

School Organizational Development Through Action Research and Basic Assumptions

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ABSTRACT

This study was an original research article that aimed to analyze school organizational development based on action research and basic organizational assumptions at MAN 4 Agam and SDN 37 Pasar Bukit. The study was conducted in response to the need for schools to adapt to organizational change demands related to effectiveness, collaboration, and alignment of organizational values. A descriptive qualitative approach with a comparative design was employed. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with educational staff and school management, as well as non-participatory observations to examine work practices and organizational dynamics in both schools. The findings showed that the implementation of action research supported schools in identifying organizational problems, designing improvement actions, and conducting reflective evaluations in a systematic and sustainable manner. The results also indicated that basic organizational assumptions, including work values, communication patterns, and decision-making practices, played a significant role in facilitating or constraining organizational development. Comparative analysis revealed differences in organizational culture and implementation practices between the two schools, which influenced the effectiveness of the change process. The study concluded that school organizational development became more effective when action research was implemented consistently and aligned with the school's basic organizational assumptions. These findings contributed both theoretically and practically to understanding organizational development in educational institutions, particularly in supporting participatory and reflective change processes.

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1. INTRODUCTION

School organizational development is a systematic and continuous process aimed at enhancing the capacity of educational institutions to respond effectively to internal and external changes. Schools, as social organizations, face increasing demands related to work effectiveness, collaboration, and alignment of organizational values in an ever-changing educational environment. Structural complexity, cross-functional interactions, and dynamic working relationships require schools to adopt planned and adaptive change strategies to ensure organizational sustainability and educational quality. In the context of educational organizations, organizational development is understood as a series of planned interventions designed to improve work structures, processes, and practices through collaboration and collective learning. Previous studies have shown that organizational development contributes to improving institutional performance by

actively involving organizational members in the change process and strengthening internal learning mechanisms (Dhillon & Sethi, 2020). One approach that has been widely applied to support organizational development in educational settings is action research. Action research emphasizes cyclical processes of planning, action, observation, and reflection, enabling schools to identify problems systematically and implement context-based improvements in a participatory manner (Cain & Harris, 2019).

Several studies indicate that the application of action research in schools supports sustainable organizational change because it integrates professional reflection with concrete actions carried out by school members themselves. Through this approach, change is not implemented in a top-down manner but emerges from collective engagement and shared responsibility within the organization. However, the effectiveness of action research is closely related to the organizational context in which it is implemented, particularly organizational culture and the basic assumptions held by organizational members.

Organizational culture reflects shared values, beliefs, and norms that influence work behavior, communication patterns, and decision-making processes within schools. Research has demonstrated that a strong and supportive organizational culture plays a significant role in enhancing organizational effectiveness and facilitating change (Sajidin, Asiah, & Pitriyani, 2023; Butarbutar, Nadeak, & Naibaho, 2022). In addition to organizational culture, basic organizational assumptions regarding human behavior, collaboration, and responsibility shape how organizational members perceive and respond to change initiatives. Positive assumptions tend to foster openness and participation, whereas negative assumptions may create resistance and rigidity in organizational practices.

Despite the growing body of research on action research and organizational development in educational institutions, empirical studies that simultaneously examine the integration of action research and basic organizational assumptions in comparative school contexts remain limited, particularly in Indonesia. Most existing studies focus on either action research or organizational culture separately, without adequately exploring how these elements interact to influence organizational development across different types of schools. Based on this research gap, this study aimed to examine the application of action research in school organizational development and to analyze the role of basic organizational assumptions in shaping organizational change processes at MAN 4 Agam and SDN 37 Pasar Bukit. Specifically, this study sought to describe the implementation of action research, analyze the influence of basic organizational assumptions, and compare organizational development dynamics between the two schools.

2. METHODS, DATA, ANALYSIS

This study uses a **descriptive qualitative approach** with a comparative study design. This approach was chosen because the purpose of the research was not to test hypotheses or measure the relationship between variables statistically, but to understand in depth the process of developing school organizations based on *action research* and the role of basic organizational assumptions in the real context. The qualitative approach allows researchers to capture the meaning, values, and practices of organizations that develop in the school environment contextually and holistically. Comparative design was used to compare the dynamics of organizational development in the context of two different educational institutions, namely MAN 4 Agam and SDN 37 Pasar Bukit. This comparison is intended to identify similarities and differences in *action research practices* as well as basic organizational assumptions that affect the process of organizational change in each school.

a. Sampling

The population in this study is all school residents involved in the organizational development process at MAN 4 Agam and SDN 37 Pasar Bukit. However, given the research's focus on managerial and organizational processes, the unit of analysis in this study is assigned to individuals who have a strategic role in the implementation and decision-making of school organizations.

The sampling technique used is **purposive sampling**, which is the deliberate selection of informants based on certain considerations relevant to the purpose of the research. Informants are chosen because they have knowledge, experience, and direct involvement in the development process of the school organization. The research informants include:

- 1) Education personnel, who play a role in administrative management, implementation of internal policies, and adaptation to changes in organizational work systems.
- 2) The vice principal for student affairs, who has a strategic role in coordinating school activities, decision-making, and implementing organizational development policies.

The selection of these informants is considered appropriate because they are directly involved in the *action research process* and have an understanding of the values, work culture, and basic organizational assumptions that develop in their respective schools.

b. Data Collection

Data collection was carried out through two main techniques, namely in-depth interviews and observations. The use of these two techniques is intended to obtain rich data and increase the credibility of the findings through triangulation of methods. Interviews are conducted in a semi-structured manner using open-ended interview guidelines. This technique was chosen so that the researcher has a directed question framework, but still provides space for informants to express their views, experiences, and interpretations freely. The interview focused on the informant's understanding of the *action research process*, organizational development practices, and basic organizational values and assumptions that influence the implementation of change.

In addition to interviews, non-participatory observations were conducted to observe work practices, interaction patterns, and school organizational dynamics firsthand. This observation aims to complement the interview data and capture phenomena that are not always revealed through verbal communication, such as work habits, coordination patterns, and responses to organizational changes. The observation results were recorded in the form of field notes that were compiled systematically.

c. Research Instruments

In this qualitative research, measurements are not carried out through quantitative instruments, but through conceptual indicators developed from the theoretical framework. Key indicators of the study include:

- 1) *Action research practice*, which includes the stages of planning, implementing actions, observation, and reflection in the development of school organizations.
- 2) Basic organizational assumptions, which include work values, communication patterns, decision-making methods, and organizational views on change.
- 3) The results of organizational development, which are reflected in changes in work practices, improved coordination, and organizational adaptation to internal needs.

These indicators are used as a reference in the preparation of interview guidelines and observation focus.

d. Data Analysis

Data analysis was carried out in a thematic qualitative manner by following systematic analysis stages. The analysis process begins from the moment the data is collected and continues continuously until the research is completed. The stages of analysis include:

1. Data reduction, which is the process of sorting and simplifying data from interviews and observations to identify information that is relevant to the focus of the research.
2. Data presentation, which is the preparation of data in the form of a thematic narrative that describes *action research practices* and basic organizational assumptions in each school.
3. Drawing conclusions, namely the process of data interpretation to find patterns, meanings, and comparative differences between MAN 4 Agam and SDN 37 Pasar Bukit.

This analysis is carried out by associating empirical findings with the theoretical framework of organizational development and *action research* so as to produce an in-depth and contextual understanding.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This section presents the empirical findings of the study concerning school organizational development based on action research and basic organizational assumptions at MAN 4 Agam and SDN 37 Pasar Bukit. The results are organized narratively to reflect key changes observed during the implementation of action research, focusing on collaboration patterns, organizational planning, work practices, and organizational culture in both schools. The presentation of findings emphasizes outcomes rather than procedural explanations. The implementation of action research in both schools produced observable changes in organizational dynamics, particularly in how school members interacted, planned activities, and responded to organizational challenges. These changes were identified through interview data and supported by direct observations of daily organizational practices.

One of the most prominent findings was the improvement in collaboration among school members. At MAN 4 Agam, collaboration among teachers, vice principals, and educational staff became more structured and intensive. Prior to the implementation of action research, coordination activities were largely administrative and conducted irregularly. During the research period, coordination meetings increased in frequency and became more focused on reflective evaluation of organizational practices. Observational data indicated that coordination meetings increased from approximately one meeting per month to three

meetings per month, with agendas increasingly centered on problem identification and joint solution planning. At SDN 37 Pasar Bukit, collaboration also showed improvement, although with different characteristics. Collaboration among classroom teachers became more informal yet more frequent. Teachers engaged in peer discussions related to instructional challenges and classroom management, particularly after reflection sessions initiated through the action research cycle. Although collaboration at SDN 37 Pasar Bukit was less formally documented compared to MAN 4 Agam, it demonstrated increased openness and mutual support among teachers. This finding suggests that collaboration intensity and form are influenced by each school's organizational context and existing work culture.

In addition to collaboration, improvements were identified in organizational planning practices. The use of the action research cycle encouraged both schools to move from reactive planning toward more systematic and reflective planning processes. Interview data revealed that school members began to base planning decisions on evaluations of previous actions rather than immediate situational demands. At MAN 4 Agam, approximately 80 percent of informants reported that organizational planning became clearer, more structured, and aligned with identified organizational needs. Planning meetings increasingly included reflective discussions on what had been implemented, what outcomes were achieved, and what adjustments were required. At SDN 37 Pasar Bukit, planning effectiveness also improved, although at a more moderate level. Around 67 percent of respondents stated that planning processes became more focused, particularly in relation to instructional activities and teacher coordination. However, limitations related to time availability and documentation capacity influenced the extent to which planning could be formalized. Despite these constraints, planning practices demonstrated greater intentionality compared to pre-intervention conditions.

Changes in work practices were also evident as a result of the action research implementation. At MAN 4 Agam, decision-making processes became increasingly evidence-based. Decisions related to task allocation, program implementation, and internal coordination were informed by reflective evaluations of prior activities. Teachers and educational staff reported greater involvement in discussions related to organizational decisions, indicating a shift from centralized decision-making toward more participatory practices. At SDN 37 Pasar Bukit, changes in work practices were reflected primarily in instructional activities. Teachers reported increased variation in teaching strategies following reflection sessions, as they became more aware of the relationship between instructional methods and student responses. Although organizational decision-making remained relatively centralized, teachers demonstrated greater confidence in proposing instructional improvements based on their reflective experiences. This finding indicates that action research influenced work practices differently across organizational levels in the two schools.

Another significant result concerned changes in organizational culture. The findings showed that action research contributed to the development of a more reflective and open organizational climate in both schools. At MAN 4 Agam, reflective practices became an integral part of organizational routines. Approximately 92 percent of respondents reported increased participation in evaluation meetings and greater willingness to express opinions regarding organizational issues. Observational data supported these claims, showing more active dialogue during meetings and a shift toward collective problem-solving approaches. At SDN 37 Pasar Bukit, changes in organizational culture were also observed, particularly in communication patterns among teachers. Teachers became more open to sharing challenges and seeking peer input, which had previously been less common. Although reflective practices were not institutionalized as formal routines, they emerged organically through informal discussions and collaborative reflection. This suggests that organizational culture change can occur through flexible and context-sensitive mechanisms, even in schools with limited resources.

To enhance clarity and support the narrative findings, key indicators of organizational change observed in both schools are summarized in Table 1. The table highlights comparative differences in collaboration frequency, planning effectiveness, changes in work practices, and the development of reflective culture.

Table 1. Summary of Organizational Development Indicators

Main Indicators	MAN 4 Agam	SDN 37 Pasar Bukit
Frequency of Collaborative Meetings	↑ from 1 to 3 meetings/month	↑ from 0 to 2 meetings/month
Planning Effectiveness	High	Moderate
Changes in Work Practices	Significant	Moderate
Reflective Organizational Culture	Strongly increased	Increased

Note: “↑” indicates improvement compared to baseline conditions prior to the implementation of action research.

Overall, the results demonstrate that action research functioned as an effective mechanism for facilitating organizational development in both schools, although with varying degrees of intensity and form. The findings indicate that organizational outcomes were shaped not only by the implementation of action research but also by contextual factors, including existing organizational culture and basic organizational assumptions held by school members. These empirical results provide a foundation for further interpretation and integration with relevant theories and previous studies in the discussion section.

DISCUSSION

This discussion section interprets the empirical findings of the study by situating them within relevant theoretical perspectives and previous research on action research, organizational development, organizational culture, and basic organizational assumptions in educational settings. The discussion aims to explain how and why action research influenced school organizational development at MAN 4 Agam and SDN 37 Pasar Bukit, while also highlighting contextual differences between the two schools that shaped the outcomes of organizational change. The findings of this study confirm that action research functioned not merely as a research methodology but as a practical mechanism for organizational development and collective learning within school organizations. The observed improvements in collaboration, planning effectiveness, work practices, and organizational culture align with the core principles of action research, which emphasize participatory problem-solving, reflection, and continuous improvement (Cain & Harris, 2019; Oranga & Gisore, 2023). Through iterative cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection, both schools were able to move beyond reactive responses toward more intentional and reflective organizational practices.

One of the most significant findings concerns the enhancement of collaboration among school members. At MAN 4 Agam, collaboration became more structured and systematic, while at SDN 37 Pasar Bukit it developed in a more informal yet meaningful manner. These differences illustrate that collaboration in action research does not follow a single standardized model but is shaped by organizational context, leadership practices, and existing work cultures. This finding supports Villeneuve and Bouchamma's (2024) argument that collaborative action research initiatives are most effective when they are adapted to local organizational conditions rather than imposed as rigid procedural frameworks. The increase in collaboration observed in both schools reflects the role of action research as a catalyst for collective engagement. Through reflection sessions and joint evaluations, school members became more aware of shared organizational challenges and developed a sense of collective responsibility for improvement. This aligns with Støren's (2024) assertion that action research fosters professional learning communities by creating structured spaces for dialogue and reflection, which in turn strengthen collaborative practices. In this study, collaboration was not limited to instructional matters but extended to organizational planning and decision-making, indicating a broader impact on organizational functioning.

The findings related to organizational planning further demonstrate the transformative potential of action research. At MAN 4 Agam, planning processes became more evidence-based and strategically aligned with organizational needs. This shift from reactive to reflective planning is consistent with organizational development theory, which emphasizes the importance of feedback loops and continuous evaluation in sustaining organizational change (French, Bell, & Zawacki, 2022). The integration of reflective data into planning discussions enabled school leaders and staff to make more informed decisions and to anticipate organizational challenges more effectively. At SDN 37 Pasar Bukit, improvements in planning were evident but less pronounced. This difference can be attributed to contextual factors such as limited resources, time constraints, and less formalized organizational structures. However, even within these limitations, the action research approach encouraged greater intentionality in planning processes. This finding supports Messikh's (2020) conclusion that action research is particularly valuable in resource-limited educational contexts because of its flexibility and adaptability. Rather than requiring extensive infrastructure, action research relies on reflective practices that can be integrated into everyday organizational routines.

Changes in work practices observed in this study further illustrate how action research influences organizational behavior. At MAN 4 Agam, decision-making processes became more participatory, with teachers and educational staff playing a more active role in organizational discussions. This shift reflects positive basic organizational assumptions regarding staff competence and responsibility, which facilitated openness to shared decision-making. Schein and Schein (2017) emphasize that organizational assumptions about human behavior significantly shape management practices and organizational outcomes. In this case, assumptions that valued collaboration and professional agency supported the successful implementation of

action research. At SDN 37 Pasar Bukit, changes in work practices were more evident at the instructional level than at the organizational leadership level. Teachers demonstrated increased reflective awareness of their instructional strategies and were more willing to experiment with alternative approaches based on collective reflection. This finding suggests that action research can influence professional practice even when broader organizational structures remain relatively centralized. The gradual nature of change observed at SDN 37 Pasar Bukit highlights the importance of viewing organizational development as an incremental process rather than an immediate transformation.

The impact of action research on organizational culture represents another key contribution of this study. The development of reflective and open communication patterns at both schools indicates that action research can reshape underlying organizational norms and values over time. At MAN 4 Agam, reflective practices became institutionalized through regular evaluation meetings, fostering a culture of dialogue and shared problem-solving. This aligns with Deal and Peterson's (2016) view that organizational culture evolves through repeated practices that reinforce shared values and beliefs. At SDN 37 Pasar Bukit, changes in organizational culture emerged through informal interactions rather than formal routines. Teachers became more willing to discuss challenges and seek peer input, signaling a shift toward greater trust and openness. Although these changes were less formalized, they nonetheless represent meaningful cultural development. This finding reinforces the argument that organizational culture change does not always require formal interventions but can occur organically through reflective and collaborative practices embedded in daily work (Windasari, Trihantoyo, & Roesminingsih, 2023).

The role of basic organizational assumptions emerged as a critical factor in shaping the effectiveness of action research implementation. Schools with positive assumptions about staff capabilities and collaborative potential were better positioned to benefit from action research processes. In contrast, where assumptions remained cautious or hierarchical, the impact of action research was more limited. This finding is consistent with Rahma Syarifah's (2021) assertion that basic organizational assumptions serve as the foundation for organizational behavior and change readiness. When assumptions support participation and trust, organizational development initiatives are more likely to succeed.

The comparative aspect of this study provides further insight into how organizational context influences action research outcomes. MAN 4 Agam, as a secondary-level institution with more complex organizational structures, demonstrated more formalized implementation of action research and stronger institutionalization of reflective practices. In contrast, SDN 37 Pasar Bukit, as an elementary school with simpler structures, exhibited more flexible and informal approaches. These differences underscore the importance of contextual sensitivity in organizational development initiatives, supporting the view that there is no universal model for action research implementation in schools (Pei & Lu, 2024).

From the perspective of organizational change theory, the findings of this study align with Kurt Lewin's unfreeze–change–refreeze model. The initial stages of action research functioned as an “unfreezing” process by raising awareness of organizational challenges and creating readiness for change. The implementation of reflective actions represented the “change” phase, while the integration of new practices into organizational routines reflected elements of “refreezing.” However, the study also suggests that in educational contexts, refreezing may remain provisional, as continuous reflection encourages ongoing adaptation rather than static stabilization.

The findings also highlight the relationship between leadership and action research effectiveness. Although leadership was not the primary focus of this study, the results indicate that supportive leadership practices facilitated collaboration and reflection, particularly at MAN 4 Agam. This observation is consistent with Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2020), who argue that successful school leadership plays a critical role in creating conditions for organizational learning and change. Leaders who encourage participation and value reflective dialogue contribute to the sustainability of action research initiatives. In terms of practical implications, the findings suggest that action research can serve as a powerful tool for human resource development within schools. By engaging teachers and staff as active participants in organizational inquiry, action research enhances professional competence, reflective capacity, and collaborative skills. These outcomes are particularly valuable in educational environments facing increasing demands for accountability and continuous improvement. However, the study also identifies challenges associated with action research implementation, particularly in schools with limited resources. Time constraints, documentation demands, and varying levels of research literacy among staff can hinder the systematic application of action research cycles. Despite these challenges, the flexibility of action research enables schools to adapt the approach to their specific contexts, as demonstrated by SDN 37 Pasar Bukit. This finding reinforces the argument that organizational development initiatives must be contextually grounded to be effective. Overall, this study contributes to the literature on educational organizational development

by demonstrating the interconnected roles of action research and basic organizational assumptions in shaping school change processes. By integrating empirical findings from two different school contexts, the study provides evidence that action research is most effective when aligned with organizational culture and underlying assumptions about human behavior. Rather than viewing action research as a technical intervention, this study highlights its role as a social and cultural process that reshapes how school organizations learn, collaborate, and evolve.

An additional dimension emerging from the findings concerns the relationship between action research and organizational learning within school contexts. The results indicate that action research encouraged schools to develop learning-oriented organizational behaviors, particularly through reflective dialogue and shared evaluation practices. Organizational learning theory emphasizes that learning occurs when organizations are able to reflect on experience, generate shared meaning, and institutionalize new knowledge into daily practices. In this study, both MAN 4 Agam and SDN 37 Pasar Bukit demonstrated early stages of organizational learning, as school members increasingly used reflection as a basis for planning and decision-making. At MAN 4 Agam, organizational learning was evident in the way reflection results were documented and revisited during subsequent planning cycles. This practice allowed the school to accumulate experiential knowledge over time, rather than treating organizational problems as isolated incidents. Such learning-oriented practices align with French, Bell, and Zawacki's (2022) view that organizational development is most effective when learning becomes embedded in organizational routines. Through action research, reflection was no longer perceived as an individual activity but as a collective responsibility, strengthening the school's capacity to adapt to change.

In contrast, organizational learning at SDN 37 Pasar Bukit developed in a more informal and experiential manner. Teachers relied on shared experiences and peer discussions rather than formal documentation. While this approach may appear less systematic, it nevertheless reflects a form of social learning that is particularly relevant in smaller educational organizations. This finding supports the argument that organizational learning does not require formal structures alone but can also emerge through sustained interpersonal interactions and trust-based communication (Deal & Peterson, 2016). Thus, action research facilitated organizational learning through different pathways, depending on each school's context.

Another important aspect highlighted by the findings is the role of reflective practice as a bridge between individual professional development and organizational change. Reflection, as a core component of action research, enabled teachers and staff to critically examine their own practices and their impact on organizational outcomes. This process contributed to increased professional awareness and a deeper understanding of the relationship between individual actions and collective organizational goals. Støren (2024) emphasizes that reflective practice is central to professional growth and knowledge production in educational settings, a perspective strongly supported by the findings of this study.

The results also suggest that reflective practices influenced the sustainability of organizational change. Schools that consistently engaged in reflection were better able to maintain improvements over time, as reflection allowed them to identify emerging challenges and adjust strategies accordingly. This supports the notion that sustainability in organizational development is not achieved through fixed solutions but through adaptive learning processes. Action research, therefore, functioned as a mechanism that enabled schools to continuously recalibrate their organizational practices in response to changing conditions. The findings further underscore the importance of trust as a foundational element in action research-based organizational development. Trust influenced the willingness of school members to participate openly in reflection and collaboration. At MAN 4 Agam, higher levels of trust were reflected in more active participation during evaluation meetings and greater openness in expressing critical perspectives. At SDN 37 Pasar Bukit, trust developed gradually through informal interactions, enabling teachers to share challenges without fear of judgment. This observation aligns with organizational culture literature, which identifies trust as a key determinant of effective collaboration and change readiness (Schein & Schein, 2017).

Trust is closely linked to basic organizational assumptions regarding human behavior and professional competence. When organizational leaders assume that teachers and staff are capable, responsible, and motivated, they are more likely to encourage participatory practices and shared decision-making. The findings of this study indicate that such positive assumptions facilitated the implementation of action research, particularly at MAN 4 Agam. Conversely, where assumptions were more cautious or hierarchical, participation was more limited, and change occurred more gradually. This reinforces the argument that organizational assumptions function as underlying drivers of organizational behavior and change processes (Rahma Syarifah, 2021). In addition, the study highlights the interaction between leadership practices and organizational assumptions in shaping action research outcomes. Although

leadership was not examined as a primary variable, the results indicate that leaders who supported reflection and collaboration played a critical role in legitimizing action research activities. Supportive leadership created psychological safety, enabling teachers and staff to engage in reflective dialogue without fear of negative consequences. This finding is consistent with Leithwood et al. (2020), who argue that effective school leadership is essential for fostering organizational learning and sustaining improvement initiatives.

The comparative findings between MAN 4 Agam and SDN 37 Pasar Bukit also provide insights into how institutional level influences organizational development processes. Secondary schools such as MAN 4 Agam often possess more formal structures and administrative complexity, which can support systematic implementation of action research but may also require stronger coordination mechanisms. In contrast, elementary schools like SDN 37 Pasar Bukit typically operate with simpler structures, allowing for greater flexibility but posing challenges in documentation and institutionalization of change. These differences suggest that organizational development strategies must be tailored to institutional characteristics rather than applied uniformly across educational contexts. Furthermore, the findings contribute to the broader discourse on participatory change in education. Action research positioned teachers and staff not merely as implementers of externally designed reforms but as active agents of change. This participatory orientation aligns with contemporary perspectives on educational reform, which emphasize bottom-up approaches and practitioner involvement as key to meaningful and sustainable change. By involving school members directly in problem identification and solution design, action research enhanced ownership of change initiatives and reduced resistance to organizational transformation.

The study also reveals the role of action research in strengthening professional identity among teachers and educational staff. Through reflection and collaboration, participants developed a stronger sense of professional agency and responsibility toward organizational improvement. This aligns with findings from Villeneuve and Bouchamma (2023), who argue that practitioner-led inquiry enhances professional confidence and decision-making capacity. In this study, increased professional agency was evident in teachers' willingness to propose changes and experiment with new practices based on reflective insights.

Another dimension worth noting is the contribution of action research to alignment between organizational values and practices. The findings indicate that reflection enabled schools to identify inconsistencies between stated organizational values and actual practices. Addressing these inconsistencies became part of the organizational development process, supporting greater coherence between values, goals, and daily activities. This alignment is critical for organizational integrity and effectiveness, as emphasized in organizational culture literature (Deal & Peterson, 2016).

From a methodological perspective, the findings support the suitability of qualitative action research for exploring complex organizational phenomena in educational settings. The use of interviews and observations allowed for in-depth understanding of organizational dynamics that may not be captured through quantitative measures alone. The comparative design further enriched the analysis by highlighting contextual variations and common patterns across schools. This methodological approach contributes to the growing recognition of qualitative inquiry as a valuable tool for studying organizational change in education (Hammersley, 2020).

Overall, the expanded discussion reinforces the central argument of this study: that action research, when aligned with supportive organizational assumptions and culture, can serve as a powerful driver of school organizational development. The findings demonstrate that organizational change is not merely a technical process but a social and cultural one, shaped by relationships, values, and shared meanings within the school community. By integrating empirical findings with established theories and previous research, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of how action research contributes to organizational learning, professional development, and sustainable change in educational institutions.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that school organizational development at MAN 4 Agam and SDN 37 Pasar Bukit can be effectively supported through the consistent implementation of action research aligned with the school's basic organizational assumptions. The findings demonstrate that action research functions not only as a methodological approach but also as a practical mechanism for organizational learning, enabling schools to identify problems, design improvement actions, and reflect systematically on organizational practices.

The results indicate that the application of action research contributed to improvements in collaboration, organizational planning, work practices, and the development of a more reflective organizational culture in both schools. However, the intensity and form of these changes differed between MAN 4 Agam and SDN 37 Pasar Bukit, reflecting variations in organizational context, culture, and basic

assumptions held by school members. Schools with positive assumptions regarding collaboration, professional capacity, and shared responsibility were better positioned to institutionalize reflective practices and participatory decision-making processes.

This study also highlights that organizational culture and basic organizational assumptions play a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of action research–based organizational development. Action research initiatives that are not aligned with existing values and assumptions may result in limited or superficial change. Therefore, successful school organizational development requires not only the application of appropriate change models but also an understanding of the cultural and cognitive foundations that shape organizational behavior.

Based on these conclusions, several recommendations are proposed. For school principals and management teams, it is recommended to foster organizational values that support openness, collaboration, and reflection, and to actively involve teachers and educational staff in all stages of action research processes. Such involvement can strengthen collective ownership of organizational change and enhance the sustainability of improvement efforts. For teachers and educational staff, active participation in reflective practices and collaborative evaluation is encouraged to improve professional competence and contribute meaningfully to organizational development initiatives.

For future researchers, further studies are recommended to expand the scope of investigation by involving a larger number of schools and diverse educational contexts. Employing mixed-methods research designs may also provide richer insights into the relationship between action research, basic organizational assumptions, and school organizational development. Such studies would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how participatory change approaches can be optimized within educational organizations.

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