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The Implementation of Visionary Leadership by the Principal in Efforts to Improve Teacher Professionalism and Education Quality at SDN Gambut 4

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Abstrak

This study aims to examine the implementation of visionary leadership by the principal in improving the quality of education at SDN Gambut 4. The research is motivated by the crucial role of the principal as an educational leader capable of facing challenges of change, technological developments, and demands for improving the quality of education in the modern era. Visionary leadership is regarded as an effective approach to guiding schools toward sustainable transformation through the formulation of a clear vision, strategic planning, and the involvement of the entire school community in achieving educational goals. This study uses a qualitative approach with a single case study design to gain a deep understanding of the practice of visionary leadership by the principal in the real context of elementary schools. The research subjects consist of the principal as the main informant and teachers and educational staff as supporting informants. Data collection techniques were carried out through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document studies. Data analysis uses an interactive model, including data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data validity is ensured through source triangulation, technique triangulation, and member checking. The results of the study show that visionary leadership by the principal is implemented through the formulation and internalization of the school's vision, needs-based strategic planning, improving teacher professionalism through supervision and training, the application of participatory leadership, and the utilization of technology in learning and school administration. This implementation has an impact on improving teacher performance, creating an adaptive and collaborative school culture, increasing school community participation, and continuously enhancing the quality of education. However, the implementation of visionary leadership still faces several obstacles, such as resistance to change, limited facilities and infrastructure, and differences in human resource competencies. The study concludes that visionary leadership by the principal is an important factor in driving change and improving the quality of education through vision strengthening, teacher empowerment, school community collaboration, and adaptation to technological developments in education. This article is classified as a research paper with a case study design.

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Introduction

Education is a strategic field that plays an important role in shaping high-quality, characterful, and globally competitive human resources. The development of science, technology, and social dynamics requires the education system to be able to adapt quickly, flexibly, and innovatively. The demands of 21st-century competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication underscore the importance of ongoing educational transformation. In this context, schools as formal educational institutions not only function as places for the transfer of knowledge but also as arenas for character and holistic student potential development (Lestari et al., 2023).

The success of educational implementation in schools is greatly influenced by the quality of the principal's leadership. The principal is no longer viewed merely as an administrator performing administrative functions, but also as an instructional leader who can mobilize all school resources to achieve educational goals effectively and efficiently. The principal's leadership plays a key role in creating a conducive school climate, improving educator performance, and building a quality culture within the educational environment (Yusuf & Basrowi, 2023).

One leadership model relevant to these changing demands is visionary leadership. Visionary leadership is the ability of a leader to formulate, communicate, and realize a clear, realistic, and sustainably-oriented future vision for the organization. Vision not only serves as the organization's direction but also becomes a source of motivation and inspiration for all organization members to move together towards the established goals (Wahyuni & Hariri, 2023). In the context of education, a visionary principal can translate the vision into strategic policies, innovative programs, and learning practices relevant to the needs of students and the demands of the times.

Visionary leadership is not only related to the ability to formulate a vision but also the ability to instill that vision in all members of the school community. The process of internalizing the vision requires effective communication, exemplary conduct, and empowerment of all school components in order to create a shared commitment to achieving educational goals. A visionary principal is expected to build an adaptive, collaborative, and continuously quality-oriented organizational culture (Fahma et al., 2024).

Various studies show that visionary leadership of principals has a significant influence on improving educational quality. Research by Mabruroh et al. (2024) and Wahyuni & Hariri (2023) shows that visionary leadership contributes to improving teacher performance, learning effectiveness, and school goal achievement. Sindy Ninthia et al. (2024) found that visionary principals can create a culture of quality through innovative and participatory programs. Findings by Amanda et al. (2025) also emphasize that visionary leadership plays an important role in promoting technology- and innovation-based learning transformation so that schools can adapt to changing times.

Previous studies generally positioned visionary leadership as a variable connected to educational quality, teacher performance, or school quality culture. However, research that comprehensively reveals the process by which principals formulate, communicate, and implement a leadership vision to manage real change in elementary school environments is still limited. This gap is more pronounced in schools undergoing organizational culture transformation and school management improvement. Based on this gap, this study offers novelty by examining the practice of visionary leadership by the principal contextually at SDN Gambut 4. The focus of the study is directed at how the leadership vision is translated into strategies for changing school culture, improving work discipline, strengthening learning, and adapting to various educational innovations at the elementary school level.

In its implementation, visionary leadership often faces various obstacles, such as limited resources, varying organizational readiness for change, and resistance to innovation. These conditions are also evident at SDN Gambut 4, based on initial observations showing the need to strengthen the culture of discipline and collaboration among school members, improve the quality of learning processes, and adjust work patterns to meet the demands of ongoing educational transformation. At the same time, the school is in the process of strengthening governance and organizational culture, which requires a clear direction for development and a shared commitment from all school members. This situation places the principal in a strategic position to formulate, communicate, and implement a vision capable of driving sustainable change. These characteristics are the main reasons for selecting SDN Gambut 4 as the research site and make the study of visionary leadership in this school relevant for understanding leadership practices in driving educational quality improvement at the elementary school level.

In the context of elementary education, these challenges become even more significant because elementary schools are the primary foundation for character building, basic skills, and learning habits among students. Therefore, the principal is required not only to manage educational administration but also to be a visionary leader who can systematically and sustainably guide school change. The principal must link the school's vision with real needs in the field and optimize all school potential to create an effective, safe, comfortable, and quality-oriented learning environment (Susilowati & Prameswara, 2025).

SDN Gambut 4, as one of the elementary schools, has its own dynamics in efforts to improve educational quality. Initial observations indicate ongoing transformation in school management, the culture of discipline, learning, and strengthening school culture. This transformation cannot be separated from the role of the principal as a visionary leader who seeks to gradually and sustainably guide school change. This aligns with Rahman (2024), who states that visionary principals act as agents of change who are able to direct, mobilize, and inspire all school members to achieve educational goals.

Based on the above explanation, this study aims to analyze how the principal of SDN Gambut 4 formulates the vision, communicates the vision to the school community, and

implements the vision in efforts to improve educational quality. This study is expected to provide empirical contributions regarding the practice of visionary leadership by principals at the elementary education level, especially in the context of cultural and school management transformation. In addition, the results of this study are expected to serve as a practical reference for principals and education stakeholders in developing adaptive, innovative leadership strategies that are oriented toward sustainable improvement of educational quality.

Metode

This study employs a qualitative methodology with a single case study design, referring to Yin (2018), to obtain an in-depth understanding of the practice of visionary leadership by the principal at SDN Gambut 4. A qualitative approach is used because it enables the examination of phenomena in a contextual, natural, and thorough manner based on the experiences and social interactions of participants (Sugiyono, 2013; Fadli, 2021). Data collection was conducted from February to April 2026. The research informants consisted of one principal as the main informant, four teachers, and one educational staff member as supporting informants, selected using purposive sampling based on their involvement in school programs and the principal's leadership activities. Data collection methods included in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted to gather information about the vision, strategies, and implementation of leadership, while observations were carried out to directly observe leadership practices in school activities. Documentation, including work programs, the school's vision and mission, and activity reports, served as supporting evidence.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles et al. (2014), which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, taking place simultaneously from the beginning of data collection until the study was completed. The use of this model remains relevant in qualitative research because it supports a systematic, reflective, and contextual process of analysis in gaining a deep understanding of social phenomena (Aspers & Corte, 2021). To ensure data validity, this study applied technique triangulation and source triangulation. Technique triangulation was carried out by comparing data obtained through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation study, while source triangulation was done by comparing information obtained from the principal, teachers, and educational staff as research informants. Additionally, data credibility was reinforced through member checking by asking informants to reconfirm the interview results and data interpretations made by the researcher. This approach aims to provide comprehensive insight into the visionary leadership of the principal in improving education quality at SDN Gambut 4.

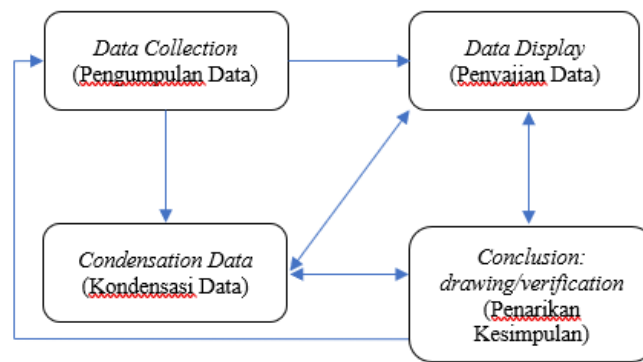


Figure 1 Interactive model data analysis according to Miles et al. (2014)

Result

The results of the study at SDN Gambut 4, based on interviews, observations, and documentation, indicate that the principal has systematically implemented visionary leadership in the areas of planning, implementation, and strengthening of school culture. This leadership is evident through the formulation of a clear vision, professional development of teachers, participative leadership, digital transformation, and the principal's ability to overcome obstacles to change. The research findings are summarized in the following table.

Table 1. Results of the Principal's Visionary Leadership Research at SDN Gambut 4

No.	Visionary Leadership Aspect	Main Findings	Field Indicators
1	Vision Formulation and Internalization	The school vision is clearly articulated and oriented toward quality improvement and future development.	Vision dissemination through meetings, coaching sessions, and school activities.
2	Strategic Planning	School programs are developed based on needs assessment and data-driven decision-making.	Availability of the School Work Plan (RKS) and Annual Work Plan (RKT) aligned with the school vision.
3	Teacher Professionalism	Continuous improvement of teachers' competencies is promoted.	Academic supervision, professional workshops, and reflective teaching practices.
4	Digital Transformation	Technology is integrated into both learning processes and school administration.	Utilization of digital learning media and IT-based administrative systems.
5	Participative Leadership and External Collaboration	Teachers are involved in decision-making processes, with support from parents and the wider community.	Participatory meetings, collaborative school programs, and active involvement of the school committee and stakeholders.
6	Implementation Challenges	Various obstacles are encountered during the implementation of change initiatives.	Teacher resistance, limited facilities and infrastructure, and differences in competency levels.

Based on the table, it can be understood that the visionary leadership of the principal at SDN Gambut 4 is not only focused on formulating the school's vision, but is also realized through various interrelated strategies. The principal strives to build an adaptive school culture by strengthening the vision, developing teacher competencies, utilizing technology, and involving the entire school community in the process of change.

Formulation and Internalization of Vision

The principal of SDN Gambut 4 has a clear, well-directed vision focused on the continuous improvement of education quality. This vision emphasizes strengthening students' character, enhancing the quality of learning, and developing 21st-century skills. Based on the interview results, the principal stated that: *"As the principal, I realize that change is something unavoidable, especially in this era which requires schools to continuously adapt."*

The vision was not only formulated administratively but also developed collaboratively by involving teachers and educational staff, fostering a sense of ownership over the school's goals. The vision was socialized through meetings, coaching sessions, teacher training, ceremonies, and various other school activities. Observations showed that most teachers understand the direction of the school's development and are able to connect it to classroom teaching practices. This condition indicates that the internalization of the vision has been carried out effectively, thus serving as a foundation for the implementation of school programs.

School Strategic Planning

Implementasi visi tersebut kemudian diwujudkan dalam perencanaan strategis sekolah yang disusun secara sistematis dan berbasis kebutuhan. Program kerja sekolah yang disusun meliputi pengembangan kurikulum, peningkatan kompetensi guru, penguatan budaya sekolah, serta integrasi teknologi dalam pembelajaran dan administrasi. Dilihat dari dokumen Rencana Kerja Sekolah (RKS) dan Rencana Kerja Tahunan (RKT) menunjukkan adanya keselarasan antara visi, misi, dan program sekolah. Selain itu, evaluasi program dilakukan secara berkala melalui rapat internal, supervisi, pemantauan kegiatan, dan analisis hasil belajar peserta didik. Dengan demikian, perencanaan program sekolah bersifat dinamis dan responsive terhadap perkembangan kebutuhan pendidikan.

Increasing Teacher Professionalism

In the aspect of human resource development, the principal of SDN Gambut 4 demonstrated a strong commitment to enhancing teacher professionalism. These efforts were implemented through academic supervision, training programs, workshops, reflective learning activities, as well as providing motivation and recognition to teachers. Based on an interview with one of the teachers at SDN Gambut 4, the participant stated: *"Through the guidance, training, and mentoring provided by the principal, we gradually began to understand how to implement these changes."*

Teachers also reported receiving intensive mentoring, which contributed to increased creativity in instructional practices. This was reflected in the use of more varied teaching

methods, the integration of educational technology, and increased active interaction between teachers and students in the classroom.

Digital Transformation in Learning

The enhancement of teacher professionalism is closely related to the school's digital transformation initiatives. The principal of SDN Gambut 4 actively encouraged the use of technology in both instructional activities and school administration. Based on the interview results, the principal stated: *"Technological changes in education are inevitable. Therefore, we continuously encourage teachers to learn how to use digital media so that learning becomes more engaging and relevant to the needs of today's students."*

The principal encouraged teachers to gradually utilize digital media in the learning process and adopt information technology-based administrative systems. These efforts were carried out through guidance, mentoring, and basic training to help teachers adapt to developments in educational technology. Although the implementation has not yet been fully optimized due to limited facilities and variations in teachers' digital competencies, these initiatives demonstrate the principal's commitment to creating a more modern, effective, and responsive learning and administrative system that aligns with the demands of twenty-first-century education.

Participative Leadership and External Collaboration

To support successful school transformation, the principal implemented a participative leadership approach by involving teachers in decision-making processes and program evaluations. Teachers were given opportunities to express their opinions, suggestions, and challenges encountered during program implementation. Based on an interview with one of the teachers, the participant stated: *"We are involved in developing learning programs and school activities."*

Such involvement made teachers feel valued because they were given opportunities to contribute ideas, opinions, and recommendations in every stage of school decision-making. Furthermore, teacher participation in various school programs fostered a sense of ownership and shared responsibility for the success of planned initiatives. This condition positively influenced teachers' participation, commitment, and readiness to support continuous school improvement and development efforts.

Challenges in Implementing Visionary Leadership

Although various improvement programs have been implemented successfully, the study identified several challenges in their execution. These challenges included resistance to change among some teachers, limited facilities and infrastructure, variations in teacher competencies, and insufficient external support. Based on an interview with the principal of SDN Gambut 4, the participant stated: *"Not all teachers can immediately accept change, especially regarding technology use and adaptation to new policies. Some teachers require additional time and assistance to adjust."*

To address these challenges, the principal employed communication, coaching, and emotional approaches to reduce resistance. The principal also continuously strengthened collaboration and provided ongoing support to teachers to ensure that school programs could be implemented effectively. Overall, the findings indicate that the visionary leadership of the principal at SDN Gambut 4 successfully promoted educational change through effective communication, teacher involvement in decision-making, professional development initiatives, and the strengthening of a collaborative and adaptive work culture. These strategies positively contributed to improving both the quality of learning and sustainable school management.

Discussion

The findings reveal that the visionary leadership of the principal at SDN Gambut 4 plays a highly significant role in driving educational improvement and school transformation. The principal not only formulated the school's vision formally but also successfully internalized it among teachers and the broader school community through continuous communication. This was reflected in the shared understanding among teachers regarding the direction of school development, particularly in improving instructional quality and strengthening student character development. This finding is consistent with the view of Rahayu et al. (2025), who argue that vision serves as a strategic direction for school development. Similarly, Hamdani and Sulastri (2024) emphasize that an internalized vision becomes a fundamental basis for structured organizational change. Consequently, schools lacking a strong vision often experience difficulties in implementing coherent and goal-oriented programs. Furthermore, successful vision internalization depends not only on the clarity of the vision itself but also on the principal's open and participatory communication practices. Teachers felt involved in the planning and implementation of school programs, which fostered a sense of ownership toward school goals. Therefore, the school vision functioned not merely as an administrative document but as a practical guide for everyday educational activities. This finding aligns with Suriansyah et al. (2026), who highlight the importance of empowering school communities in establishing sustainable educational systems.

In terms of strategic planning, the principal demonstrated the ability to connect the school's vision with the systematic implementation of educational programs. The programs developed were not limited to administrative concerns but were directed toward addressing actual school needs, including teacher competency development, strengthening school culture, and integrating educational technology. This alignment was evident in the consistency between the school vision and planning documents such as the School Work Plan (RKS) and Annual Work Plan (RKT). This finding supports Hardiyanto et al. (2025), who argue that effective visionary leadership is always supported by data-driven planning and periodic evaluation. Likewise, Sahriah and Arismunandar (2025) suggest that data utilization enables leaders to make objective decisions and provides a foundation for continuous evaluation processes. The success of school programs was further supported by routine evaluations conducted through internal meetings and

reflective learning activities, which allowed programs to remain adaptive to field conditions. This finding is consistent with Sabthazi et al. (2024), who found that periodic evaluations contribute significantly to continuous program improvement. Thus, visionary leadership becomes effective when leaders consistently use data and evaluation as the basis for decision-making.

Teacher quality improvement also emerged as a major focus of the principal's leadership. The principal consistently conducted academic supervision, training sessions, reflective discussions, and motivational activities aimed at enhancing teachers' professional competencies. These efforts resulted in increased teacher creativity in managing classroom learning, greater use of diverse digital learning media, and enhanced interaction between teachers and students. This finding is in line with Triantoro et al. (2025), who argue that visionary principals serve as both motivators and facilitators in improving teacher competence. According to Nurbani et al. (2025), motivational efforts by school leaders significantly improve teacher performance by strengthening commitment and work enthusiasm. Furthermore, the facilitator role, particularly through the provision of training opportunities and supportive working environments, encourages teacher creativity and innovation. The success of teacher professional development was also influenced by the personalized and continuous mentoring approach adopted by the principal. Teachers were not only provided with training but were also encouraged to reflect on their instructional practices. Therefore, visionary leadership in this context extends beyond providing direction and encompasses the creation of a collaborative learning culture within the school.

The principal also demonstrated the ability to promote digital transformation, indicating that visionary leadership at SDN Gambut 4 is responsive to the demands of twenty-first-century education. Technology integration was implemented not only in classroom instruction but also within school administrative systems. The use of digital learning media, information technology-based administrative applications, and online communication between the school and parents reflected efforts toward establishing a more modern and efficient school management system. This finding supports Basra et al. (2025), who contend that school principals must act as change agents in responding to technological developments. However, the implementation of digital transformation at SDN Gambut 4 still faces challenges, including limited facilities and uneven digital competencies among teachers. Nevertheless, the principal has succeeded in fostering a school climate that remains adaptive to technological change through gradual implementation and continuous mentoring. This finding suggests that successful digital transformation depends not only on infrastructure but also on leaders' capacity to develop human resource readiness.

Moreover, the principal adopted a participative leadership approach by involving teachers, the school committee, and parents in various decision-making processes. Such involvement created a more collaborative working environment and strengthened support for school programs. This finding is consistent with Mufidah et al. (2024), who

argue that stakeholder involvement enhances the effectiveness of educational programs. Through participation and collaboration among various stakeholders, the principal demonstrated that school programs could be implemented more effectively. This collaborative approach not only facilitated program implementation but also strengthened collective responsibility for student development. Active participation from members of the school community made educational initiatives easier to accept and implement consistently. Consequently, participative visionary leadership contributed to the development of a more open, democratic, and cooperative school culture.

Despite the various achievements accomplished, the implementation of visionary leadership at SDN Gambut 4 was not free from challenges associated with educational organizational change. The study identified several obstacles, including resistance to change among some teachers, limited supporting facilities and infrastructure, and varying competency levels among school personnel. These challenges are common in organizations undergoing transformation, particularly when adapting to changes in work culture, professional development demands, and technological advancement. Nevertheless, the principal demonstrated effective leadership by addressing these challenges through persuasive communication, gradual coaching, and strengthened collaboration among school members. These strategies not only reduced resistance to change but also fostered a shared understanding of the importance of educational improvement. This finding supports Turaya (2023), who argues that successful organizational change is largely determined by leaders' abilities to manage resistance and optimize available resources.

The principal's approach enabled teachers and educational staff to adapt more comfortably without experiencing excessive pressure during the change process. Overall, the visionary leadership practiced at SDN Gambut 4 generated tangible impacts on educational quality improvement. These impacts were reflected in enhanced teacher professionalism, the development of a more adaptive school culture, increased stakeholder participation, and the creation of more active and innovative learning processes. This finding is consistent with Mardizal et al. (2023), who identify visionary leadership as a crucial factor in achieving systematic and sustainable school transformation. Therefore, visionary leadership at SDN Gambut 4 functions not merely as a theoretical concept but as a practical and sustainable driver of educational transformation at the elementary school level.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the visionary leadership of the principal at SDN Gambut 4 plays a significant role in promoting educational quality improvement. The principal was able to formulate and internalize the school vision effectively through clear communication, needs-based strategic planning, continuous teacher professional development, participative leadership practices, and the strengthening of digital transformation in both learning and school administration. The implementation of this

visionary leadership contributed to improved teacher performance, the development of an adaptive and collaborative school culture, and increased stakeholder involvement in supporting sustainable educational programs. From a theoretical perspective, this study enriches the body of knowledge on visionary leadership in educational administration by confirming its importance as a key factor in facilitating school transformation at the elementary education level. The findings support the view that visionary leadership extends beyond the articulation of future goals and encompasses the ability to mobilize school members, foster innovation, and create a shared commitment to continuous improvement. From a practical perspective, the results may serve as a valuable reference for school principals seeking to develop leadership approaches that are innovative, adaptive, and responsive to contemporary educational challenges. Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. The research was conducted in a single school with a limited number of participants, which restricts the generalizability of the findings to broader educational contexts. In addition, the study primarily focused on internal school perspectives and did not extensively explore the views of students and parents regarding the implementation of visionary leadership. Consequently, future studies are encouraged to examine visionary leadership practices across different school settings and educational levels to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of their effectiveness. Furthermore, future research may focus on investigating strategies employed by school leaders to manage resistance to change and enhance teachers' readiness for digital transformation, as these issues remain critical challenges in the implementation of visionary leadership. Additional studies could also explore the relationship between visionary leadership and student learning outcomes, organizational resilience, teacher job satisfaction, and stakeholder engagement. Such investigations would provide deeper insights into the long-term impact of visionary leadership on sustainable school improvement and educational excellence.

Declarations

Contribution Author

Arif Rahman contributed to the research design, data collection, literature review, manuscript drafting, and manuscript revision. Arinda Oktanthia Wijaya contributed to data collection, literature review, analysis of research findings, and manuscript preparation and revision. Raihani Rahma contributed to data collection, literature review, manuscript preparation and revision, and coordination of the article publication process. Aslamiah contributed to the development of the research concept, methodological validation, and scientific supervision throughout the research process. Celia Cinantya contributed to academic mentoring, validation of research findings, critical review of the manuscript content, and refinement of the article prior to publication. All authors have read, approved, and agreed to the final version of the manuscript for publication.

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Data Availability Statement

The data generated and analyzed during this study are not publicly available because they contain interview transcripts, observation notes, and supporting research documents that must be managed in accordance with research ethics principles. However, the data may be made available by the corresponding author for academic purposes upon reasonable request and subject to ethical considerations.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest, whether financial or non-financial, that could have influenced the conduct of the research, data analysis, manuscript preparation, or publication of the study findings.

Ethical Statement

This study was conducted with permission from the school where the research took place. All participants voluntarily agreed to participate in the study and provided informed consent prior to data collection. The information obtained was used solely for academic and research purposes, and the confidentiality and anonymity of participants were maintained throughout the research process.

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