

STRATEGIC STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTING AN INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract: *The improvement of the quality of basic education greatly depends on a culture of continuous quality, where the implementation of SPMI becomes a strategic instrument for fulfilling SNP. This research aims to analyze strategic steps in building a quality culture through the implementation of SPMI in elementary schools. The method used is a literature study with qualitative analysis of various relevant literature related to the concept of quality culture, SPMI policies, and best practices that have been implemented in various elementary education institutions. The study results indicate that the PPPEP cycle (Mapping, Planning, Implementation, Evaluation, and Control) and the PDCA model (Plan-Do-Check-Act) serve as the main frameworks in the effective implementation of SPMI. The implementation of the SPMI framework has proven successful in improving quality through strengthening the role of school principals, forming quality teams, training teachers, and digitizing procedures. Case studies in various elementary schools show significant improvements in the quality of learning, teacher competence, and student learning outcomes. Challenges such as limited resources, fluctuating regulations, and resistance to change have become major obstacles, but they can be overcome with effective resource allocation, intensive training, and the collective commitment of the entire school community. In conclusion, the success of a quality culture in elementary schools depends on the systematic, participatory, and sustainable implementation of SPMI.*

Keywords : SPMI; Basic Education; Implementation Strategy; Quality Culture.

Introduction

Primary education plays an important role in laying the foundation for individual growth and national progress. As the frontline of formal education, elementary schools are responsible for producing skilled, character-driven graduates who are ready to face future challenges. Quality assurance in education becomes an important element in this context. Guaranteed quality assurance will ensure that every student receives an education that meets standards to maximize their potential. The quality of a school is not only determined by students' learning outcomes but also by the quality culture that grows and develops within the school environment. However, efforts to improve the quality of education at the elementary school level are often hindered by a lack of coordination, limited resources, and suboptimal participation from all stakeholders.

In this context, the Internal Quality Assurance System (SPMI) serves as a strategic framework to build a sustainable quality culture, with a focus on meeting and improving the eight National Education Standards (SNP). SPMI is a quality assurance mechanism developed and implemented by the educational unit itself. The implementation of a quality culture through SPMI is also supported by regulations such as Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System and Government Regulation Number 19 of 2005 on National Education Standards. (Romadlon et al., 2022) With this regulation, elementary schools are expected to develop a quality assurance system that meets the needs and characteristics of each school. The implementation of SPMI in elementary schools includes syllabus development, determination of minimum completeness criteria (KKM), learning supervision, learning evaluation, as well as integrated management of human resources and facilities (Darmaji et al., 2020a). The success of SPMI implementation and the establishment of a quality culture in elementary schools will serve as a solid foundation for the improvement of education quality on a national scale. With strong policy support, intensive mentoring, and the commitment of all stakeholders, elementary schools can become the vanguard in realizing quality education in line with the demands of the digital era (Dewanti, 2020).

Building a quality culture is not an instant process. A deep understanding of quality assurance principles,

commitment from all school members, and well-planned and measurable strategic steps are needed. This article presents a new perspective on the implementation of SPMI in elementary schools by emphasizing strategies for building a sustainable quality culture. The integration of the PPPEP cycle and the PDCA model is examined as an effective approach, along with analyzing several challenges and their solutions. Additionally, case studies of schools that have successfully implemented SPMI are presented as inspiration for other institutions. Based on this background, this article aims to examine the strategic steps in the implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System (SPMI) in elementary schools, with a focus on efforts to build a sustainable quality culture to achieve quality basic education.

Method

This research uses library research with a qualitative approach to analyze concepts, policies, and empirical findings related to SPMI implementation and quality culture in primary schools. Library research is a research activity carried out by collecting information and data from various sources such as reference books, results of previous similar studies, articles, various journals, and so on that have something to do with the problem to be solved (Sari & Asmendri, 2020). with an article review approach is an activity of reviewing or re-examining various previously published literature, both by academics and other researchers related to the topic we want to research (Mahanum, 2021). Data sources are obtained from policy documents, books, previous research articles, and relevant educational news. Data analysis is carried out by collecting articles with related themes, then grouping and selecting sources that are relevant to the discussion. The next step is to analyze and map the data to answer the research problems that have been determined. This study seeks to explain the improvement of quality culture through the Internal Quality Assurance System (SPMI) in primary schools, including the basic concept, strategic steps for implementing SPMI, examples of SPMI practices in primary schools, as well as challenges and solutions.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

A visionary principal is a leader who has a clear and directed vision for the future of the educational institution they lead. That vision not only serves as a personal guide but also as a collective direction for all school members in achieving meaningful and sustainable long-term goals. Without a strong vision, the principal will only carry out tasks routinely without a clear direction, thus unable to drive the changes and innovations needed in the 21st-century education era (Asnawi, 2019). The success of the visionary leadership of the principal is reflected in their ability to collectively realize the school's vision and mission, as well as to implement various innovative ideas and strategies that can enhance the quality of education and the school's organizational culture. This is inseparable from the various important roles played by visionary leaders in the context of complex and dynamic educational management.

Referring to Nurul Hidayah's opinion in (Mulyadi, 2025), there are four main roles that reflect the character of visionary leadership, particularly in the context of 21st-century school principals :

1. Direction Finder

A visionary principal plays a role as the direction setter for the organization. He is tasked with formulating a contextual, communicative, and inspirational vision and mission. This vision is effectively communicated to all school members, motivating them to move in unison towards change, and building the belief that the steps taken are strategic for collective progress. In the current digital and global era, school principals also need to ensure that the vision aligns with technological developments, societal needs, and the 21st-century competencies that students must possess.

2. Change Agent

In this role, the principal becomes the driving force behind the school's transformation. He is uncomfortable with stagnant conditions or the status quo. On the contrary, visionary leaders always seek opportunities for innovation, evaluate existing systems, and introduce new breakthroughs to improve the quality of educational services. As agents of change, school principals are also required to be adaptive to external dynamics, such as curriculum developments, digitalization of learning, and the demands of competency-based education (Gistituati, 2021).

3. Vision Spokesperson

A visionary principal must be able to be an effective spokesperson in conveying the school's vision and policy direction, both to the internal school community (teachers, students, staff) and external parties (parents, community, education department). Through persuasive, open, and consistent communication, the principal

builds public support and trust in the school's programs. He became a symbol of the spirit of progressive change, while also ensuring that all components of the school were actively involved in realizing the agreed-upon vision.

4. Team Training and Development

Visionary leaders do not work alone, but build solid teams through a collaborative approach. In this role, the principal acts as a coach who is capable of developing the potential of individuals and groups, directing collaboration among teachers, and creating a productive and synergistic work environment. He coordinates collective efforts towards achieving the vision by empowering all "players" within the organization, including teachers, educational staff, and students. This collaborative leadership is becoming increasingly important in the 21st century, where cooperation, innovation, and technological literacy are the main foundations of educational success (Rusdarti et al., 2018).

By optimally carrying out these four roles, the principal not only becomes an administrative leader but also a driving force for change capable of addressing the challenges of modern education. Strong visionary leadership will create schools as centers of inclusive, adaptive, and future-oriented learning, while also being able to produce competent, character-driven generations ready to face a constantly changing world. However, the results of this literature review indicate several significant limitations. First, this study does not provide empirical data such as interviews, observations, or real case studies in schools. The absence of field data weakens the practical value and novelty of the article, making it more descriptive and normative without concrete evidence of how visionary leadership is implemented in the real world. This phenomenon is important because many articles related to school leadership have already incorporated field research, providing more applicable insights. Second, there is repetition and redundancy of ideas, especially related to the emphasis on vision, the role of change agents, and the characteristics of visionary leaders. This repetition makes the article less effective in conveying the main message and can reduce its appeal to readers.

The phenomenon in the field also reinforces the need for special attention to the implementation of visionary leadership. Based on data from the Ministry of Education and Culture (2022), around 40% of school principals in Indonesia have not fully implemented visionary leadership, particularly in terms of innovation and adaptation to technological developments and 21st-century competency demands. This reinforces statement that "without a strong vision, school principals will only perform their duties routinely without a clear direction, thus unable to drive the changes and innovations needed in the 21st-century education era." Therefore, a leadership approach that is not only normative but also based on the real context and the problems faced by the school is very much needed. In conclusion, although this article provides a rich conceptual framework on the role of visionary leadership of 21st-century school principals, the existing literature studies are not yet empirically and practically robust. The recommendation moving forward is to conduct more in-depth and systematic field research so that the visionary leadership model can be adapted and effectively implemented in schools with real contexts and challenges.

Discussion

Based on a literature review from various national and international journals, visionary leadership of school principals in the 21st century plays a strategic role in driving progress and transformation in the world of education. Visionary leadership is not merely an administrative competency, but rather reflects the strategic capacity to read the direction of changing times, formulate a relevant future vision, and inspire the entire school community to adapt and develop sustainably (Badu & Djafri, 2017). In the context of globalization, digitalization, and complex socio-cultural changes, this role becomes crucial for the realization of adaptive, innovative, and highly competitive educational institutions. One of the main characteristics of visionary leadership is its ability to formulate a clear, inspiring, and contextual vision. A strong vision serves as a collective guide in every decision-making process and the direction of school development. The formulation of this vision is not only data-driven but also involves the strategic imagination, intuition, and creativity of the principal in envisioning a better future for the educational institution they lead. A visionary principal is able to read opportunities and challenges that may not yet be visible to the naked eye.

He formulates a realistic yet progressive future strategy, blending idealism with concrete steps that can be realized together. The vision is not merely a formal document, but rather an energizing force driving the school's culture towards collaboration, innovation, and continuous learning. In the era of the 4.0 industrial revolution and society 5.0, school principals are required to be more than just managers (Dwivedi et al., 2022). They must be able to serve as instructional leaders, change agents, and architects of the future of educational institutions. Visionary leadership requires school principals to build adaptive visions and missions that meet the demands of the times – integrating digital literacy, critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration within the framework of 21st-century

competencies (Nadeak, 2023). Moreover, visionary school principals must be the driving force behind digital transformation within the school environment. They facilitate the use of learning technologies such as Learning Management Systems (LMS), blended learning, and AI-based platforms. A digital collaborative culture is developed through teacher training, online learning communities, and the use of educational social media (Hanan et al., 2025). This opens up opportunities for more flexible, personalized, and contextual learning.

So that visionary leadership does not stop at the level of normative discourse, concrete steps need to be developed that can be applied at the level of educational units. This article recommends five main implementational approaches :

1. **Mapping Vision Based on School Needs**
The formulation of a vision must be based on mapping the needs and potential of the school. The principal initiated a participatory process with teachers, educational staff, and the school committee to formulate a vision grounded in the institution's reality using instruments such as SWOT analysis.
2. **Practical-Based Leadership Training**
Strengthening the capacity of school principals is carried out through case study-based training, leadership simulations, and educational innovation workshops. The focus includes digital leadership, visionary communication, and change management.
3. **Strengthening the Vision Monitoring and Evaluation System**
The vision must be translated into performance indicators and evaluated periodically. The M&E system is designed to measure the achievement of the vision based on the quality of learning data, teacher professional development, and the effectiveness of the school's strategic programs.
4. **Strategic Partnership**
Visionary school principals collaborate with universities, professional communities, the business world, and local governments to expand support for resources and educational innovation.
5. **Vision-Participatory-Convergent Model**
The vision is formulated inclusively and articulated in tangible programs such as curriculum digitization, a collaborative culture, teacher training, and student development. The convergence between the school's vision and work plan must be maintained to ensure that the implementation remains aligned and measurable.

In the 21st century, school principals are faced with various complex challenges ranging from the acceleration of digitalization, the demand for inclusive education, to the need to create a learning environment that is responsive to the changing times. In this context, visionary leadership becomes crucial as the driving force behind school transformation. Visionary leaders are not only able to design a progressive future vision for the school but also guide the educational community to concretely realize that vision. Based on the results of the literature study, visionary leadership is characterized by the principal's ability to: (1) create a clear and inspiring direction; (2) build a collaborative culture; (3) integrate innovation; and (4) develop the capacity of all school members. To guide the practical implementation of visionary leadership, the following 5K Strategy approach is offered:

1. **Commitment to Values and Direction of Change**
The principal needs to demonstrate integrity and consistency in directing educational changes based on values such as justice, professionalism, and inclusivity. This commitment becomes the moral foundation in every decision-making and transformational policy.
2. **Cross-Stakeholder Collaboration**
Visionary leadership encourages the creation of synergy between teachers, students, parents, and the community. The principal acts as a facilitator of a collective movement that strengthens the school's vision and mission through open and participatory communication.
3. **Contextualization of Vision**
A strong vision must be adapted to local conditions, school culture, and the specific challenges faced. This contextualization ensures that the vision is not just a document, but becomes a relevant guiding principle that encourages the involvement of the entire school community.
4. **Digital Capabilities**
Principals in the 21st century are required to be digitally literate and become agents of technological transformation. They must be able to leverage technology to enhance learning effectiveness, governance transparency, and expand access to information and communication.
5. **Adaptive Leadership**

The world of education is full of uncertainty, as seen during the global pandemic. Visionary leaders need to have flexibility, mental resilience, and the ability to innovate in crisis situations, without losing direction and the collective spirit of the school community.

Visionary leadership is an important foundation for the transformation of education in the 21st century. Visionary school principals are able to create an adaptive, creative, and collaborative learning environment, and foster an innovation culture that encourages the entire school community to grow together (Saputra et al., 2025). Through a strong vision, structured implementation strategies, and inclusive partnerships, the principal becomes the main actor in creating an educational institution that is not only academically excellent but also relevant to the demands of the times.

Conclusion

Visionary leadership of school principals is a strategic foundation in facing the complexities of 21st-century educational challenges. Principals cannot merely manage administratively; they must be able to build a transformative vision that drives changes in school culture, learning innovations, and the strengthening of digital capabilities. The implementation of that vision requires a systematic approach that includes mapping school needs, practice-based leadership training, vision performance monitoring, and cross-sector strategic partnerships. The 5K Strategy: Commitment, Collaboration, Contextualization of vision, Digital capability, and Adaptive leadership can serve as practical guidelines in concretely actualizing the role of visionary leadership. Thus, visionary school principals not only lead but also transform educational institutions into inclusive, competitive, and future-relevant learning centers.

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