflected in a collaborative culture, competent human resources, and adequate digital facilities. The opportunities dimension stems from government policy support, the School Driver Program, and strategic partnerships with various stakeholders. The aspirations dimension is realized through the school's "TERMUDA" vision (Berkarakter, Berilmu, Berbudaya) as the direction for school development. The results dimension is evident in improved teacher collaboration, learning quality, student achievement, stakeholder participation, and data-driven school management. Thus, the SOAR Analysis has proven to be an effective strategic framework for fostering appreciative, collaborative, and sustainable school development.

Keyword: SOAR analysis; strategic management in education; school development

Abstrak. Implementasi manajemen strategik di sekolah dasar masih didominasi oleh pendekatan berbasis masalah seperti SWOT, sedangkan kajian mengenai penerapan Analisis SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results) sebagai pendekatan apresiatif dan berbasis kekuatan masih terbatas. Selain itu, penelitian sebelumnya belum banyak menjelaskan bagaimana keempat dimensi SOAR diterapkan secara sistematis dalam pengembangan sekolah. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis implementasi Analisis SOAR dalam pengembangan sekolah di SDN Pelambuan 4 Banjarmasin. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara, observasi, dan studi dokumentasi terhadap lima informan yang terdiri atas satu kepala sekolah, dua guru, satu tenaga kependidikan, dan satu ketua komite sekolah. Keabsahan data dilakukan melalui triangulasi sumber, teknik, dan waktu serta member checking. Analisis data menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman dengan pengelompokan temuan berdasarkan empat komponen SOAR. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dimensi strengths tercermin pada budaya kolaboratif, sumber daya manusia yang kompeten, dan fasilitas digital yang memadai. Dimensi opportunities berasal dari dukungan kebijakan pemerintah, Program Sekolah Penggerak, serta kemitraan strategis dengan berbagai pihak. Dimensi aspirations diwujudkan melalui visi sekolah "TERMUDA" (Berkarakter, Berilmu, Berbudaya) sebagai arah pengembangan sekolah. Dimensi results tampak pada peningkatan kolaborasi guru, kualitas pembelajaran, prestasi siswa, partisipasi pemangku kepentingan, serta pengelolaan sekolah berbasis data. Dengan demikian, analisis SOAR terbukti menjadi kerangka strategik yang efektif dalam mendorong pengembangan sekolah yang apresiatif, kolaboratif, dan berkelanjutan.

INTRODUCTION

The evolution of education policy in Indonesia through Merdeka Belajar and the Merdeka Curriculum requires schools to undergo a transformation that is more adaptive, collaborative, and focused on quality improvement. Schools are not only required to resolve internal issues but also need to constructively optimize the strengths, opportunities, and potential of the school community. Noor and Shabrina (2022) explain that school development strategies can be carried out through strengthening human resources, improving school infrastructure, updating the curriculum, implementing excellent learning, optimizing extracurricular activities, and strengthening cooperation networks. Therefore, schools require a strategic management approach that is not only problem-solving oriented but also focused on strengthening existing assets and opportunities.

In the context of strategic education management, the SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results) analysis is a relevant approach because it focuses on strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and desired outcomes. Unlike SWOT, which also emphasizes weaknesses and threats, SOAR highlights what is already working well within the organization to be developed into future strategies. This is in line with Shetti and Kumari's study (2022), which explains that SOAR is a strategic planning framework that focuses on organizational strengths, stakeholder involvement, opportunities, shared aspirations, and measurable results in formulating development strategies. Furthermore, Stavros and Hinrich (2011) explain that SOAR is a strategic framing mechanism that fosters a positive approach through the identification of strengths, the development of opportunities, the sharing of common aspirations, and the establishment of measurable outcomes.

Although the SOAR concept has been recognized as relevant to the development of educational organizations, research on its implementation at the elementary school level remains relatively limited. Most research on strategic educational management still relies heavily on problem-based or SWOT approaches, whereas SOAR, as an appreciative approach, has not yet been extensively studied in a contextual manner within public elementary schools. Furthermore, some discussions on SOAR remain conceptual and have not clearly demonstrated how the dimensions of strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results are applied in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of school programs. Karadzhov (2026) also explains that although SOAR is conceptually grounded in appreciative inquiry and positive organizational scholarship, many of its applications still lack standardized validation and measurable operationalization, thereby limiting transparency, comparability, and analytical rigor.

The implementation of SOAR is also inextricably linked to the leadership role of the school principal. Fadhli (2016) states that the principal is a key factor in creating an effective school through a strong vision, effective learning management, optimal use of school resources, data-based planning, and continuous evaluation. In the context of SOAR, the principal acts as a facilitator who fosters dialogue, cooperation, and positive reflection among the school community. Hasanah et al. (2025) also emphasize that appreciation-based leadership can foster the formation of shared aspirations focused on the school's actual strengths and opportunities. Thus, the success of SOAR implementation is determined not only by the analytical tools used but also by the principal's ability to build collaboration and a shared vision.

SDN Pelambuan 4 Banjarmasin serves as a relevant case study because it possesses productive human resources, a strong culture of mutual cooperation, supportive learning facilities, and strategic partnerships with various stakeholders, such as the Pelambuan Community Health Center, the Department of Environmental Affairs, and PT Trakindo. Furthermore, as a School of Change, SDN Pelambuan 4 receives support in academic supervision, learning innovation, and the digitization of educational administration. However, this potential needs to be systematically analyzed to determine how the school identifies its strengths, capitalizes on opportunities, formulates shared aspirations, and achieves measurable development outcomes.

Based on the above discussion, this study aims to analyze the implementation of the SOAR Analysis in school development at SDN Pelambuan 4 Banjarmasin. This study is expected to fill a gap in the literature regarding the application of SOAR in the context of public elementary schools and to contribute to the development of a more appreciative, collaborative, and results-oriented approach to strategic educational management.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study design, as it aims to analyze the application of the SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results) analysis model in school development at SDN Pelambuan 4 Banjarmasin. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon and derive meaning from the perspectives of participants directly involved in the natural context. A case study was used so that the research could comprehensively describe educational strategic management practices at a single research site, namely SDN Pelambuan 4 Banjarmasin, which is one of the Pioneer Schools in the city of Banjarmasin. The research was conducted from October to December 2025 through the stages of preparation, data collection, data analysis, and the preparation of the research report.

The researcher served as the primary instrument, directly involved in the process of data collection and interpretation through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Throughout the study, the researcher maintained objectivity and research ethics by respecting the norms in the school environment. The research was conducted at SDN Pelambuan 4 Banjarmasin, located on Jalan Ir. PM Noor, Pelambuan Village, West Banjarmasin District. This school was selected because it possesses a strong collaborative culture, has implemented the Merdeka Curriculum, and is actively developing school programs based on the strengths and participation of the school community.

The data sources consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with five informants, comprising one school principal, two teachers, one school staff member, and one school committee chairperson. Informants were selected through purposive sampling, taking into account their involvement in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of school programs. Secondary data was obtained from various official school documents, such as the Strategic Plan (Renstra), School Activity and Budget Plan (RKAS), Operational Curriculum of the Educational Unit (KOSP), supervision reports, educational report cards, and school partnership documents.

Data collection methods included interviews, observations, and documentation. Interviews were used to gather information regarding the identification of strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and the outcomes of school development. Participatory observations were conducted to observe classroom instruction, staff meetings, teacher collaboration activities, and school culture. Documentation was used to review various documents related to strategic planning, program implementation, and the evaluation of school development.

Data validity was ensured through source triangulation, methodological triangulation, and temporal triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information from the school principal, teachers, school staff, and the school committee. Methodological triangulation was conducted by cross-checking the results of interviews, observations, and documentation against the same focus. Temporal triangulation is conducted by collecting data on several different occasions to ensure the consistency of the information. In addition, the researcher also applies member checking by asking informants to review the results of the data interpretation that has been compiled.

Data analysis utilized the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions and verification. During the data reduction phase, the results of interviews, observations, and documentation were first transcribed, then coded based on the four main components of SOAR. Data related to the school's internal potential is categorized under the Strengths theme; data regarding external support and opportunities is placed under the Opportunities theme; data describing the school's vision, hopes, and development goals is categorized as Aspirations; while data showing achievements, changes, and the impact of school programs is grouped under the Results theme.

During the data presentation stage, the coding results are organized into a SOAR thematic matrix so that the relationships between categories can be systematically identified. The conclusion-drawing and verification stage is conducted by comparing findings from various data sources, identifying patterns of interrelationships among SOAR components, and verifying the consistency of findings through triangulation and member checking. Through this process, this study produces a comprehensive picture of the implementation of SOAR Analysis in school development at SDN Pelambuan 4 Banjarmasin.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This study examines the implementation of the SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results) approach in school development at SDN Pelambuan 4 in Banjarmasin. Data were collected through interviews with the principal and teachers, observations of learning activities and school culture, and a review of school planning and evaluation documents. This study examines the application of the SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results) approach in school development at SDN Pelambuan 4 Banjarmasin. Data were collected through interviews with the principal and teachers, observations of learning activities and school culture, and a review of school planning and evaluation documents.

Strengths

The research findings indicate that the key strengths of SDN Pelambuan 4 lie in the quality of its human resources and a strong culture of collaboration. The principal emphasized that a culture of mutual cooperation and teacher competence are the school's primary assets in improving the quality of learning. He stated:

"Some of SDN Pelambuan 4's strengths include a strong culture of mutual support among teachers, a high level of commitment to implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, and teachers' continuously evolving capabilities through collaboration and shared reflection."

These findings are reinforced by teachers' statements noting that the school's work environment fosters mutual support and professional development. One teacher remarked:

"Teachers here help and share with one another. If someone is having trouble developing a module or learning strategy, we usually discuss it together right away."

Observation results show positive teacher–student interactions, where teachers provide clear instructions and open up space for dialogue, while students actively ask questions and engage in discussions. Additionally, the school maintains a consistent character-building culture, such as the daily morning handshake ritual, religious activities, a healthy eating program, and a commitment to caring for the school environment. In terms of resources, the school is supported by adequate learning facilities, including smartboards, tablets, Chromebooks, and an internet network utilized for both instruction and school administration.

Opportunities

The interview results show that the school has been able to capitalize on external opportunities, particularly government support for the digitization of education and the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. The principal explained:

"Our greatest opportunity is the government's support for school digitization and deep learning training. Many teachers have participated in these trainings, and that has greatly helped improve the quality of learning."

Teachers also acknowledged that digital devices and training have had a tangible impact on the learning process. One teacher stated:

"With the smartboards and training, lessons have become more varied and students are more enthusiastic."

Additionally, the school has established partnerships with various stakeholders, including community health centers, the police, local government, and the private sector. These partnerships are utilized in project-based activities, school health programs, and character-building initiatives for students.

Aspirations

The school's aspirations were formulated through a participatory process and are shared by the entire school community. The principal stated that SDN Pelambuan 4 has a long-term aspiration to become a model school with student-centered learning. He said:

"Our aspiration is to become a model elementary school in the Pelambuan area, with learning that is truly student-centered and continuous character development."

Teachers demonstrated an understanding aligned with these aspirations. One teacher stated:

"We want SDN Pelambuan 4 to be an outstanding school, both in terms of the quality of learning and its digitalization, so that it can serve as an example for other schools."

Observations indicate that these aspirations are reflected in various learning and co-curricular activities that align with the TERMUDA vision (character-building, knowledge-based, and culturally enriched).

Achievement

The research findings indicate that the implementation of the SOAR approach has yielded various positive outcomes. The principal noted that teacher collaboration and the quality of instruction have improved. He stated:

"What we are now beginning to see is stronger teacher collaboration, more creative instruction, and increased parental involvement."

Observations and documentation reveal a range of student achievements at the subdistrict and national levels. In addition, the school conducts regular instructional supervision and routine evaluation meetings. The principal explained:

"We carry out monitoring and evaluation through classroom supervision, evaluation meetings, and follow-up in the form of instructional improvements."

The use of Quality Report data as a basis for planning indicates that the school has implemented data-driven management focused on continuous quality improvement.

Discussion

This discussion aims to interpret research findings regarding the application of the SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results) approach in school development at SDN Pelambuan 4 in Banjarmasin by relating them to relevant theories and research findings. The SOAR approach emphasizes organizational development based on strengths and aspirations, thereby encouraging schools to focus on the potential, opportunities, and achievements they wish to realize on a sustainable basis.

Strengths-based school development

Research findings indicate that the primary strengths of SDN Pelambuan 4 lie in the quality of its human resources, its collaborative culture, and its positive school climate. Teachers who are relatively young, productive, and possess a spirit of mutual cooperation serve as a vital asset in supporting the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. This finding aligns with the research by Sukmawati et al. (2025), which states that the SOAR approach can enhance teacher participation and collaboration because it focuses on the assets and strengths possessed by the school.

The collaborative culture fostered through the sharing of teaching modules, joint reflection, and peer coaching among teachers demonstrates the school's characteristics as a learning organization. Sumiati et al. (2024) emphasizes that teacher collaboration becomes stronger when the principal practices adaptive leadership and creates space for innovation. This is clearly evident at SDN Pelambuan 4, where teachers feel supported in trying new teaching strategies without fear of making mistakes.

Additionally, a consistent character-building culture such as religious practices, health activities, and environmental awareness indicates that the school's development is holistic. Tang et al. (2023) state that a school's vision emphasizing character and local culture can be effectively implemented through practices

integrated into school life. Thus, the strengths of SDN Pelambuan 4 are not merely structural but also cultural.

In terms of resources, the availability of digital facilities such as smartboards, tablets, and Chromebooks reinforces 21st-century learning. Sari et al. (2026) demonstrate that the use of IFP/Smartboards at SDN Pelambuan 4 Banjarmasin is effective in creating engaging, interactive, and enjoyable learning experiences, as well as in enhancing students' active participation, motivation, conceptual understanding, and collaboration. Meanwhile, Nursaadah et al. (2025) emphasize that digitalization is a crucial component in supporting differentiated and project-based learning under the Merdeka Curriculum. The findings of this study indicate that SDN Pelambuan 4 has optimally leveraged the potential of digital facilities.

Optimizing external opportunities

Research findings indicate that SDN Pelambuan 4 is capable of strategically identifying and leveraging external opportunities. Government support through school digitization programs, teacher training, and its status as a Pioneer School represent significant opportunities that have been optimized to enhance the quality of learning. These findings align with the research by Mustofa et al. (2025), which states that digital teacher training plays a crucial role in supporting the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum.

As a Pioneer School, SDN Pelambuan 4 has broader access to training and mentoring. Mahdayana et al. (2023) state that pioneer schools tend to innovate more quickly because they receive systemic support from the government. This is evident in the school's ability to adapt learning to a deep learning approach. In addition, partnerships with various stakeholders such as community health centers, the police, local governments, universities, and PT Trakindo-enrich the school's learning ecosystem. Mulditasari and Noviani (2023) emphasize that school-community partnerships significantly contribute to improving the quality of the educational ecosystem. This finding is further supported by Malik (2025), who states that school-family-community partnerships provide multidimensional benefits for student development and school success. Thus, available external opportunities are not only identified but also integrated into school programs on an ongoing basis, in accordance with the SOAR principles.

School aspirations as strategic drivers (Aspirations)

School aspirations are a central element in the SOAR approach because they serve as the direction and driving force for change. Research findings indicate that the aspirations of SDN Pelambuan 4 were formulated through a participatory process and are collectively understood by the school community. The aspiration to become an exemplary and benchmark school in its region is reflected in the TERMUDA vision (character-building, knowledge-based, and culturally enriched) as well as various school development programs.

These findings are consistent with Waruwu et al. (2025), who state that school principals' leadership plays a crucial role in improving the quality of learning through the development of a vision and mission, teacher training, and collaboration with stakeholders. Aspirations built collectively foster a sense of ownership and commitment among teachers toward the school's long-term goals. The KOSP document and annual programs developed based on SOAR analysis demonstrate that the school's aspirations do not remain at the conceptual level but are translated into clearer and more focused planning. Documented strategic planning is essential because it helps schools establish a direction for development, determine program priorities, and ensure that activities are implemented in line with quality improvement goals. This is reinforced by Fullan and Quinn (2016), who state that coherence between vision, policy, and practice is the key to sustainable school transformation.

School development outcomes and impact (Achievement)

Research findings indicate that the implementation of the SOAR approach yields tangible and measurable outcomes. Improvements in the quality of learning, teacher motivation and collaboration, as well as parental engagement demonstrate that school development is proceeding effectively. This finding is consistent with Mubarak (2024), who states that responsive and adaptive school strategic management can

help schools address challenges and capitalize on opportunities, particularly in the digital age, to improve the quality and effectiveness of education.

Student achievements at the regional and national levels serve as indicators that school development impacts not only the process but also the outcomes. This is consistent with Mulyani and Virgianti (2023), who explain that strategic school planning plays a crucial role in achieving a school's vision and mission, as it allows the school's level of success to be measured, evaluated, and improved in line with established goals. Internationally, Hattie (2018) emphasizes that a strong learning environment and clear learning objectives have a significant impact on student achievement. Thus, student achievement can be understood as the result of focused strategic planning, a supportive learning environment, and alignment between school goals and learning practices that are implemented on an ongoing basis.

From a leadership perspective, the principal's role in supervision, evaluation, and follow-up demonstrates participatory and reflective leadership practices. Nurman et al. (2018) state that the principal's participatory leadership has a positive effect on school quality. These findings are further supported by Fullan (2023) and Leithwood et al. (2020), who assert that school leadership is a key factor in the success of educational transformation.

The use of Quality Report data as a basis for planning indicates that the school has implemented data-driven management. Ramadhani et al. (2023) explain that the implementation of a database in a school setting can facilitate more structured, accurate, and efficient information management, thereby supporting administrative processes and decision-making. Ingram et al. (2004) also emphasize that the use of data in decision-making helps schools develop more targeted interventions.

Challenges in implementing SOAR

Although the implementation of SOAR at SDN Pelambuan 4 in Banjarmasin has yielded positive results, it still faces several challenges, such as teachers' limited time, varying levels of digital proficiency, and the reluctance of some teachers to try new things because they are still accustomed to old ways of working. This situation indicates that the success of SOAR depends not only on the school's strengths and opportunities but also on the readiness of human resources to adapt to change. This finding aligns with Zulfahmi (2025), who noted that time constraints and low teacher awareness regarding competency development pose challenges in teacher professional development; therefore, school principals need to implement transformational leadership, training, mentoring, and continuous support. Thus, the implementation of SOAR requires continuous guidance, strengthening of teacher competencies, and leadership capable of building trust and readiness among the school community to support the school's sustainable development.

Summary of the discussion

Overall, this discussion indicates that the implementation of the SOAR approach at SDN Pelambuan 4 Banjarmasin has been effective because it is supported by solid internal strengths, the strategic utilization of external opportunities, clear and participatory aspirations, and measurable achievements. The consistency of findings from interviews, observations, and document reviews reinforces the validity of this study's results.

The SOAR approach has proven to be not only a strategic analysis tool but also a cultural approach that shapes the way school community members think and act. By focusing on strengths, opportunities, and aspirations, the school has been able to foster optimism, collaboration, and a shared commitment to achieving sustainable improvements in educational quality.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the implementation of the SOAR Analysis at SDN Pelambuan 4 Banjarmasin has positively contributed to improving the quality and effectiveness of school management. This approach helps the school develop a more appreciative strategic plan by emphasizing strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and tangible results. Through the strengths component, the school possesses competent, collaborative, and adaptive human resources, supported by the principal's leadership that fosters a spirit of cooperation and shared responsibility. In terms of

opportunities, the school is able to leverage support from the Education Office, partnerships with the community, and technological advancements to support digitalization and project-based learning. Furthermore, the aspirations component is reflected in the "TERMUDA" vision, which serves as the school's development direction in shaping students who are of good character, knowledgeable, and culturally aware. The results component indicates improvements in academic achievement, non-academic accomplishments, the effectiveness of data-driven management, and strengthened collaboration with external partners. Thus, the SOAR Analysis can serve as a relevant strategic approach to fostering adaptive, collaborative, and sustainable school transformation. As a recommendation, SDN Pelambuan 4 Banjarmasin should continue to optimize the implementation of SOAR on an ongoing basis through regular evaluations, strengthening collaboration among school community members, and increasing the use of data in decision-making. The school also needs to expand partnerships with external parties and enhance learning innovations so that the school's vision can be realized to the fullest extent. Additionally, all school community members are expected to remain actively involved in the planning, implementation, and reflection of programs so that school development is not solely the responsibility of the leadership but becomes a collective effort.

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