The Principal's Visionary Leadership Transforms Quality: Good Example and Habits

Erna Kusumawati
Universitas Muhammadiyah Prof. DR. HAMKA, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

The importance of "example" and "good habits" as essential mechanisms for principals' visionary leadership in attaining "exceptional quality." This study investigates how principals can play a visionary leadership role in improving school quality through good examples and practices. This study aims to analyze leadership strategies, given the importance of leadership for improving educational quality. This study employed mixed methods, combining qualitative and quantitative methods. Subjects included principals, teachers, and students from five high-achieving schools, using a mixed approach consisting of interviews, observations, and qualitative and quantitative surveys. The results indicate that ethical principles and positive habits, such as wearing a practice uniform and reflecting on disruption, significantly increase pedagogical innovation and build a culture of quality. This study advances understanding of transformative leadership and has practical implications for improving the quality of science- and technology-based schools.

Corresponding Author:

Erna Kusumawati,
Universitas Muhammadiyah Prof. DR. HAMKA, Indonesia
Email: khoerulindri@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

In the dynamic landscape of contemporary education, institutional standards are essential for an organization's efficacy in cultivating proficient and competitive graduates (Zhang & Wu, 2016; Li, 2024). Quality enhancement extends beyond academic dimensions; it also includes character development, the cultivation of contemporary skills, and the establishment of an engaging learning atmosphere. Effective school leadership is essential in the face of this complexity. The principal, as the chief leader, is accountable for guiding all facets of the school to attain superior quality standards (Leithwood, 2021; Ghamrawi, 2023; Kemethofer et al., 2025). Effective leadership involves more than just administration (Yuliani & Suragih, 2015). They must also possess visionary capabilities, enabling them to anticipate future developments and proactively cultivate a school culture that fosters success.

All institutions endeavor to attain superior educational standards; nonetheless, numerous schools continue to encounter challenges in realizing them (Andrews &

Öhman, 2019; Khan et al., 2024). This study will examine how principals can utilize visionary leadership and effective practices as essential catalysts for enhancing school quality (Erdogan & Sengul, 2014; Yakob et al., 2025). This research is important due to its capacity to delineate specific methods for converting leaders' objectives into actions that affect the entire school community (Khan et al., 2024). The findings will furnish principals, policymakers, and education practitioners with pragmatic recommendations on leadership techniques that can enhance all facets of education, encompassing teaching quality, the learning environment, and a school culture focused on excellence (Škoda et al., 2015).

A considerable amount of study has been undertaken regarding visionary leadership and its influence on school performance (Kusumawati, 2023a; Candrasari et al., 2023; Kusumawati, 2023b). Nonetheless, several inquiries persist concerning the manner in which principals exhibiting visionary leadership directly affect substantial quality transformation through instances of exemplary practice (Day et al., 2016; Hermawan et al., 2024). Prior studies have predominantly concentrated on the macro aspects of leadership and its influence on teacher motivation and overall job satisfaction. Nevertheless, scant study has specifically investigated how principals assimilate quality content via affirmative actions and the cultivation of constructive habits throughout the school and how this process tangibly corresponds to substantial quality enhancement. Habituation and role modeling, often overlooked leadership elements, offer significant transformational potential (Le Roux & Nagel, 2018; Kim, 2020).

This study introduces innovation by highlighting "example" and "good habits" as essential mechanisms for principals' visionary leadership in attaining "exceptional quality" (Farias et al., 2016; Terpstra, 2022). This distinguishes it from prior research that has concentrated more on the structural or management aspects of leadership. We shall analyze both the statements and intentions of principals (the vision) and their everyday actions to actualize that goal. These behaviors exemplify appropriate conduct for educators, learners, and personnel. This method will comprehensively analyze how transformative quality improvement can be attained through effective practices established by principals, including a culture of reflection, collaboration, and ongoing innovation. This study aims to elucidate how leadership uses role modeling to effectuate cultural transformation.

This study seeks to thoroughly examine the influence of principals' visionary leadership on the transformation of schools into exemplary institutions through the provision of illustrative examples and best practices. This study will identify the methods and practices employed by visionary principals and analyze their impact on school culture and teaching methodologies. This study aims to offer pragmatic guidance to principals and educational stakeholders on using these practices and role-model-oriented leadership to attain exemplary school status.

2. METHOD

This study employed mixed methods, combining qualitative and quantitative methods. This method was chosen to gain a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the role of visionary principals in transforming school quality by providing examples and good practices. Quantitative data were used to measure statistical significance and generalizability of findings, while qualitative data provided insight into the subjects' processes, experiences, and perceptions. The following is a mixed-methods analysis model presented in Figure 1.
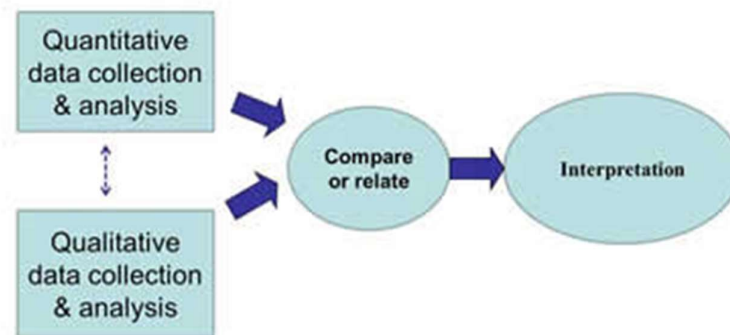

Figure 1. Flowchart Mixed Methods Research

Subject Selection Method: This method employed purposive sampling. The study subjects consisted of ten principals, twenty-five teachers, and fifteen students from five high-achieving schools in the study area identified as having exceptional quality standards. To be selected as a principal, they were required to have at least five years of experience and be recognized for their progress in quality improvement. Principal recommendations and active involvement in programs for improving school quality determined the selection of teachers and students.

Three main methods were used to collect data: In-depth interviews were conducted with teachers and principals to determine leadership vision, strategies for habituating challenges, and perceptions of school quality. Participatory Observation: Conducted in schools to watch exemplary behavior and the practices implemented. This procedure included observing teaching and learning activities, teacher meetings, and the principal's interactions with the school community. Questionnaires and surveys were distributed to teachers and students to measure the level of positive habits, principal leadership, and cultural quality.

Data Analysis Techniques: Thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data. To reach conclusions, the process included transcription of observation and interview data, open coding, grouping codes into themes, and interpreting these themes. To compare groups and test hypotheses, quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies and means) and inferential statistics. To enhance the validity and credibility of the findings, data from three approaches (interviews, observations, and questionnaires) were analyzed.

3.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Visionary Leadership to Build a Culture of Quality Through Example

Studies indicate that principals exhibiting visionary leadership and personal exemplification significantly impact the development of an exceptional school culture. Qualitative evidence obtained from participant observation and comprehensive interviews with ten principals, twenty-five instructors, and fifteen students across five high-performing schools indicates that principals regularly exhibit behaviors aligned with their quality vision (Namaziandost et al., 2020). Timeliness, a robust dedication to ongoing professional growth, and integrity in decision-making exemplify commendable practices (Andrews & Öhman, 2019; Guerrero-Ortiz et al., 2017). A principle consistently arrives first and departs last. They actively engage in training and seminars, motivating teachers and other staff to follow suit. Principals engage in educational activities, like occasionally inviting students to class or participating in discussions with teacher study groups, illustrating that all stakeholders share the responsibility for enhancing educational quality. They not only articulate the goal but also exemplify the anticipated standards of excellence.

Quantitative data from the teacher perception questionnaire indicate that schools led by principals exhibiting strong role modeling achieved a higher average quality culture score (4.7 out of 5.0) than those with less effective leadership (3.8 out of 5.0), with the difference being statistically significant ($p < 0.001$).

The findings closely correspond with the research on transformative and ethical leadership, highlighting the influence of outstanding leaders. Research indicates that the exemplary influence of a transformational leader profoundly affects the performance and commitment of followers. Research indicates that affirmative conduct from school leaders enhances organizational atmosphere and teacher motivation (Damanik & Aldridge, 2017; Wiyono, 2018). This study highlights how exemplary moral and ethical leadership cultivates trust and collaboration within educational institutions. Analyzing this worldwide environment reveals that principals' capacity to cultivate a quality culture is a global phenomenon that transcends educational systems and geographical boundaries. We discovered that principals who exemplify their quality vision are more effective and propagate the values of excellence throughout the school community.

Multiple prior research studies have demonstrated that a leader's honesty is favorably associated with employee trust, and active participation in fundamental organizational activities enhances effectiveness (Jena et al., 2018). The findings indicate that "Modeling the Way" is a key leadership tactic (McClellan, 2021). Our study further establishes a direct connection between the principal's micro-exemplary behaviors and the transition from quality to excellence, attainable through the cultivation of a robust quality culture. This addresses a previously identified gap:Previous research primarily concentrated on the general effects of leadership, neglecting to investigate how the principal's direct example influences quality habits and standards throughout the entire school. We illustrate that the example serves not only as a moral dimension but also as a tangible method for enhancing quality.

This study's results significantly improve science and technology in quality management and educational leadership. This research theoretically contributes a distinct and quantifiable dimension of "exemplarity as a mechanism for quality transformation" to the notion of visionary leadership. This improves comprehension of how a leader's vision is conveyed and assimilated through motivating conduct. These findings have substantial implications for initiatives aimed at improving principal leadership. The fundamental goal of leadership training should be character development, integration, and the consistent demonstration of leadership across all job facets. Moreover, the role of science and technology is evident in the development of an extensive evaluation system to assess the impact of exceptional leadership on the quality culture of a school. This assessment framework can be integrated into an educational management information system. This study advocates for the creation of a digital platform or application enabling principals to document and disseminate exemplary practices.

Principal's Initiative for Continuous Quality Improvement

The research findings demonstrate that positive practices, begun and consistently upheld by the principal, are essential for changing school excellence into exceptional and sustainable practices. School documentation codifies several constructive practices, including work plans, activity reports, meeting minutes, and focus group discussions (FGDs) involving teachers and staff. This qualitative analysis yields these results. Examples of these approaches include a culture of open, constructive feedback; weekly reflection meetings on teaching methodologies; sessions for exchanging best practices among educators; and a consistent professional book reading program. The principal continually leads and actively engages in these projects to ensure their sustainability and consistency. For instance, a principal organized "Knowledge Sharing Fridays," an event where each educator contributed by sharing innovative concepts or obstacles encountered in their classrooms. These behaviors fostered an environment in which continual learning and quality enhancement became standard (Zamiri & Esmaeili, 2024).

Institutions exhibiting robust policies revealed statistically significant disparities ($p<0.005$). Quantitative results from the organizational habits measuring scale reveal that schools exhibiting robust habits demonstrate elevated levels of pedagogical innovation (4.5 out of 5.0) and enhanced teacher satisfaction (4.3 out of 5.0) in contrast to schools without organized habits.

These findings correspond with notions highlighted in the management and education literature about organizational habit formation and professional learning cultures (Teledahl et al., 2024)). Research indicates that the implementation of minor habit modifications can result in significant shifts inside an organization. Research on knowledge generation also indicates that habits and routines are essential for promoting organizational learning. The notion of "professional learning communities," referred to as such in Nordic nations, has demonstrated efficacy in enhancing teaching quality. These communities are established through efficient collaborative endeavors. This

global comparison reinforces our study and illustrates that effective practices can be extensively employed to promote ongoing quality enhancement when launched and maintained by astute leadership (Metaferia et al., 2023; Nurhidayati, 2021). We discovered that leaders who cultivate positive behaviors inside their schools establish a robust basis for sustained achievement. This study corroborates studies that underscore the significance of learning organizations, accentuating the relevance of a collaborative culture in educational reform (Zhang & Zheng, 2020). Our findings specifically indicate that habits and systems are not the exclusive objectives that yield extraordinary achievements. Our research illustrates how principals actively recognize, develop, and sustain exemplary practices associated with effective change. This addresses a previously identified gap: Previous research predominantly concentrated on the macro aspects of school culture, neglecting to clearly analyze the principal's involvement in fostering transformative micro habits (Bentley & Yates, 2017). We illustrate that principals are the designers of behaviors that influence excellence.

This study's results substantially improve science and technology in pedagogical innovation and school management. This research theoretically integrates the concept of "intentional habituation" as a vital method for attaining exceptional and sustainable standards, thus enhancing the visionary leadership paradigm. This offers a novel viewpoint on how vision might be actualized through ingrained habits and routines. These findings have substantial implications for the establishment of principal leadership programs and the enhancement of strategies to improve school quality. Principal education and training must encompass modules on the design, implementation, and maintenance of beneficial habits inside educational institutions. Science and technology can aid principals by monitoring, assessing, and managing beneficial practices in schools, while promoting the sharing of exemplary methods among institutions (Huber & Helm, 2020; Paletta et al., 2020). This study advocates for the creation of technology-driven diagnostic instruments to pinpoint habits for enhancement in educational institutions. These initiatives will provide more precise treatments to attain exceptional quality (Cuthrell & Lyon, 2007).

4.   CONCLUSION

The transformation of a school's standards from exceptional to sustainable is largely dependent on the visionary leadership of the principal, as evidenced by the establishment and maintenance of systematic processes. Teacher satisfaction and pedagogical innovation were greatly enhanced by positive reactions, such as weekly reflection meetings, sessions for exchanging best practices, and a culture of constructive criticism headed by the administrator. Additionally, they established a culture that accepted quality enhancement as the standard. Organizational habit-building mechanisms made this impressive quality improvement possible. Visionary principals not only set lofty objectives but also proactively created and upheld reliable procedures and practices. These behaviors established a structure of support throughout the school community, encouraging flexibility, teamwork, and

ongoing education. As a result, community norms and expectations were changed as the quality vision became ingrained in day-to-day activities.

Even though this study offers insightful information, there are a few limitations that could affect subsequent studies. Future research should look beyond pedagogical innovation and teacher satisfaction to examine the long-term effects of successful methods on specific student learning outcomes. Finding variations in the efficacy of these methods requires more extensive comparative research across various educational or geographic contexts. Additionally, future studies should concentrate on developing and evaluating technology-based therapies. These measures would simplify the process for principals to monitor and oversee the development of positive habits. This field of study is to establish a school culture in which strong leadership fosters internalized behaviors that naturally lead to greatness. Schools may proactively lay the groundwork for long-term quality improvement without depending on immediate satisfaction by learning how to create and sustain beneficial habits. This will foster a more adaptable, innovative, and excellence-driven atmosphere, which will enhance education for the coming generation.

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