

Conference Paper

Reflecting on Personal Experiences: An Auto-ethnography in Search of a Meaningful Educational Management and Administration

Priadi Surya

MPhil in Education (Student), School of Education, University of Aberdeen, Scotland – United Kingdom

Abstract

The terms of administration and management in education are still a debate among Indonesian scholars in this discipline. This debate is rooted in their different stance which has implications in practices. This study attempts to address this issue. It aims to find the meaning of educational administration and management, which is considered to be important especially for academicians and students in this field and also practitioners. The study found that the term of educational management in Indonesia is more preferable among scholars and popular for public, indicating adoption of management values from business management to public institutions. Very few insist the use of administration instead of management, while some others argue that these two terms are interchangeable.

Keywords: meaningful learning; learning experience; educational administration; educational management;

Corresponding Author:

Priadi Surya
r04ps14@abdn.ac.uk

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1. Introduction

The performed studies in the *educational administration* field have evolved from a positivist to critical, interpretive and postmodern perspectives. The principles and theory of *management sciences* were used to build the theoretical base of *educational administration* discipline in the United States in the 1950s [1]. After the 1970s, the direction of the field of educational administration began to change its paradigm to be interpretive, critical, cognitive, symbolic and cultural described beyond positivism. In the United Kingdom the discipline firstly appeared in early 1960s. However, the British Educational Administration Society (BEAS) was established in 1971. Later on, BEAS was changed into British Educational Management and Administration Society (BEMAS) in 1980, and finally it was changed into British Educational Leadership, Management, and

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Administration Society (BELMAS) in 2000 [2]. This transformation implies the development of *educational administration* discipline influencing the popularity of *management* and *leadership*. This paper attempts to find insights about *educational administration* generated from writer's personal experiences and to enrich the balance of educational theory and practice [3, 4]. The result of this study do not intended for generalisation although it may be relevant to other contexts.

The discipline of *educational administration* appeared in Indonesian higher education in the 1950s. Initially, the Educational Administration was a course provided for the B.Ed. students since 1954 in Perguruan Tinggi Pendidikan Guru (PTPG), a teacher college which is now Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI), in the city of Bandung [5]. Then, this course was significantly developed in early 1960's when Professor Murray Thomas from State University of New York accompanied the local lecturers, such as Professor Suganda and Oteng Sutisna, MSc. This led to the establishment of the *Department of Educational Administration and Supervision* in 1964. This initiation was to meet the demand of skilful personnel in the field of *educational administration* and *management* and the demand of the teachers of *administration* and *supervision* subject in the teacher education schools specialised to prepare elementary teachers and it was abolished in 1991. Later, in the 1998, the name of the department was changed into the *Department of Educational Administration*, and it remains until the time this paper written. Some universities in Indonesia also established the department of *educational administration*, for example in Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta (founded in 1964), Universitas Negeri Malang (founded in 1964) [6], Universitas Negeri Padang (founded in 1983) [7], Universitas Negeri Makassar (founded in 1965) [8]. In the 2000s, they changed the name of their Bachelor study programme from Educational Administration into *Educational Management*.

It has been suggested that the term of *educational management* is more popular in various educational institutions and authorities than the *educational administration*. The popularity is associated with widely adoption of the *management* term originally from private enterprises into public institutions. The Indonesian Ministry of National Education, for example, introduced *School Based Management* programme in 1999 across the nation. The government adopted this term from the other countries implementing this programme, such as "local management of schools (England, Wales, and Northern Ireland)", "school-based management" (North America), "site-based management" (USA), and "school-initiative management" (Hong Kong) [9]. Furthermore, the use of *administration* derived from French in Indonesia was influenced by the Dutch vocabulary, *administratie*. Thus, it often associated with official work or clerical work, rather than

the original meaning from Henry Fayol in his *Administration Industrielle et Generale*, translated into English, *General and Industrial Management*. Consequently, the *educational administration* term in the general public is often misunderstood as a clerical work in school. This also happens in the recruitment process when such a vacancy for the graduate of the *B.Ed. in Educational Administration* was misunderstood and enrolled by the graduate of the *B.Ed. of Office Administration Education*. It is argued that there is misunderstanding of the fundamental meaning of the *educational administration* and the competence of their graduates.

On the other hand, the Indonesia's General Directorate of Higher Education (Dikti) only uses the *educational administration* term on their study programme database. However, the term used in the centralised national selection to enrol public universities (SNMPTN, SBMPTN) varies according each department preference. In addition, the board of national accreditation for higher education (BAN PT) is accommodative for both *educational administration* and *educational management* terms. The departments in universities response this situation, for example, while the factual name is the *B.Ed. of Educational Management*, one of the departments providing this programme chose to use the *educational administration* term for its re-accreditation, to conform to the ministerial database of study programmes. In the same time, the department also proposes to the Dikti to change the name of the study programme in the database, that the expected name is "*the B.Ed. of Educational Management*". This inconsistency to some extent might affect the prospect of the graduate to find a job and make the confusion in the general public. For example, my personal experience: in 2007, I was rejected by a frontline officer when trying to apply for a lecturer vacancy in a public university in Jakarta, Indonesia, merely because my master degree is *M.Ed. in Educational Administration*, while the written qualification on the formal vacancy document is *M.Ed. in Educational Management*.

This paper attempts to search how would be *educational management* and *administration* meaningful within the Indonesian context by reflecting from the learning and teaching experiences. The research questions are:

1. What are meaningful experiences of studying *educational management* and *administration*?
2. What are meaningful experiences of teaching *educational management* and *administration*?

3. As conclusion, reflecting on these studying and teaching experiences: how would be *educational management* and *administration* meaningful for academics, students, and practitioners in Indonesia?

2. Literature Review

“Meaningful learning is understood as a concept describing personally valued, rich and worthwhile learning experiences from the perspective of the learner” [10]. Equipping young people for a meaningful life is a worthwhile, but not all-important educational aim [11]. Educators should help them not only to see their lives as meaningful but also to lead lives that are meaningful. The concept of personally meaningful learning experience refers here to student’s learning processes and various events, activities and circumstances that they consider to have a special meaning to him [10]. Thus, meaningful education is questioning whether such a curriculum and timetabling arrangements help or hinder learner in living a meaningful life [11].

The special meaning of learning experiences various events, activities and circumstances might be consisting of various process characteristics and be enhanced in many ways. One of them is the concept of a ‘being’ mode of learning, arguing that ‘being’ includes the thought, action and affect of the learner and “provides a more person-focused approach that is useful for providing balance and congruence between feeling and thought and between mind and body, supplementing the having and doing approaches [10]. Therefore, it is particularly important to gain understanding of how to facilitate rich and valuable learning experiences while studying educational management.

There are different views of *management* and *administration*. Basically, there is no difference in practice between *administration* and *management*, and in much of the literature the two terms are used interchangeably. Both of terms mean the process of securing decisions about what activities the organisation (or unit of an organisation) will undertake, and mobilising the human and material resources to undertake them [12]. However, those different levels of activity were involved and such a division was well entrenched in the public consciousness, the terms *management* and *administration* then being used differentially.

Basically, *educational management* as a field of study and practice was derived from *management* principles first applied to industry and commerce, mainly in the United States, in which the used term is *educational administration* [13]. The *administration* term was initially introduced by Henri Fayol through *Industrielle et Generale Administration*,

TABLE 1: The spectrum of *management* and *administration* [12].

Spectrum	Description of the spectrum
<i>Management</i> and <i>administration</i> is interchangeably.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no difference in practice between <i>administration</i> and <i>management</i>, and in much of the literature the two terms are used interchangeably. • Both <i>administration</i> (in North America) and <i>management</i> (in British context) are used as the general term applicable to both levels of <i>policy making</i> and <i>policy implementation</i> activity.
<i>Management</i> is higher than <i>administration</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Management</i> generally has connotation of <i>higher level work</i> in the private sector.
<i>Administration</i> is higher than <i>management</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Administration</i> is a philosophy in action which becomes activated in two ways, 'by means of <i>administrative</i> processes which are abstract, philosophical, qualitative, strategic and humanistic in essence. • <i>Managerial</i> processes which are concrete, practical, pragmatic, quantitative and technological in nature. • <i>Administration</i> is made up of three initial successive processes (<i>philosophy</i>, <i>planning</i> and <i>politics</i>); each of these three process phases can be subsumed under the rubric of <i>policy making</i>. • <i>Management</i> is made up of three latter processes after the <i>policy making</i>: <i>mobilizing</i>, <i>managing</i>, and <i>monitoring</i>, and subsumed under the rubric of <i>policy implementation</i>.

which then translated into English: *General and Industrial Management*. *Management* in its broadest sense is about (1) setting direction, aims and objectives; (2) planning how progress will be made or a goal achieved; (3) organising available resources (people, time, materials) so that the goal can be economically achieved in the planned way; (4) controlling the process (i.e. measuring achievement against plan and taking corrective action where appropriate); and (5) setting and improving organisational standards [14].

Furthermore, nowadays *educational management* has become an important academic subject which is very popular for practitioners who, unlike many policy-makers, sense that practice without theory is shallow [13]. This is in line with the policy direction of the bachelor degree of *educational management study programme* [9]. Since the teacher education schools in Indonesia (such as *SPG*, *SGO*) no longer exist, the study programme does not orientated to teach their pre-service teachers, instead focuses on graduating the future managerial officers of educational institutions (e.g. schools, educational authority). The graduates are expected to master both administrative-managerial aspects and to internalise educational aspects supporting to the precise *educational management* in the educational institutions. Indeed, these knowledge and skills acquired in the undergraduate level are especially supporting to the technical and operational levels in the field of *educational management*.

3. Material & Methodology

This study employed an auto-ethnography approach in which I (the author) used self-reflection and writing to explore my personal experiences both while I studied and teach in the *Bachelor Degree of Educational Administration* study programme. Then, this autobiographical story is connected to wider cultural, political, and social meanings and understandings. This auto-ethnography is a combination of retrospective life history and contemporaneous life history [15]. I reconstruct my study experience in the past and describe my status as a lecturer in the programme from the present feelings and interpretations of my individual concerned. Specifically, I reflect my meaningful experiences both as a former student and as a lecturer of the *Bachelor Degree of Educational Management* study programme. Furthermore, based on my studying and teaching experiences, this I draw the possible features of the study programme that would be meaningful for the current students. I present this auto-ethnography in a naturalistic mode: “a first-person life history in which the life story is largely in the words of the individual subject, supported by a brief introduction, commentary and conclusion on the part of the researcher” [15].

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Meaningful experiences of studying educational management, and administration

I (Priadi), the author of this paper, obtained the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) in *educational administration* from the Department of Educational Administration, Faculty of Educational Sciences, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI), in the city of Bandung, West Java, Indonesia (year of study: 2000-2005). The department remains using the *educational administration* term while most of other organising institutions change their nomenclature into *educational management* in the early 21st century.

I obtained the *B.Ed. of the Educational Administration* after earning 152 credits, including 6 credits of the undergraduate thesis. I graduated from this programme in time: 4.5 years (9 semesters). The programme provided the core *educational administration* courses (98 credits). This included managerial internship, such as *educational planning*, *educational management*, and *educational supervision* [16]. In general, the core *educational administration* curriculum emphasised the student ability related to managerial functions rather than the clerical one. In addition, I was impressed that although the programme is not teacher education in nature, but the curriculum provided: liberal

arts (14 credits); educational foundations (22 credits), and; teaching theories, teaching praxis, and one-semester-teaching practice at school (18 credits). Therefore, I also have the *Akta Kependidikan IV* teaching license that was licensing the graduates of the B.Ed. as a novice teacher in the subject.

Actually, the study programme of *educational administration* in UPI aims to prepare and/or to develop educational-personnel who is truly competent both in the governmental and private institutions to fulfil: structural officer, functional officer, technical officer who is organising education, manager of educational programme, teaching personnel, and the developer of *educational administration* study [16]. It is argued that the aim of the study programme was ambiguous to prepare their students: (1) not only to be an *educational technical officer, administrator, leader, and manager*; but (2) also to be a *teacher*. However, I argue that this additional teaching competence was a 'secret weapon' to compete in the job market afterwards. In fact, for being a head-teacher/principal at school, the graduates should start their career as a teacher.

Furthermore, until mid 2000's many the graduates work as a school teacher. Since there is no *educational administration* subject at school anymore, they teach any subject existing in school. However, it could be criticised that the professional teacher should teach the same subject obtained in the university. Therefore, some of the graduates take their second bachelor degree according to their own teaching position with the acknowledgement their prior credits. Meanwhile, I continued my study until the Master Degree in the same field, in the same university, directly after I finished my Bachelor Degree (year of study: 2005-2007). After that, I worked mainly as a principal assistant with the additional task as a Civic Education teacher in a private international secondary school in Jakarta, Indonesia for 1.5 years. I argue that both my managerial and teaching knowledge and skills acquired from the university made me much more confidence and gave me a better chance to get this position. Finally, I become a lecturer of the *Bachelor Degree of Educational Management* study programme, Faculty of Educational Sciences, Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia, since 2010.

4.2. Meaningful experiences of teaching educational management and administration

The *Department of Educational Administration*, Faculty of Educational Sciences, Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta (UNY) organises the *B.Ed. in Educational Management*

programme. The name of this programme is different from its department's name. Indeed, the curriculum structure is slightly different from I experienced in UPI Bandung.

Previously, I had such a fundamental stance that *management* is a subordinate of *administration* in which implement the policy made by a leader as the policy maker. Now, I have a new perspective that *administration* and *management* is interchangeable, as mentioned before that "There is no difference in practice between *administration* and *management*, and in much of the literature the two terms are used interchangeably." [12]. However, the credits of each course in the curriculum of the *B.Ed. in Educational Management* in UNY are identified: how many credits that are theoretical or practical or field study. Although the programme is academic (the *B.Ed./Sarjana Strata 1*), I perceive such a vocational sense within this curriculum.

This curriculum emphasises the so-called "the eight fields of *educational management*" (*delapan bidang garapan*). These eight fields consist of (1) *educational organisation*, (2) *curriculum management*, (3) *pupil/learner management*, (4) *educational personnel management*, (5) *educational facility management*, (6) *management of educational finance*, (7) *public relation in education*, and (8) *office administration in educational institution*. The department seems posit these eight fields as material objects of the *management in education*. In addition, the discourse of these eight fields is completed by *educational leadership and supervision* (Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan UNY, 2009). This division could be proposed as a body of knowledge of the *educational management* discipline. However, this long-term division might trap both the lecturers and the students into a comfort zone assuming that the development of the *educational management* should be only within these eight fields.

Furthermore, instead of providing teaching theories and praxis in the curriculum, the department focuses it on its core: *educational leadership and management*. Even, they had developed the so-called *micro-leading* course with its particular laboratory, instead of microteaching as the UPI's employed. In addition, I am impressed by a group of courses: library management, e-library, and its internship practicum [17], because I never found this course during my previous study, since these were not provided by UPI [16]. In short, the department does not provide teaching competences in the curriculum, but the university had awarded the *Akta Mengajar IV* teaching license to the *B.Ed. in Educational Management* graduates until the introduction of the *Pendidikan Profesi Guru/PPG* (teacher profession education) in 2014. The PPG is awarding their graduates with *Sertifikat Profesi Pendidik* (professional educator certificate) replacing the *Akta Mengajar IV*.

5. Conclusion

Reflecting to the aforementioned experiences of studying and teaching *educational management* and *administration*, it is difficult to point such a type of this discipline is the most meaningful for everyone in different contexts. It is argued that *educational administration* term is broader than *educational management*. To some extent, this might be suitable when it is viewed from the theoretical and historical stances. The *educational administration* may have more strength in the historical-academic sense and in the formal nomenclature conforming to the government policy statements. However, it might be slightly difficult for their graduates to convince the general public this original meaning of *educational administration*, especially for getting job. Furthermore, if they were confident with the *educational administration* romanticism referred as 'the science for being executive', then they must deal with the reality that, to achieve 'the executive position', they might usually start from the lower level they claimed as *management*. On the other hand, those who graduated from the programme using *educational management* term could be more confident to deal with the general public and main private job market, regardless the historical-academic sense and the formal nomenclature from the government preferring the *educational administration* term.

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