

**AN ANALYSIS OF OPERATIONAL RISK MANAGEMENT IN THE  
APPOINTMENT PROCESS OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AT FOUNDATION X  
BASED ON ISO 31000:2018**



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**Abstract**

Risk management is essential in educational governance to ensure the sustainability and quality of learning services. This study analyzes operational risks in the appointment process of school principals at Foundation X in North Maluku using the ISO 31000:2018 framework. The research applies a descriptive qualitative method through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis. The findings reveal that the principal appointment process has not yet been supported by standardized and documented procedures, opening space for subjective intervention, the dominance of informal power structures, and limited transparency in decision-making. The risk assessment identifies three high-priority risks: intervention from the Board of Trustees in principal selection, non-meritocratic appointments that disregard competency standards, and internal organizational conflicts stemming from weak leadership legitimacy. The application of ISO 31000:2018 enables systematic mapping of risk likelihood and impact, as well as the formulation of governance-oriented mitigation strategies such as the development of formal selection SOPs, formation of an independent selection committee, and reinforcement of performance evaluation mechanisms. This study contributes to improving risk management practices in foundation-based educational institutions by offering recommendations that promote transparency, accountability, and leadership quality.

**Keywords:** Risk Management, ISO 31000:2018, Principal Appointment

## INTRODUCTION

Risk management is a crucial component of educational governance and has increasingly become a strategic priority across modern institutions, including public administration and higher education (Lacković, 2022). Risk management practices in educational institutions are essential for guiding strategic objectives in complex environments and diverse stakeholder engagements. According to Muhlis and Supriyadi (2018), effective risk management not only protects institutional assets but also aligns resources with strategic objectives, thereby improving organizational performance. The multifaceted nature of educational environments requires a structured approach to risk management, as explained by Riyadi (2025), who highlights various strategies and best practices that can be adapted to different institutional contexts. Furthermore, Handriadi et al. (2025) highlight the importance of evaluating risk management implementations, suggesting that consistent evaluation allows institutions to recalibrate their objectives in response to emerging risks. Rahmat et al. (2020) support this, demonstrating that integrating enterprise risk management into higher education settings promotes resilience and adaptability, ultimately facilitating the achievement of strategic objectives. Such comprehensive risk management approaches encompass a proactive stance that addresses the complexities faced by educational institutions.

. One category of risk that requires particular attention is operational risk, which may arise from weaknesses in internal processes, limited human resource capacity, inadequate administrative systems, or external pressures affecting institutional performance (FIELD, 2023; ISO Standards, 2018).

Foundation X is an educational institution in North Maluku that oversees approximately 140 educational units ranging from elementary to senior secondary schools. Within this structure, school principals hold a strategic role in shaping instructional quality, managing institutional resources, and fostering a conducive organizational culture. However, in practice, the process of appointing school principals at Foundation X has not yet been fully supported by standardized and documented procedures. The absence of a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) opens space for subjective intervention, including the influence of the Board of Trustees and internal political dynamics. Such conditions risk undermining meritocracy and competency as the basis for selecting school leadership.

Irregular appointments of leaders in educational foundations pose significant operational risks that negatively impact leadership effectiveness, teaching quality, and institutional reputation. Atiso Ahiaku (2019) highlights the importance of stakeholder perspectives in assessing the effectiveness of school management teams, highlighting that irregular appointments can undermine trust and cohesion within the leadership structure. The leadership vacuum resulting from such appointments often leads to a decrease in the quality of teaching, as temporary leaders may lack the experience and commitment necessary to promote educational standards (Kenayathulla et al., 2024). Furthermore, procedural discrepancies in principal appointments can contribute to institutional reputational damage, as noted by Olaifa et al. (2021), who found that administrative effectiveness is closely linked to the integrity of appointment processes. This literature reveals significant research gaps related to the long-term implications of irregular appointments on educational outcomes, necessitating further investigation into sustainable strategies for effective leadership transitions in educational contexts.

In response to these conditions, this study aims to analyze operational risk management in the school principal appointment process at Foundation X using the ISO 31000:2018 framework for risk identification, assessment, and mitigation. The analysis is expected to provide recommendations for strengthening institutional governance that is more transparent, accountable, and oriented toward the improvement of educational quality.

Although several previous studies have discussed the implementation of risk management in educational institutions, the primary focus of these studies has generally been on public schools and higher education institutions, emphasizing organizational stability and more formal administrative governance (Addo et al., 2021; Rahmat et al., 2020). However, research on operational risk management within faith-based educational foundations remains very limited, particularly concerning the appointment of school principals, which is vulnerable to structural intervention and internal dynamics. Therefore, this study provides a new contribution by mapping the risks arising from non-meritocratic principal appointment mechanisms and proposing governance improvement recommendations based on the ISO 31000:2018 framework. This approach is expected to strengthen educational management practices that are more transparent, accountable, and oriented toward improving service quality at Foundation X.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Comprehensive risk management in educational organizations is essential to ensure the sustainability and continuity of services, particularly through effective governance and leadership. Leadership plays a critical role in translating risk management policies into actionable practices, as highlighted in the Ghanaian context (Addo et al., 2021). Furthermore, stakeholder engagement is critical to identifying and managing systemic risks, which fosters collaborative efforts (Bazaluk et al., 2024). By adopting a stakeholder perspective, educational institutions can address the complexities of university-industry collaborations and improve research and development programs (Fernandes et al., 2023). Therefore, effective risk management frameworks contribute significantly to the resilience and longevity of educational organisations.

Operational risk is understood as the risk arising from weaknesses in internal processes, human resource limitations, administrative system gaps, or external pressures that affect institutional performance (ISO Standards, 2018; Kermani et al., 2021). The misalignment between leadership practices and standards of competence contributes significantly to operational risks in educational contexts. Kurniawati & Fitriani (2025) Highlight the need for effective risk management strategies by school leaders to ensure continuity of quality, thereby emphasizing the risks that arise when leadership fails to align with established standards of competence. Additionally, Wandee et al. (2017) discuss various risks inherent in school management, highlighting that poor leadership practices can exacerbate operational vulnerabilities. Furthermore, David Syamsia et al. (2021) analyze operational risks in higher education, suggesting that aligning leadership with competency standards is essential to mitigate these risks. To address these challenges, strategic staff development and improved procedural frameworks are key.

Meritocratic appointments of school principals are critical to cultivating an effective organizational culture, fostering teacher development, and improving overall school performance. Atiso Ahiaku (2019) highlights the importance of stakeholder perceptions

when evaluating school management teams, indicating that meritocratic selection fosters trust and collaboration among staff, which are vital for a positive organizational climate. The transparency inherent in merit-based appointments often leads to greater administrative effectiveness, as demonstrated by Olaifa et al. (2021) who found a direct correlation between the procedural integrity of principal appointments and the operational efficiency of secondary schools in Kwara State. This alignment not only improves decision-making and resource allocation but also cultivates a sense of responsibility that fosters professional growth among teachers. Furthermore, the importance of principal leadership in shaping school success cannot be overstated. González-Falcón et al. (2020) argue that contextual factors and leadership styles significantly impact school performance, and meritocratic appointments serve as a vehicle for effective leadership practices. Together, these studies illustrate that meritocratic appointments not only strengthen the structural foundation of school administration but also promote an environment conducive to teacher development and improved student outcomes.

The implementation of ISO 31000:2018 within Foundation X has the potential to significantly improve key appointment processes by addressing operational risks and improving the quality of governance through standardized procedures and merit-based selection. ISO 31000:2018 provides a robust risk management framework that can be tailored to the specific needs of educational institutions, facilitating a systematic approach to identifying and managing risks associated with principal appointments (Trisnawati et al., 2023).

As Riyadi (2025) suggest that, by adopting risk management practices, educational institutions can create a more resilient selection process that mitigates operational uncertainties, ultimately leading to better governance outcomes. This systematic approach not only promotes transparency but also ensures that selection criteria are aligned with institutional objectives, thus strengthening meritocracy in candidate selection.

Furthermore, Rusdi et al. (2023) highlight the connection between risk management and effective governance in educational contexts, arguing that a well-designed governance framework, supported by ISO 31000:2018, allows for a more structured assessment of candidates. This comprehensive methodology could lead to improved accountability and decision-making during the principal appointment process, further solidifying the foundation's commitment to high-quality governance. Therefore, the implementation of ISO 31000:2018 could facilitate a more standardized and effective approach to key appointments at Foundation X, benefiting both the institution and its stakeholders.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the school principal appointment process at Foundation X and the operational risks arising from this practice. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows exploration of contextual factors, institutional relationship dynamics, and managerial practices that cannot be fully captured through numerical data alone (Creswell, 2019).

Research data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations within the foundation and school environments, and document analysis of organizational records such as organizational structures, principal appointment decrees, and internal administrative notes. The research informants consisted of foundation administrators, school principals, and

teaching staff selected through purposive sampling, based on their direct involvement in the principal appointment process.

Data analysis was conducted using the operational risk management framework of ISO 31000:2018, which includes the stages of risk identification, risk analysis, risk evaluation, and the formulation of mitigation strategies (ISO Standards, 2018). In the identification stage, the data were used to identify sources of risk emerging from the principal appointment practices. The analysis stage involved assessing the likelihood and impact of risks on the continuity of school governance. The evaluation stage was used to determine the severity of the risks in order to prioritize them. Subsequently, mitigation strategies were formulated to minimize potential risks and strengthen institutional governance.

Triangulation of sources and methods is essential to improve the reliability of data, particularly in qualitative research. By employing different data collection methods such as interviews, observations, and document analysis, researchers can cross-check findings, thereby increasing credibility (Chand, 2025). Interviews provide rich, context-specific insights, while observations offer real-time context, and document analysis adds historical depth. The integration of these methods allows a more complete understanding of the phenomenon studied. Furthermore, triangulation minimizes the biases inherent in single-method studies, as highlighted by Natow (2020), who highlights its importance in elite interviews, illustrating the need for multiple perspectives to validate research findings.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that the process of appointing school principals at Foundation X is not yet fully based on standardized and documented procedures. The absence of a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) outlining criteria, selection stages, and evaluation mechanisms for principal candidates has resulted in the appointment process being dominated by informal policies and subjective considerations of the foundation's leadership. This situation allows for potential interference by certain parties, the dominance of non-formal power structures, and decision-making practices that are not fully transparent or accountable.

Interviews with key informants revealed that, in several cases, principals were selected based on personal closeness, organizational loyalty, and alignment with internal relational dynamics rather than through competency-based assessments, performance track records, and professional qualifications. This condition has led to unstable leadership dynamics at the school level, reduced institutional management effectiveness, and strained working relationships among educators. These findings are consistent with Yakob et al. (2025), who assert that the appointment of educational leaders without considering professional competence can negatively affect organizational governance and hinder the improvement of educational quality.

Furthermore, this situation generates operational risks for the foundation, particularly in relation to principal leadership legitimacy, the consistency of internal policy implementation, human resource trust, and the institution's reputation. To assess the severity of these risks, a risk analysis was conducted using the ISO 31000:2018 framework by evaluating the likelihood and impact levels of each identified risk.

**Table 1.**  
**Risk Likelihood Scale**

Level	Score	Qualitative Description	Frequency of Occurrence
<b>Very Frequent</b>	<b>5</b>	Occurs repeatedly and can be predicted	More than once per month
<b>Frequent</b>	<b>4</b>	Occurs within the organization's annual cycle	3–12 times per year
<b>Possible</b>	<b>3</b>	May occur depending on conditions	1–2 times per year
<b>Rare</b>	<b>2</b>	Occurs only with specific triggers	Once every 1–3 years
<b>Very Rare</b>	<b>1</b>	Almost never occurs	Less than once every 3 years

Source: Adapted from ISO 31000:2018 and adjusted to the context of this study (2025).

**Table 2.**  
**Risk Impact Scale**

Level	Score	Organizational Impact
<b>Very Severe</b>	<b>5</b>	Disrupts institutional stability and educational service delivery
<b>Severe</b>	<b>4</b>	Reduces the quality of governance and the institution's public image
<b>Moderate</b>	<b>3</b>	Decreases the effectiveness of school performance
<b>Minor</b>	<b>2</b>	Impact is limited to the internal school scope
<b>Very Minor</b>	<b>1</b>	Minimal impact with no long-term effects

Source: Adapted from ISO 31000:2018 and adjusted to the context of this study (2025)

Risk scores were calculated using the formula: **Risk Score = Likelihood × Impact**

**Table 3.**  
**Risk Level Classification**

Risk Score	Risk Level	Handling Implications
<b>1–5</b>	<b>Low</b>	Monitoring is sufficient
<b>6–10</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	Limited control measures required
<b>11–15</b>	<b>High</b>	Requires planned managerial intervention
<b>16–25</b>	<b>Very High</b>	Strategic and urgent priority for mitigation

Source: Adapted from ISO 31000:2018 and adjusted to the context of this study (2025).

**Table 4.**  
**Risk Matrix**

Likelihood\ Impact	1 (Very Minor)	2 (Minor)	3 (Moderate)	4 (Severe)	5 (Very Severe)
<b>5 (Very Frequent)</b>	5	10	15 (Internal Conflict)	20	25
<b>4 (Frequent)</b>	4	8	12	16 (Non-Competency-)	20 (Board of Trustees Intervention)

				<b>Based Appointment)</b>	
<b>3 (Possible)</b>	3	6	9	12	15
<b>2 (Rare)</b>	2	4	6	8	10
<b>1 (Very Rare)</b>	1	2	3	4	5

**Source: Adapted from ISO 31000:2018 and adjusted to the context of this study (2025).**

Based on the risk mapping using the risk matrix, the study identified three major risks with high to very high levels of urgency in the school principal appointment process. The risks categorized as *Extreme* are the intervention of the Board of Trustees in determining school principals and the appointment of principals that is not based on competency and meritocracy. These two risks fall within the score range of 16–20, indicating that they occur frequently and have a significant impact on governance quality, organizational stability, and the sustainability of educational quality within schools.

Meanwhile, the risk of internal conflict among school leaders and teaching staff falls into the *High* category with a score of 15. This risk tends to emerge as a consequence of weak leadership legitimacy resulting from principal appointments conducted without a clear and structured selection mechanism. The absence of clearly defined authority and role structures leads to strained working relationships, low coordination, and potential polarization within the school environment.

These three risks are interrelated. The dominance of informal structural intervention leads to competency-neglecting principal selection, and these two conditions subsequently trigger internal conflict. Thus, the core underlying risk is the absence of a standardized SOP for principal appointments, which directly affects organizational stability and the quality of educational management. This finding underscores the need for institutional governance restructuring based on the principles of transparency, accountability, and objectivity, as recommended in the ISO 31000:2018 framework.

**Table 4.  
 Ris Register**

Main Risk	Risk Description	Source of Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Score (L×I)	Risk Level	Potential Impact	Mitigation Strategy (Action Plan)	Responsible Party
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<b>Supervisory Board Intervention</b>	Appointment decisions are influenced by non-formal authority, personal networks, and subjective considerations.	Absence of standardized procedures and weak organizational governance mechanisms.	4 (Likely)	5 (Very Severe)	20	<b>Very High</b>	Institutional instability and decreased organizational legitimacy and trust.	Develop and enforce a formal SOP for principal selection; ensure transparent decision-making; limit non-formal intervention through governance regulations.	Supervisory Board / Foundation Leadership
<b>Non-Competency-Based Appointment</b>	School principals are appointed without clear merit-based criteria, professional qualifications, or performance evaluation.	Lack of competency standards and structured selection assessment tools.	4 (Likely)	4 (Severe)	16	<b>High</b>	Declining leadership performance, weak school management, and reduced educational quality.	Establish competency and qualification requirements; form an independent selection committee; apply structured interviews and assessment instruments.	Foundation Education Department / HR Division
<b>Internal Organizational Conflict</b>	Disputes and role tensions occur due to leadership legitimacy being questioned by staff and stakeholders.	Leadership appointed without broad acceptance or participatory consultation.	5 (Very Likely)	3 (Moderate)	15	<b>High</b>	Reduced teamwork, increased staff dissatisfaction, and school climate.	Conduct mediation sessions; strengthen communication and participatory decision-making; provide leadership development and conflict resolution training.	School Principal / School Supervisor / Foundation Management

Source: Adapted from ISO 31000:2018 and adjusted to the context of this research (2025).

The risk register in the table above serves as the primary instrument for risk management at Foundation X. The three identified risks fall within the high and very high categories, thus requiring prioritized handling. Mitigation efforts are directed toward governance reform and strengthening the selection procedures to ensure that the appointment of school principals is conducted in a professional, transparent, and accountable manner. The mitigation strategies are not solely technical-administrative in nature, but also encompass aspects of leadership development and organizational culture.

The analysis revealed three major risks in the process of appointing school principals at Foundation X: intervention by the Board of Trustees, non-competency-based appointments, and internal conflict within the school environment. The first risk, with the

highest score (20), falls into the *extreme* category. This condition arises from unclear authority structures and the absence of a formal selection SOP. This finding is consistent with Suryani (2022), who asserts that the lack of transparent procedures in educational management often leads to decision-making bias and organizational instability.

The second risk, namely appointments that are not based on competency, scored 16 and has a direct impact on the effectiveness of school leadership. This supports the findings of Sunardi et al. (2019), which indicates that school principals with low competency levels tend to be unable to perform managerial and pedagogical functions optimally.

The third risk is internal conflict, which emerges as a consequence of weak leadership legitimacy. Such conflict affects teacher cohesion and the organizational climate. This finding reinforces organizational behaviour theory, which posits that leadership legitimacy is a key factor in maintaining stable working relationships (Robbins and Judge, 2013).

This study makes an important contribution to the development of risk management research in foundation-based educational institutions, particularly those in regional contexts. Most previous studies have focused on public educational institutions and higher education, while research on governance practices in foundation-based schools remains limited. By applying the ISO 31000:2018 framework, this study demonstrates that strengthening SOPs, implementing meritocratic principles, and restructuring authority are key elements in preventing operational risks that may hinder educational quality. Thus, the study not only enriches the literature on educational risk management but also provides practical policy directions for Foundation X in establishing more transparent and accountable governance.

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the process of appointing school principals at Foundation X is not yet supported by a structured and formally documented governance mechanism. The absence of a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has resulted in the selection and appointment of school principals being largely influenced by subjective considerations and internal relational dynamics within the foundation. This condition has a direct impact on the effectiveness of school leadership, working relationships among educators, and the overall quality of educational management.

Through the application of the ISO 31000:2018 risk management framework, this study identifies three priority risks requiring immediate attention: intervention by the Board of Trustees in principal selection, appointments that are not based on competency and meritocracy, and the potential for internal conflict within the school environment. These three risks fall within the high to very high categories of risk assessment, thus necessitating structural and systemic mitigation strategies.

This study highlights the need to strengthen governance in the principal appointment process through the formulation and implementation of qualification-based selection SOPs, the establishment of an independent selection committee, periodic performance evaluations for school principals, and leadership capacity building through professional development programs. By implementing these measures, Foundation X can establish a more objective, transparent, and accountable principal appointment process, which ultimately contributes to improving educational quality and enhancing overall organizational stability.

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