

Visionary Leadership of School Principals in Enhancing the Quality of Education

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ABSTRACT

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Visionary leadership of school principals plays a critical role in enhancing the quality of education through strategic vision, teacher supervision, instructional innovation, and collaboration among all stakeholders to create a favourable school climate. This study aims to analyze the role of visionary leadership in improving educational quality and to develop an effective contextual leadership model for the first secondary school, Muhammadiyah Payakumbuh. The research employed a qualitative case study approach, utilizing data collection techniques including semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis. Data were analyzed iteratively through data reduction, presentation, and concluding. Data validation was conducted through the triangulation of sources, methods, and time to ensure the consistency and accuracy of the findings. Results indicate that the principal has formulated a clear educational vision and begun its implementation through programs to improve learning, strengthen character development, and enhance teacher capacity. Visionary leadership is characterised in collaborative strategies, effective stakeholder engagement, and seamless technology integration. Positive impacts are evident in improved student learning outcomes and increased parental satisfaction. However, challenges such as limited budget, teacher resistance, and infrastructure constraints remain obstacles. This study highlights the importance of visionary leadership, stakeholder support, and continuous training in achieving sustainable educational quality in resource-limited schools. In conclusion, visionary leadership is essential for improving educational quality, but its success heavily depends on the collective support of all stakeholders.



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A. INTRODUCTION

Improving the quality of education remains a central issue that continues to attract the attention of various stakeholders, including in Indonesia (Atikasari, 2020). Quality education encompasses academic achievement and character development, holistic skills, moral values, and critical thinking abilities necessary to face global challenges (Nurarfiansyah et al., 2022; Mira Febrina, 2022). Effective learning processes, relevant curricula, and supportive school environments are prerequisites for realizing such quality (Hasanah et al., 2024). Active participation of all stakeholders, including teachers, students, parents, and the community, also plays a crucial role (Khidayat Muslim et al., 2024). In this context, the visionary leadership of school principals emerges as a key driver of educational transformation through a clear, inspiring vision that motivates all school members (Anas, 2025; Nasrulloh & Lailiya, 2022). However, resource limitations often hinder implementation, particularly in remote areas (Karim, 2025; Sriyanto, 2022).

The visionary leadership of school principals plays a vital role in enhancing educational quality within schools. Principals are responsible for translating the school's vision into various strategies, such as teacher supervision, performance evaluation, and fulfilling the needs of educational staff (Liswati et al., 2023). Effective communication of this vision is key to encouraging teachers to adopt innovative teaching practices. Instructional leadership further contributes to a favourable school climate by managing learning programs and creating a supportive work environment (Guo et al., 2025). Principals must also adapt to change and manage educational innovation (Abdul Aziz et al., 2022; Ubaidillah et al., 2018). Cultural, structural, and agency-related challenges must be addressed to ensure continuous improvement (Shava & Heystek, 2019). The involvement of all stakeholders and the fostering of a collaborative culture are essential, supported by data-driven decision-making (Sam et al., 2025; West, 2025). Ongoing training for principals strengthens leadership capacity (Romero & Krichesky, 2018; Tanzeh et al., 2021).

In the educational context, visionary principals serve as administrators and change agents who promote innovation and enhance educational quality (Fitriah & Rahmah, 2020). Visionary leadership emphasizes the importance of effective communication, human resource empowerment, and future-oriented decision-making through four main components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Farida & Ma'ruf, 2022). This role is vital in addressing educational challenges, improving learning quality, and developing student character (Saaduddin, 2020). Research conducted at the first secondary school, Muhammadiyah Payakumbuh, aims to examine the principal's role in this context and identify obstacles, such as a lack of vision, limited resources, and insufficient stakeholder involvement (Anas & Karim, 2025; Jamaluddin et al., 2022). Not fully visionary leadership is considered a root cause of the main problems (Pandi, 2020).

This study proposes a solution by developing a visionary leadership model tailored to the context and needs of the first secondary school, Muhammadiyah Payakumbuh. The model is designed to enhance the principal's capacity to formulate a clear vision, inspire the school community, and effectively implement strategies for improving educational quality (Jamaluddin et al., 2022). Furthermore, this research highlights the importance of training and mentoring for principals, as well as active stakeholder involvement in the education planning and evaluation processes (Nuraini, 2021). The primary objective of this study is to analyze the role of visionary

leadership in enhancing educational quality and to develop a contextual and practical leadership model. The findings of this study are expected to encourage more effective leadership practices at the school level (Seriyaniti et al., 2021). The novelty of this research lies in its contextual approach, which integrates visionary leadership theory with the real-life conditions of secondary schools in Indonesia (Anas & Hanani, 2024).

B. RESEARCH METHODS

This study was conducted at the first secondary school, Muhammadiyah Payakumbuh, at Jl. Tan Malaka No.168, Kelurahan Napar, Kota Payakumbuh, West Sumatra. The research employed a qualitative case study approach (Darmalaksana, 2020) to explore in depth the phenomenon of visionary leadership by the school principal and its impact on the quality of education at the school. Data collection techniques included semi-structured interviews, observation of daily activities at the school, and document studies (Nurfajriani, 2016), as detailed in the table below:

Table 1. Research Framework

Research Focus	Interviews	Observation	Documentation
Vision and mission of the school	Interviews with the principal and teachers regarding the formulation and dissemination of the vision and mission to the school community.	Observation of interactions during meetings, socialization of the vision and mission, and responses from the school community.	The school’s documents include its vision and mission statements, strategic plans, and records of dissemination activities for these statements.
Implementation of visionary leadership through empowerment and participation strategies	Interviews with teachers, parents, school committee members, and staff about training, stakeholder involvement, and challenges.	Observation of teacher training sessions, school committee meetings, and activities integrating technology in learning.	Documents include teacher training reports, committee meeting minutes, and reports on school technology use.
Impact of visionary leadership on educational quality and stakeholder satisfaction	Interviews with students, parents, and teachers related to academic achievements, competition participation, and service satisfaction.	Observation of student activities in academic and non-academic competitions and interactions between the school and parents.	Data on national exam scores, student competition reports, and parent satisfaction survey results.

Data analysis was conducted systematically and iteratively through several stages. The first stage involved data reduction, which entailed sorting and focusing on data relevant to the research objectives. Subsequently, the data were grouped into main themes, including the principal’s role, challenges in implementing the vision, and the impact of leadership on students. The second stage involved presenting data in narratives, tables, or diagrams to facilitate interpretation, supported by direct quotes from interviews as evidence of the findings. The final stage links the analysis results to visionary leadership theory to address the research focus.

To ensure data validity, this study applied several triangulation techniques. First, source triangulation was conducted by comparing data from various informants, including the principal, teachers, administrative staff, students, and parent representatives, to minimize bias. Second,

method triangulation combined semi-structured interviews, observations, and document studies to complement and verify the data. Third, time triangulation involved collecting data at different times to ensure the consistency of findings. Additionally, member checking was implemented by confirming preliminary results with informants to strengthen credibility and avoid misinterpretation.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The principal's leadership has a vital role in improving the quality of education in schools. The success of implementing the Independent Curriculum depends heavily on visionary leadership, which can foster motivation and transform the learning culture in the school environment (Sari et al., 2025). Leadership styles such as visionary, democratic, and authoritarian also affect teachers' work motivation and performance in school management (Zebua et al., 2025). In addition, school principals play a role in shaping student discipline through example, policies, and positive habituation (Nasution et al., 2025). Evaluation, monitoring, and empowerment of teachers and staff are part of improving the institution's quality (Amelia & Siahaan, 2025). School principals' managerial competence and supervision also support the effectiveness of school education and service programs (Zainuddin et al., 2025; Fahra & Syukri, 2025). The Principal's Visionary Leadership in Improving the Quality of Education at Muhammadiyah Payakumbuh Junior High School is described as follows:

1. The Role of School Principal Leadership in Enhancing the Quality of Education

School principal leadership is critical in improving the quality of education within schools. Successfully implementing the Merdeka Curriculum largely depends on visionary leadership that fosters motivation and transforms the learning culture in the school environment (Sari et al., 2025). Leadership styles such as visionary, democratic, and authoritarian also influence teachers' work motivation and performance in school management (Zebua et al., 2025). Moreover, principals play a significant role in shaping student discipline through exemplary behaviour, policies, and positive habituation (Nasution et al., 2025). Evaluation, monitoring, and empowerment of teachers and staff are integral to enhancing institutional quality (Amelia & Siahaan, 2025). The managerial competence and supervision of principals further enhance the effectiveness of educational programs and school services (Zainuddin et al., 2025; Fahra & Syukri, 2025).

2. Vision and Mission Formulation at the first secondary school, Muhammadiyah Payakumbuh

The principal has formulated a clear vision and mission, aiming to position the school as a leading educational institution that produces graduates with strong character, academic achievement, and the ability to compete nationally (Anas & Karim, 2025). The vision of the first secondary school, Muhammadiyah Payakumbuh, is "To develop a disciplined, creative, Islamic, and excellent generation with a global perspective in welcoming the future." Its mission includes integrating Islamic values and noble character throughout school activities; providing adequate, high-quality learning facilities and infrastructure; ensuring professional educators and education staff; and delivering an education that equips students with knowledge, independence, noble character, skills, and readiness for further education. These vision and mission statements are implemented through programs such as enhancing learning quality, strengthening character education, and developing extracurricular

activities. However, the dissemination of this vision has not been uniformly conducted, resulting in some school community members not fully understanding or supporting its implementation. This indicates that although a clear vision is a crucial first step, its effectiveness heavily relies on communication and the involvement of all stakeholders. The principal's strategic implementation of the vision and mission involves planning, communication, and visionary leadership to promote quality improvement and achieve the school's goals (Baidowi, 2024).

The principal's role in formulating the school's vision and mission is a fundamental basis for strategic planning. A clear vision and mission guide programs, activities, and policies to align with the school's long-term objectives (Doringin, 2020). Effective communication is essential to embed the vision and mission into the school's culture and daily practices. Involving teachers, parents, and other stakeholders in the formulation process fosters a sense of ownership and shared responsibility (Ghavifekr & Ramzy, 2020). Well-articulated vision and mission statements enhance teacher motivation and performance by providing precise and meaningful goals (Sariakin et al., 2025). The principal's leadership, which supports the vision and mission, contributes to a positive organisational culture and higher teacher participation (Slamet et al., 2024). A strong vision and mission also directly impact student achievement and overall school success (Chien, 2022).

3. Implementation of Visionary Leadership at the first secondary school, Muhammadiyah Payakumbuh

Visionary leadership is implemented through teacher empowerment, stakeholder participation, and technology integration in learning (Saputra, 2022). Empowering teachers via training and workshops has improved their pedagogical and professional competencies. Meanwhile, the involvement of parents and the community in planning and evaluating school programs strengthens collaboration between the school and its surrounding environment. However, challenges such as budget constraints and resistance from some teachers hinder the full implementation of these strategies. These findings align with visionary leadership theory, which emphasizes the importance of collaboration and support from all parties to achieve shared goals (Yusuf & Basrowi, 2023).

Programs implemented at the first secondary school, Muhammadiyah Payakumbuh, including improving learning quality and developing student character, have shown significant results. Nevertheless, challenges like limited resources and resistance from some teachers highlight the need for a holistic and sustainable approach to implementing visionary leadership. This study offers practical implications for policymakers and educational practitioners. First, training and mentoring programs are needed to develop principals' visionary leadership skills. Second, increasing stakeholder participation in planning and evaluating school programs is crucial to ensure support and sustainability. Third, improving school infrastructure and facilities is necessary to support implementing innovative programs.

4. Impact of Visionary Leadership at the first secondary school, Muhammadiyah Payakumbuh

The positive impact of visionary leadership is evident in the increased average national exam scores, greater student participation in academic and non-academic

competitions, and higher parental satisfaction with educational services. Visionary leadership can catalyze improving education quality (Nasrulloh & Lailiya, 2022). However, challenges such as financial limitations, lack of active participation from some teachers, and inadequate infrastructure suggest that the success of visionary leadership depends not only on the principal's abilities but also on adequate support and resources. These findings correspond with visionary leadership theory, which states that visionary leaders inspire and motivate followers to achieve higher goals (Yusuf & Basrowi, 2023). The principal of the first secondary school, Muhammadiyah Payakumbuh, has demonstrated these characteristics by formulating a clear vision and implementing it through structured strategies. However, the study also reveals that successful visionary leadership requires the support of all stakeholders (Irwan et al., 2023). Additionally, the findings support the Educational Quality theory, which posits that improving education quality requires strong leadership, meticulous planning, and continuous evaluation (Fauzi et al., 2024).

Overall, this study contributes novel insights to the educational leadership literature by integrating visionary leadership theory with the context of the first secondary school, Muhammadiyah Payakumbuh. The findings reinforce the importance of visionary leadership in enhancing education quality and highlight the need for contextual and collaborative approaches, especially in schools with limited resources (Fitriah & Rahmah, 2020). Consequently, this research offers practical recommendations that can be implemented in schools with similar characteristics to achieve sustainable improvements in educational quality. The principal's leadership in creating a positive work environment and supporting teacher welfare is fundamental in significantly enhancing teacher motivation, productivity, and the quality of learning within the school (Marjuki et al., 2025).

D. CONCLUSION

The visionary leadership of the school principal holds a central role in improving the quality of education at the first secondary school, Muhammadiyah Payakumbuh. The principal has successfully formulated and implemented a clear vision through strategies such as teacher empowerment, active stakeholder involvement, and the use of technology in learning. These strategies have yielded positive impacts, including improved student academic achievement, increased participation in competitions, and higher parental satisfaction with the school's educational services. However, several challenges remain, such as limited resources, resistance from some teachers, and inadequate supporting facilities (Fransiska et al., 2020). This study strengthens the visionary leadership theory and contributes a contextual leadership model that other schools with similar conditions can adapt. Practical implications of this research emphasize the importance of leadership training for principals, enhanced stakeholder engagement, and the development of school infrastructure and facilities. Overall, the findings affirm that the success of visionary leadership depends heavily on collaboration and support from all parties, enabling sustainable, comprehensive efforts to improve educational quality.

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Muhammadiyah Payakumbuh. Their support and participation made this study possible and yielded significant findings on the role of visionary leadership in enhancing educational quality. The results demonstrate that appropriate leadership strategies can positively impact student achievement, stakeholder participation, and the quality of school services. Hopefully, this research will provide practical benefits and serve as a reference for future educational development.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

- Author 1 : Designed a specific and contextual methodological framework for the research.
Author 2 : Collected in-depth primary data through interviews and field observations.
Author 3 : Analyzed data using thematic analysis to identify patterns.
Author 4 : Systematically structured and presented the research findings.
Author 5 : Provided new empirical evidence on visionary leadership in a Muhammadiyah school context.

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