Visionary Leadership in Education: Strategies for Achieving International Standard

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the strategies required to achieve international standard education through visionary leadership. This study employs a qualitative method with a case study approach, utilizing informant sources that include principals, academics, and teachers. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation, with data analysis conducted using the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of three stages: data collection, data reduction, and data presentation. The study's results indicate that visionary leadership has successfully implemented modern educational approaches that meet international standards. The approach employs the International Collaborative Approach strategy, Leadership Focused on Curriculum Innovation, and development of 21st-century skills. This study provides important implications for the development of educational policies, particularly in the application of visionary leadership in schools that meet international standards. The results of this study can serve as a reference for principals and educators in designing educational strategies that are more effective, innovative, and capable of meeting global challenges in the 21st century.

Keywords: _Visionary Leadership, International Standards, Collaborative Approach_

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis strategi yang harus dilakukan dalam pencapaian pendidikan berstandar internasional melalui kepemimpinan visioner. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus, dengan sumber informan yang meliputi kepala sekolah, civitas akademika, dan guru. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi, dengan analisis data menggunakan model Miles dan Huberman yang terdiri dari tiga tahap, yaitu pengumpulan data, reduksi data, dan penyajian data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan visioner telah berhasil menerapkan strategi-strategi yang bersifat pendekatan pendidikan modern berstandar internasional. Adapun pendekatannya menggunakan strategi Pendekatan Kolaboratif Internasional, Kepemimpinan yang Berfokus pada Inovasi Kurikulum, dan Pengembangan Keterampilan Abad ke-21. Penelitian ini memberikan implikasi penting bagi pengembangan kebijakan pendidikan, terutama dalam penerapan kepemimpinan visioner di sekolah-sekolah dengan standar internasional. Hasil penelitian ini dapat menjadi referensi bagi kepala sekolah dan pendidik dalam merancang strategi pendidikan yang lebih efektif, inovatif, dan mampu memenuhi tantangan global di abad ke-21.

Kata Kunci: _Kepemimpinan Visioner, Standar Internasional, Pendekatan Kolaboratif_

INTRODUCTION

Achieving global standards in school institutions is not only determined by improving facilities and technology, but by visionary leadership that can direct, inspire, and develop a culture of innovation throughout the education ecosystem (Chan, 2023; Fathih et al., 2021; Guàrdia et al., 2021). Achieving global standards in school institutions does not solely depend on improving facilities and technology because physical and technical advances are only supporting tools. More fundamental is visionary leadership that can optimally utilize these resources, create a clear vision, and build a culture of innovation.

Visionary leadership fosters a collaborative spirit, inspiration, and motivation among educators and students, ultimately contributing to the overall and sustainable progress of education (Mendenhall et al., 2021; Sudrajat et al., 2024). Empirical studies on visionary leadership have demonstrated that schools with visionary leaders are more successful in achieving global standards (Gimbert et al., 2023). These leaders can formulate long-term strategies, guide educators in continuous professional development, and support their students in achieving their goals. Thus, visionary leadership that can direct and build a culture of innovation in schools is a key factor in achieving global standards, beyond simply improving facilities and technology.

Visionary leadership in education is crucial because it provides clear direction and goals for the development of educational institutions (Diana et al., 2021). With visionary leadership, school institutions can adapt to global demands, improve the quality of education, and prepare students to face competition in the era of globalization (Pan et al., 2020; Pentury et al., 2020). Visionary leadership is also considered capable of encouraging continuous innovation and positive change, enabling schools to achieve global education standards.

Visionary education leaders play a crucial role in equipping students with global competencies, including digital literacy, critical thinking skills, and the ability to thrive in multicultural environments (Tran et al., 2023). Such leaders ensure that schools adopt international standards that meet the needs of globalization (Chen & Yuan, 2021; Gill & Singh, 2020; Marlia et al., 2020). Therefore, research on visionary leadership in education emphasizes the importance of leaders in directing schools to achieve global standards through innovation, adaptation to global demands, and the development of student competencies that align with the principles of globalization.

Achieving global standards in school institutions is not solely dependent on improving facilities and technology, as physical and technical advancements are only supporting tools (Glavič, 2020). More fundamental is visionary leadership that can optimally utilize these resources, create a clear vision, and build a culture of innovation (Jones et al., 2021). Visionary leadership can foster a collaborative spirit, inspiration, and motivation among educators and students, ultimately contributing to the overall and sustainable progress of education.

Visionary leadership demonstrates that schools with visionary leaders are more successful in achieving global standards because these leaders can formulate

long-term strategies, guide teachers and staff in adopting innovative practices, and encourage continuous professional development. Thus, visionary leadership, which can optimally utilize resources and foster a culture of innovation, is a significant factor in achieving global standards in school institutions, more so than improved facilities and technology. The novelty of this research lies in revealing how visionary leadership is contextually implemented in a pesantren-based school to drive transformation toward international-standard education through collaborative strategies, curriculum innovation, and the enhancement of 21st-century skills.

The purpose of this study is for researchers to interpret the strategies that must be implemented to achieve global standards in education through visionary leadership. With a deep understanding of these strategies, the researcher hopes that it will help educational institutions adopt effective best practices. Visionary leadership is considered essential for guiding schools in formulating and implementing effective strategies to achieve and maintain global educational standards. Visionary leaders can develop and implement long-term strategies that focus on improving the quality of education. This research highlights the importance of identifying effective strategies to achieve global standards, which can be accomplished through visionary leadership. The contribution of this research is to provide strategic insights for educational institutions in formulating and implementing visionary leadership practices to achieve and sustain global education standards.

Visionary leaders employ strategies such as International Collaborative Approaches, Curriculum Innovation-Focused Leadership, and 21st-century skills development to achieve global standards of education. These approaches enable educational institutions to adapt quickly to global needs, improve curriculum relevance, and prepare students for future challenges. These strategies not only expand educational horizons with the integration of technology and innovative learning methods but also promote international cooperation and the development of skills essential in the era of globalization, thereby strengthening the position of educational institutions in meeting and exceeding global standards. Visionary leaders employ such strategies to enable educational institutions to adapt quickly, preparing students for the challenges of the future and strengthening their position in meeting and exceeding global education standards.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research on strategies for achieving a global standard in education, utilizing visionary leadership in school institutions, is conducted at SMA Darussalam Blokagung, Banyuwangi, East Java, Indonesia. The school has a strong reputation for academic achievement and educational innovation, and is undergoing a significant development process under the visionary leadership of its principal. With these conditions, this school is a relevant example to examine how visionary leadership can play a role in improving the quality of education concretely in a dynamic and growing educational institution.

This research employs a qualitative method with a case study approach, wherein researchers will conduct an in-depth exploration of the phenomenon of

visionary leadership. This qualitative method was chosen to gain a holistic understanding of how the principal, as a visionary leader, influences the improvement of educational quality in the school (Matos et al., 2023). Through the case study approach, the researcher can collect rich and detailed data through direct observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis, thus enabling a comprehensive understanding of the leadership practices implemented.

The sources of information in this study include the principal, school secretary, and school treasurer, as they hold important roles and possess direct knowledge related to the management and implementation of visionary leadership in the school. The principal will provide insight into the vision and leadership strategies. In contrast, the school secretary and treasurer will provide information related to administrative, financial, and operational aspects that support efforts to improve the quality of education (see Figure 1).

Table 1. Resource Person Assignment

Informant	Role	Job
Principal	School Leader	Provides direction on the vision and strategy for global standard development in the school.
School Secretary	School Administration and Documentation	Manages administrative and operational aspects that support leadership policies.
School Treasurer	School Financial Management	Responsible for managing funds, budgeting, and resource allocation to improve educational quality.

The data collection techniques used in this study included interviews, observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted to extract in-depth information from the principal, school secretary, and school treasurer regarding the role and implementation of visionary leadership. Observation was conducted to directly observe how visionary leadership is implemented in daily activities, as well as its impact on the school environment. Meanwhile, documentation was used to collect relevant written and archival data, such as financial reports, school policies, and meeting notes, which could enrich and confirm the findings from interviews and observations.

Data analysis in this study employed the Miles and Huberman model, which comprises three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and data verification (Matta, 2022). At the data reduction stage, raw data from interviews, observations, and documentation were filtered and simplified to highlight the most relevant information and eliminate the unnecessary. Furthermore, at the data presentation stage, the reduced data was organized in a structured format, such as tables or narratives, to facilitate the identification of patterns and themes. Finally, at the data verification stage, the researcher checks the consistency and validity of the findings by triangulating the data and rechecking the accuracy of the analysis results, ensuring that the research findings are credible and reliable.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Result
International Collaborative Approach

The international collaborative approach at SMA Darussalam has successfully enhanced students' global skills and teaching quality, despite facing

challenges related to cultural and language differences. The international collaborative approach introduces students and teachers to teaching methods and experiences from different cultures, which helps improve global understanding and cross-cultural communication skills. The international collaborative approach in language programs and departments is designed to improve students' global skills and the quality of teaching. This was revealed by the principal, Mr. Alfan, in an interview as follows,

"we focus heavily on an international collaborative approach, especially in the foreign language program. We offer English, Japanese and Mandarin lessons with a curriculum that has been adapted to international standards. We not only teach the language as a communication skill, but also include cultural materials that originate from those countries. This allows students to understand a broader social and cultural context."

The language programs offered include foreign languages such as English, Japanese, and Mandarin, with a curriculum that integrates international teaching materials. Students not only learn languages but also interact with materials from different cultures, thanks to partnerships with overseas schools and educational institutions. Through student and teacher exchange programs, they can collaborate on international projects, such as joint research and cultural activities, which enrich their learning experience and build cross-cultural communication skills.

Figure 1. International Collaboration of Language Programs

Figure 1 illustrates the implementation of the activity program in the language class. This factualization is carried out at the end of school learning, namely, the peak of the final class. This activity is specifically designed for the language program, which is held on the island of Bali. With this program, it becomes a forum for students to learn from foreign nationals in a factual setting.

Leadership Focused on Curriculum Innovation

Leadership focused on curriculum innovation has a vision to enhance the quality of education by introducing new teaching methods and leveraging the latest technology. This approach aims to create a more dynamic and relevant learning environment. The interview data from the principal, Mr. Alvan, is

presented in the interview as follows, "We have successfully introduced several new teaching methods, such as project-based learning (PBL) and the use of digital platforms. These methods are designed to improve student engagement and their learning outcomes. We believe that active and collaborative learning will provide a more meaningful learning experience." The interviews above demonstrate that this school has successfully introduced and implemented new teaching methods, including project-based learning and the use of digital platforms, which enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.

Figure 2. Project-Based Chemistry Practice

Figure 2 above, a project-based chemistry practice involving ice cream making is designed to teach the concept of freezing point reduction in a practical and fun way. In this project, students learn how adding salt to a mixture of ice and water can lower the freezing point, thus affecting the freezing process of ice cream. They design and carry out experiments by making ice cream using various salt solutions, recording the freezing time and texture of the final product. Students were able to relate the experimental results to chemical theory, while deepening their understanding of how chemical principles are applied in everyday situations. The project not only enriches their theoretical knowledge but also provides practical laboratory skills, making chemistry learning more interesting and relevant. It is thus a testament to leadership that focuses on project-based innovation.

21st Century Skill Development

The development of 21st-century skills has been successful in enhancing students' abilities in critical thinking, collaboration, and communication, although there are constraints in providing adequate resources and training. The focus of this development is on enhancing students' abilities in critical thinking, collaboration, and communication to prepare them for the challenges of the modern world. The development of 21st-century skills includes collaborative projects.
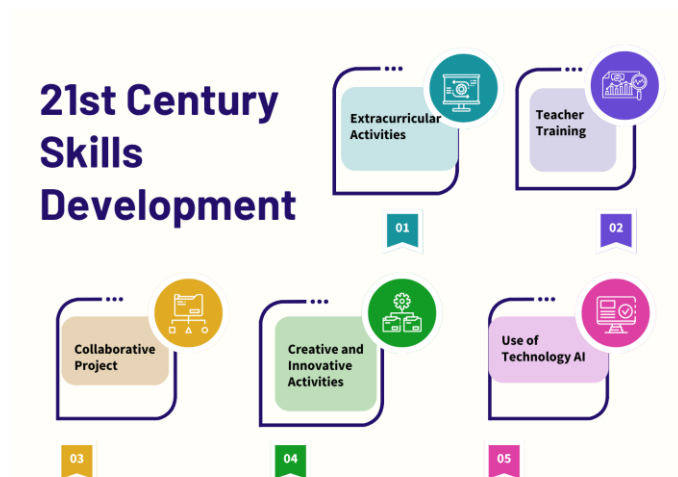
Figure 3. 21st Century Skills Development

Figure 3 illustrates the development of 21st-century skills, which includes collaborative projects in chemistry, biology, geography, and other subjects, as well as extracurricular activities such as Scouts, PMR, cooking, and others. Furthermore, technology and digital tools are used during ANBK learning assessments, utilizing computers. Creative and innovative activities, such as creating digital content. Teacher training, such as workshops on strengthening the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and the Primary Five curriculum.

Figure 4. Workshop on Strengthening The Implementation Curriculum

Figure 4 above is a teacher training activity in the form of a workshop to strengthen the implementation of the independent curriculum and P5. This activity demonstrates visionary leadership that incorporates 21st-century skills and competencies. These data demonstrate that visionary leadership is not only evident in planning strategies but is also effectively implemented in real-world terms through structured teacher training. The workshop aims to enhance the capacity of educators in implementing the Independent Curriculum and the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5), which are at the core of 21st-century learning. This reflects the commitment of school leaders in building a culture of sustainable learning and ensuring teacher readiness to face global challenges in education.

Discussion

The international collaborative approach in language programs and majors also encourages the integration of a curriculum that is more adaptive to global educational developments. Through collaboration with foreign educational institutions, the school adopts teaching materials that align with international standards, such as global project-based learning and the use of digital platforms for cross-country collaboration (Tejedor et al., 2024; Yeboah et al., 2020). This not only broadens students' horizons on global issues but also fosters their confidence in using foreign languages actively in real-world contexts. Thus, international collaboration not only serves as a means of language enrichment but also as a transformative strategy that strengthens the institution's position as an Islamic boarding school-based educational organization, one that is ready to compete globally while upholding local values

Technology also plays a significant role in supporting this collaboration, with the use of digital platforms for virtual classes and online communication between international students and teachers (Haryanti & Saerozi, 2024; Indana et al., 2023). Additionally, this school organizes cultural activities, such as international festivals and language clubs, that enable students to engage directly with global traditions. Professional training for teachers ensures that they can adopt international teaching methods and continue to update their skills (Mohammed & Rashid Attabi, 2022). Regular evaluation and feedback from program participants help measure the success of this approach and identify areas for improvement, ensuring that the program continues to provide significant benefits to students and the quality of education in the school.

Collaboration with international institutions also provides access to broader resources and perspectives, which can enrich the teaching and learning process and improve the overall quality of education (Thoha, 2024; Wang et al., 2024). Thus, the language class program is one of the international collaborations that the principal has implemented. This demonstrates visionary leadership with a strategy to achieve global standards. Thus, the strategy supports education in school institutions.

Leadership at this school, focused on curriculum innovation, demonstrates a genuine commitment to transforming the learning process to align with the demands of 21st-century education. Leadership that supports innovation provides the resources and support needed to integrate new technologies and methods into the teaching and learning process. However, challenges such as teacher training and curriculum adjustments often arise (Ghafar et al., 2021; Sabariah et al., 2023; Wijayanti et al., 2022). With a vision of enhancing the quality of education, the principal and management team actively encourage the use of technology, including online learning platforms, interactive digital devices, and creative visual media, in teaching and learning activities (Jusoh et al., 2024). This innovation not only enriches teaching methods but also increases student participation and motivation to learn.

Additionally, this innovative process involves collaboration between teachers across subjects to design contextual, thematic, and project-based learning experiences. However, although support for innovation is quite strong, challenges

such as low digital literacy among some teachers, the need for continuous training, and resistance to curriculum changes remain obstacles that must be strategically overcome. With a consistent and adaptive approach, this innovative leadership has been a driving force in building a school culture that is more responsive to global changes and the needs of today's students (Sabariah et al., 2023).

In addition, innovative leadership plays a crucial role in creating a collaborative and reflective learning ecosystem, where teachers serve not only as educators but also as facilitators and lifelong learners. Through regular discussion forums, internal training, and mentoring programs, teachers are encouraged to continuously evaluate and update their teaching practices to remain relevant and practical (Hefniy et al., 2023). The principal actively encourages a culture of sharing knowledge and best practices among teachers to accelerate the spread of innovation across learning units (Memon et al., 2024). This policy also creates a safe space for pedagogical experimentation, where teachers are given the freedom to try new approaches without fear of failure, as long as they are oriented towards improving student learning outcomes (Shula & Heystek, 2024). By building a participatory and vision-based leadership system, the school is gradually strengthening the foundation of transformative education, which relies not only on technical changes but also on changes in the mindset and culture of the institution as a whole.

Strengthening 21st-century skills is also achieved through a project-based learning approach and contextual learning, which places students at the center of the learning process. Students are encouraged to develop practical solutions to local and global problems encountered in their learning, allowing them to not only learn theory but also hone critical thinking and leadership skills directly (Indana et al., 2023). In addition, the integration of digital technology is a crucial element in facilitating collaboration and communication, both in the classroom and through online platforms, which enable cross-class and even cross-school interactions (Wijayanti et al., 2022). With the support of teachers who are gradually being trained and the provision of infrastructure that is continually improved, the school is slowly creating a learning environment conducive to the development of 21st-century competencies in a sustainable manner. According to research, 21st-century skills programs are designed to integrate activities and projects that encourage students to work together, communicate effectively, and solve problems creatively (Fathih et al., 2021). However, challenges arise in terms of providing adequate resources and sufficient training to support the full implementation of these skills.

In addition, the success of strengthening 21st-century skills cannot be separated from the active role of school leadership in building an innovative and collaborative culture in the educational environment. The principal and educational management team encourage teachers to develop learning designs that incorporate elements of 21st-century skills, such as creativity, problem-solving, and digital literacy, and provide space for students to learn exploratively and reflectively (Mendenhall et al., 2021). The development of these skills is also strengthened through extracurricular activities, such as debates, literacy clubs, and student entrepreneurship projects, which train students in soft skills and social

responsibility. Although challenges such as limited teaching time, differences in teacher capacity, and the availability of facilities persist, the school demonstrates a commitment to overcoming these obstacles through partnerships with external parties, ongoing training, and the use of open-source technology. With a consistent strategy and responsiveness to change, this school is gradually building a holistic learning system that is relevant to the needs of the 21st century.

The implications of this study suggest that the implementation of visionary leadership has a significant impact on transforming education towards global standards. International collaboration strategies, curriculum innovation, and the strengthening of 21st-century skills are concrete evidence of how visionary leadership can drive systemic change in an Islamic boarding school-based educational environment. This emphasizes the importance of the principal as an agent of change, who can design strategic policies and foster an adaptive, innovative, and collaborative school culture. The leadership model can be replicated by other schools, particularly those with a religious background, to create high-quality education that aligns with local values while remaining globally competitive.

CONCLUSION

The visionary leadership at the school has successfully driven educational transformation through modern and globally oriented strategies. By developing an international collaborative approach, the school can provide students and teachers with access to cross-cultural learning opportunities through collaborative partnerships with overseas institutions. Programs such as foreign language teaching and joint projects between countries have been proven to improve global communication skills and broaden students' horizons. In addition, an innovative curriculum that combines theory and practice, strengthening 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity, is a significant focus in creating a relevant and adaptive learning environment. Although challenges such as limited resources and training still exist, the commitment of school leaders to advancing the quality of education shows that visionary leadership can bring about real and sustainable positive change.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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