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## THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL'S VISIONARY LEADERSHIP IN ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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### Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of the principal's visionary leadership in improving the quality of education at SD Negeri Jrebengkembang, Karangdadap District, Pekalongan Regency. The research employed a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study design, enabling the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of visionary leadership practices within the real context of an elementary school. The study focused on four main dimensions of visionary leadership: the principal as a formulator of vision, a driver of change and innovation, an effective communicator, and a mentor who fosters teachers' professionalism. Data were collected through direct observation of leadership activities at school, in-depth interviews with the principal, teachers, students, and the school committee, as well as document analysis covering the school's vision and mission statements, work plans, and supervision reports. Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The findings indicate that the principal implemented a coaching-based leadership approach emphasizing teacher empowerment, professional reflection, collaboration with the community, and the reinforcement of a religious and character-driven school culture. This approach effectively enhanced both teacher and student motivation, improved the learning climate, and fostered a shared sense of ownership toward the school's vision. The study concludes that the integration of visionary leadership and coaching practices can transform schools into adaptive, innovative, and sustainable learning communities, while contributing both theoretically and practically to the advancement of educational management quality in Indonesia.

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### Keywords

Coaching, Educational Quality, Professional Development, School Transformation, Visionary Leadership.



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## INTRODUCTION

SD Negeri Jrebengkembang in Karangdadap District, Pekalongan Regency, is a state primary school with students from diverse economic backgrounds. It faces complex challenges in maintaining teaching excellence amid curriculum updates and technological advancements. The principal is expected to align the school's vision with national policies, particularly the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes adaptability, ethical development, and student-centered learning. Yet, the extent to which visionary leadership is enacted in this context remains underexplored, making it a timely and relevant subject for research.

The researcher's initial observations of the principal at Jrebengkembang Public Elementary School revealed a unique leadership style characterized by a visionary orientation toward addressing contemporary challenges. The principal of Jrebengkembang Public Elementary School has developed a vision to establish a strategic direction and school development initiatives aligned with global trends. The principal also noted that Jrebengkembang Public Elementary School holds a strategic position as a core school in Karangdadap Subdistrict and has been an inclusive school since 2021. Consequently, the principal is committed to consistently providing motivation and support to teachers to continuously improve through various methods and activities. This is often referred to as visionary leadership, which will undoubtedly contribute to enhancing the quality of education at the school.

The visionary leadership demonstrated by the school principal plays a crucial role in improving the quality of learning and teacher performance at Jrebengkembang Public Elementary School. The principal's clear vision and mission serve as the foundation for enhancing educational quality (Moh, 2024). Other key strategies the principal must implement include human resource development and the optimization of innovation (Wahyuningtyas et al., 2024). Further supporting evidence indicates that visionary leadership can boost student interest and motivation, thereby impacting teacher performance (Noviyanti, 2024; Said Ashlan & Hambali, 2022). Teacher productivity is also indirectly influenced by the school's culture and the innovations implemented (Yulianti et al., 2025).

Various factors influence the effectiveness of a school principal's visionary leadership in efforts to improve the quality of education at the school. A key influencing factor is participatory communication to foster the achievement of visionary leadership (Arar et al., 2026). Additionally, collaboration with stakeholders also has a direct impact on improving the quality of education

(Alzouebi et al., 2025). The availability of resources and the quality of teachers are also factors supporting the success of visionary leadership (Kasim, 2021). Apart from that, school culture also plays a role in visionary leadership (Nazareno et al., 2024).

Teachers', students', and parents' perceptions of visionary leadership vary widely. Teachers with positive perceptions have a positive impact on motivation and work performance (Ahmadi & Tiro, 2025). Teachers' perceptions indicate that collaborative learning leads to good understanding (Baloch, 2023). Students believe that effective learning can create a conducive learning environment (Raharjo, 2019). Parents also note that high-quality principal leadership has a direct impact on learning outcomes (Zhang & Wu, 2025).

Various previous studies have been conducted regarding the visionary leadership of school principals. A study Wahyuningtyas et al. (2024) explains that the visionary leadership of school principals has been proven to improve the quality of education through strategies that have a positive impact on teachers, parents, the learning process, and school facilities. A study Arta et al. (2024) confirms that curriculum innovation is the most important factor in improving character-based educational quality. Another study by Nikko (2024) also explains that transformational leadership has a significant impact on improving educational quality by enhancing teacher performance and student learning outcomes. Transformational leadership also impacts management innovation, which leads to improved educational quality (Trimulyo et al., 2025). Thus, the findings of these studies confirm that visionary leadership has a significant positive impact on educational quality through curriculum innovation, teaching effectiveness, and teacher empowerment (Subni et al., 2024).

While numerous studies have demonstrated the impact of visionary and transformative leadership on educational quality, the majority of these studies are quantitative in nature and have not thoroughly studied the implementation process. Additionally, there hasn't been much research done on combining a coaching method with visionary leadership, especially in elementary schools. Thus, the practice of coaching-based visionary leadership in raising educational standards is qualitatively investigated in this study.

Theoretically, the concept of leadership for learning focuses on collaborative learning environments (Hallinger, 2011). The theory of educational change based on values and social relations (Fullan, 2003), the transformational leadership theory, which emphasizes inspiration and individual development (Bass & Riggio, 2006), and the coaching leadership approach, which

emphasizes reflection and the professional empowerment of teachers (Lofthouse, 2019), are all cited in this study. The visionary leadership aligns with Nanus (1992) theories that argue that an organizational vision is developed and communicated to serve as a guide for the organization's direction. These Harris (2008) theories also explain that leadership involves not only the role of the school principal but also the collective efforts of all stakeholders. The theories suggest that visionary leadership serves as a crucial foundation for improving the quality of learning.

This study therefore aims to examine the influence of the principal's visionary leadership in achieving superior education at SD Negeri Jrebengkembang, focusing on four interrelated dimensions: (1) the principal as a guide who establishes a clear, shared vision; (2) the principal as a reformer who fosters innovation and continuous improvement; (3) the principal as a communicator who encourages dialogue and collaboration with internal and external stakeholders; and (4) the principal as a mentor who supports teachers and cultivates a professional, high-performing culture. This study contributes to discussions on educational leadership by affirming that the effectiveness of leadership is measured not only by operational competence but also by the capacity to drive meaningful change. Theoretically, this study can provide insights that enrich the discussion of visionary leadership, which focuses on the role of school principals as guides, communicators, and mentors in driving change and achieving a shared vision. Practically, this study can serve as a foundation for school principals and relevant stakeholders to develop a shared vision aimed at fostering innovation, collaboration, and the professional development of teachers.

## **METHOD**

This research utilized a qualitative descriptive method to delve deeply into the ways in which the school principal's forward-thinking leadership impacts the enhancement of teaching standards at SD Negeri Jrebengkembang, located in Karangdadap District, Pekalongan Regency. The qualitative method was selected for its ability to provide a detailed exploration of social phenomena, relationships, and lived experiences in their authentic school environment. The research design adopted here is a case study. This approach was deemed most fitting as it concentrates on a single, defined entity, specifically SD Negeri Jrebengkembang, with its distinct features, interpersonal dynamics, and educational hurdles. This framework allows for an in-depth analysis of the principal's role as an innovative guide in steering the institution toward superior benchmarks, enhancing educator expertise, and establishing a teaching space that is inventive, team-

oriented, and learner-focused.

Participants were recruited through purposeful sampling to guarantee that those included could offer valuable perspectives on the topic. Central figures encompassed the school head, various instructors from different year groups, chosen pupils, and members of the school council. Selection was based on their active roles in the school's governance, leadership initiatives, and educational programs. By incorporating diverse viewpoints, the investigation achieved a comprehensive understanding of the principal's guidance and its effects on institutional excellence. Data gathering employed three interconnected strategies: direct observation, in-depth discussions, and record examination. The research was conducted from September 8, 2025, to September 27, 2025. Direct observation was performed to monitor firsthand the exchanges, decision processes, and execution of leadership tactics within the school. Guided by systematic observation checklists, the researcher concentrated on leadership actions, educator-learner interactions, and the broader instructional atmosphere. (Lim, 2025), observation involves direct scrutiny of the research object. In participant observation, the researcher actively joins the activities being observed or becomes part of them (Hasanah, 2017).

Data analysis was conducted by transcribing the interview data. Key findings regarding the school principal's visionary leadership at SD Negeri Jrebengkembang were then identified from the interview data. The interview results were then described in paragraph form to explain how the school principal's forward-thinking leadership impacts the enhancement of teaching standards at SD Negeri Jrebengkembang. The research data was also supported by explanations from observations and documentation conducted at the school to ensure the data was credible and consistent with the conditions of the school principal's visionary leadership. Therefore, the analysis results were presented descriptively in accordance with the research objectives.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Findings**

The outcomes of this investigation highlight that the principal of SD Negeri Jrebengkembang embodies visionary leadership by steadfastly implementing a coaching-centric approach to school management. Visionary leadership, in this context, refers to the ability to inspire long-term goals and foster a shared vision for educational excellence, while coaching-based leadership draws from principles akin to sports coaching, where the leader acts as a mentor who guides, supports, and

develops team members rather than merely directing them. This style prioritizes four key elements: empowerment, which involves delegating authority and encouraging teachers to take ownership of their roles; moral example, where the principal models ethical behavior and integrity to set standards for the entire school community; reflection, promoting regular self-assessment and critical thinking among staff to identify areas for growth; and collaboration, building a team-oriented environment that values collective input and joint problem-solving.

To gather comprehensive evidence, the study employed a multi-method approach, including in-depth interviews with the principal, teachers, students, and community members to capture personal insights and experiences. Additionally, direct observations were conducted in classroom settings to witness teaching practices and student engagement, as well as in broader community interactions to understand how school initiatives extend beyond the classroom. Document analysis further enriched the data, involving a thorough review of official school reports that detail academic performance metrics, coaching records that log mentoring sessions and progress notes, and teacher training certificates that verify professional development efforts.

Through rigorous thematic analysis of the collected data, seven overarching themes emerged, each illustrating distinct ways in which the principal fulfills his coaching role to elevate the school's educational quality. These themes include strategies for personalized teacher development, fostering a culture of continuous improvement, integrating community resources into learning, enhancing student motivation through inspirational guidance, streamlining administrative processes to support teaching, promoting inclusive practices for diverse learners, and measuring impact through data-driven evaluations. Overall, this approach not only addresses immediate educational challenges but also cultivates a sustainable framework for long-term school advancement.

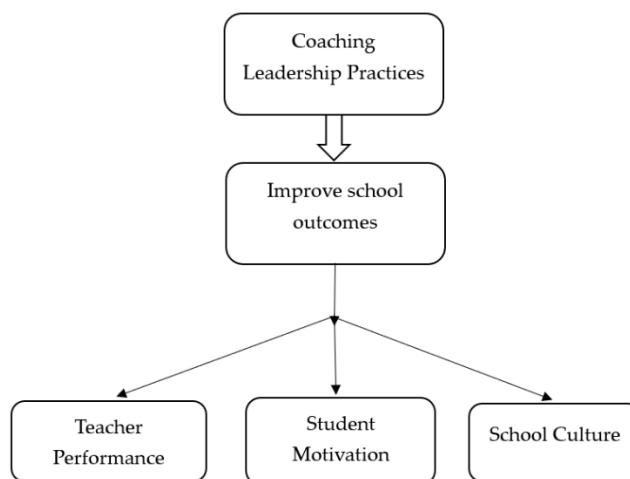
The data analysis revealed seven central themes reflecting how the principal enacts his role as a coach in improving the overall quality of education at the school. The principal's role as a mentor is reflected through several key functions that enhance the quality of education. This includes empowering teachers by supporting their professional development and adopting a humanistic mentoring style focused on guidance and reflection. The principal also fosters a school culture grounded in character and religious values through regular activities, while encouraging collaboration with parents and the school committee through transparent and participatory communication. By setting an example, the principal's disciplined behavior is emulated by the

school community. Additionally, the principal motivates students through guidance and the integration of educational technology. In essence, mentoring is a key strategy implemented comprehensively to foster awareness, responsibility, and cooperation in realizing the school's vision.

The findings from two distinct observation periods offered a comprehensive view of how coaching leadership is put into practice at the school. During the initial session, which took place in the principal's office, the focus was on a one-on-one coaching interaction between the principal and a teacher, aimed at reviewing and improving approaches to digital literacy in the classroom. This personalized exchange allowed the teacher to reflect on their teaching methods while receiving tailored guidance. The subsequent observation, occurring during the school's weekly Friday morning assembly, showcased group-based coaching that emphasized building character, instilling discipline, and promoting environmental responsibility through shared activities.

The principal demonstrated his role as a thoughtful mentor by actively listening to participants, posing probing questions that sparked deeper thinking, and guiding them toward independent solutions to challenges. This method not only boosted the teachers' internal drive and sense of ownership over their professional development but also created an environment where they felt empowered to innovate. Furthermore, the character-focused initiatives during the assembly exemplified the principal's commitment to modeling exemplary behavior, cultivating a school culture rooted in mutual respect, teamwork, and ethical values. By integrating these elements, the principal's leadership style effectively bridges individual growth with collective well-being, contributing to a more harmonious and productive educational setting. This approach aligns with broader educational goals, such as fostering lifelong learning and social responsibility, while ensuring that coaching remains a practical tool for real-world application in school management.

The conceptual framework presented in Figure 1 below summarizes the interrelationships among key components of coaching leadership practices, illustrating how these practices enhance overall school outcomes by improving teacher performance, student motivation, and school culture.



**Figure 1.** Conceptual design

*Source: Researcher's Conceptual Design Based on Empirical Data (2025)*

The implementation of coaching leadership at the school demonstrates a dynamic balance between individualized professional support and collective character-building initiatives. Through consistent mentoring interactions, the principal successfully nurtures teacher growth, enhances student motivation, and strengthens a positive school culture. These interconnected elements contribute to improved school outcomes and exemplify how coaching-based leadership serves as an effective strategy for fostering sustainable educational development.

## Discussion

The research outcomes reinforce the theoretical model put forward by Bass & Riggio (2006), which posits that transformational leaders can ignite motivation, confidence, and productivity through the inspiration of collective aspirations and individual development. At SD Negeri Jrebengkembang, the principal's coaching-focused leadership style mirrors these transformational traits by incorporating compassion, relationship-building, and ongoing professional guidance. This method also resonates with (Hallinger, 2011), the leadership for learning framework, stressing that proficient school administrators foster settings of teamwork and introspection instead of depending exclusively on hierarchical oversight. The principal's method of prompting educators to contemplate classroom hurdles and enabling knowledge exchange among colleagues reveals a leadership style that evolves teaching into a shared endeavor, rather than a solitary endeavor (Abbaspour et al., 2024; Nadeem, 2024). Moreover, the investigation bolsters (Fullan, 2003) viewpoint that enduring educational shifts hinge on ethical objectives and interpersonal reliance. The incorporation of spiritual practices and ecological consciousness at SD Negeri Jrebengkembang exemplifies how ethical leadership can be enacted in routine activities,

boosting not just scholastic success but also moral and spiritual maturation. Additionally, the principal's tactics echo the capacity-building coaching framework proposed by Galey-Horn (2020). Coaching unfolds via conversation, understanding, and joint exploration, highlighting educator independence and personal reflection (Lofthouse, 2019). The ongoing coaching following professional workshops also fits with (Nguyen & Nguyen Thi, 2025). Innovation of transformational leadership for extensive reforms, in which administrators maintain advancement through persistent support rather than sporadic efforts (Farahnak et al., 2020; Sliwka et al., 2024). Recent empirical studies support and extend these perspectives: for instance, Roesminingsih & Windasari (2025) found that transformational leadership significantly enhances teacher motivation and learning innovation in Indonesian schools. Recent studies highlight that transformational leadership plays a critical role in fostering innovation, collaboration, and professional growth within educational institutions. For instance, Yuan et al. (2024) demonstrated that transformational leadership significantly improves the quality of education in elementary schools by enhancing teacher motivation, instructional practices, and collaborative problem-solving, while Yuan et al. (2024) showed that such leadership drives management innovation and organizational resilience in Islamic education institutions. These findings align with the classical frameworks of Bass & Riggio (2006), who emphasize that transformational leaders inspire both collective aspirations and individual development, and Hallinger's (2011) Leadership for Learning model, which stresses the creation of reflective, collaborative, and learning-focused school environments. Additionally, (Fullan, 2003). argues that sustainable educational change requires ethical, relational, and systemic approaches, which are reinforced through coaching practices as highlighted by (Kioupi & Voulvoulis, 2019; Nicholson & Kurucz, 2019). (Fullan, 2009) also underscores the necessity of persistent support for teachers to ensure large-scale reform succeeds. Together, these perspectives illustrate that the principal's visionary and coaching-oriented leadership at SD Negeri Jrebengkembang effectively integrates innovation, teacher well-being, and institutional development, demonstrating a coherent application of both classical transformational theories and contemporary empirical evidence on sustainable school leadership (Karakus et al., 2026; Pagán-Castaño et al., 2021). From a practical standpoint, this study illustrates that coaching leadership, when fused with visionary guidance, emerges as a robust tool for nurturing a culture of learning. The principal's skill in blending empathetic coaching, thoughtful discussions, and ethical direction establishes a comprehensive environment where educators, learners, and guardians collaboratively strive for educational

superiority. Therefore, visionary leadership at SD Negeri Jrebengkembang is far from theoretical; it manifests daily through steady behaviors, compassion, and mutual accountability. The principal functions as a guide and ethical beacon directing not via command, but through encouragement, involvement, and faith.

In terms of implications, the findings highlight significant contributions to educational practice. By demonstrating how coaching leadership can enhance teacher efficacy and student engagement, the study underscores its potential to drive long-term improvements in school performance and community well-being. These outcomes not only elevate academic standards but also foster holistic development, including ethical awareness and environmental stewardship, which are crucial for preparing students for real-world challenges. The research thus provides actionable insights for educators and policymakers aiming to implement sustainable leadership models in diverse school settings.

Compared to previous research, these findings align closely with existing literature while also offering new insights. As noted by (Bass & Riggio, 2006), transformational leadership fosters motivation and individual development through empathy and trust, and this study demonstrates how these principles are uniquely applied in the context of an Indonesian primary school, including the integration of cultural elements such as religious routines. (Hallinger, 2011) emphasizes the importance of collaborative learning environments, and these findings extend that understanding by showing how such environments can incorporate moral and environmental dimensions, differentiating them from more Western-centric studies. (Fullan, 2003) approach, which highlights relational trust as a driver of change, is reinforced here, with empirical evidence drawn from a developing country setting. In line with (Knight, 2021) and (Robertson, 2022), coaching practices at the school proved effective, and the implementation of on going coaching expands upon Leithwood and (Hollweck & Lofthouse, 2021) insights on sustaining large-scale reform in resource-constrained environments. Furthermore, recent studies support these findings: (Huynh & Pham, 2024) showed that transformational leadership that builds affective trust enhances creativity, while (Ruiz et al., 2025) that emphasized the role of emotional intelligence in mediating leadership and teacher change-readiness. Overall, the integration of classical and contemporary evidence confirms that visionary and coaching-oriented leadership at SD Negeri Jrebengkembang not only improves learning quality but also fosters teacher motivation, innovation, and sustainable institutional development.

## CONCLUSION

The study highlights that effective school leadership through coaching practices serves as a transformative approach to educational development. By positioning the principal as both a mentor and facilitator, coaching leadership fosters a collaborative environment where teachers and students alike can grow professionally and personally. This leadership model demonstrates that the strength of a school lies not only in managerial competence but also in the capacity to inspire reflection, autonomy, and shared responsibility among all members of the school community.

Overall, this research underscores the significance of integrating coaching principles into leadership practices to sustain long-term school improvement. It offers a model where leadership becomes a catalyst for continuous learning, ethical engagement, and innovation. The implications extend beyond the observed context, suggesting that schools adopting coaching-oriented leadership can cultivate resilient educational ecosystems that prioritize both individual empowerment and collective excellence.

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