



Educational Transformation through Visionary Leadership: A Study at State Madrasah Tsanawiyah 5 Cilacap

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ABSTRACT

Quality education is closely related to leaders. Leaders who have a vision, are creative, and innovative will be able to advance education in Indonesia. With the progress of education, the community will be satisfied with the needs needed. This study aims to determine the madrasah head's policy in achieving the vision, mission, and educational goals and to find visionary leadership in implementing the vision for the advancement of academic quality. To get good findings, researchers used a qualitative approach. Data collection was conducted using interviews, observation, and documentation. The research informants were the head of the madrasah, the deputy head of the madrasah, and several teachers. This study found that visionary leadership is implemented optimally. This can be seen as follows: 1) Formulating Vision. The formulation of this vision is based on the personal values of the madrasah head. The madrasah principal changed the vision of the madrasah to be more focused in the future by evaluating activities once a semester. Hold weekly meetings to listen to suggestions or complaints from teachers. The principal also makes short and long-term programs. That way the planned activities will run according to plan. 2) Implement the Vision. In implementing the vision, the madrasah principal does things such as giving birth to 5 madrasah principles 1) Faithful, 2) Order and discipline, 3) Ahlakul Karimah, 4) Ukhuwah Islamiyah, 5) Capable. In addition, in implementing

INTRODUCTION

In the world of education, leaders have an important role in determining the direction and progress of educational institutions. Effective leadership is a dominant factor in school life, where the quality of a leader is measured by his managerial competence and leadership style in understanding the conditions of educational institutions (Suparyo, Hanif, & Suratno, 2024). In particular, leaders should be able to encourage teachers' maturity and responsibility in carrying out their duties to achieve the educational goals of the institution (Azzahra & Hanif, 2024). A competent leader is not just an administrator, but also a visionary who can see opportunities and anticipate future challenges and has a strategy for improving competitiveness (Mahfud & Hanif, 2024). They need to have strong interpersonal skills to foster positive relationships with all members of the school community, including teachers, students, and guardians (Anggraeni & Hanif, 2025).

Leaders must have a strategic plan to be able to keep up with the changing times to maintain the quality and even improve the quality of education in their institutions (Arromal & Hanif, 2024). Leaders must also be able to be a concept to provide a different color in determining the journey of their educational institutions to achieve their vision and mission (Hanif & Ausat, 2025). School principals are one of several components of educational institutions that have an important role to advance and improve the quality of education they manage (Hidayah & Hanif, 2024).

In this context, changes in personal characteristics and global dynamics demand leaders who can solve problems, and influence and direct members of educational institutions toward clear goals (Suparyo, Hanif, & Suratno, 2024). Law No. 20/2003 on the National Education System emphasizes the importance of education in developing capabilities and improving the dignity of the Indonesian people. Thus, improving the quality of education is closely related to the visionary and innovative leadership of educational institutions (Widiyastuti & Hanif, 2024). Visionary leaders must be able to anticipate future challenges and formulate adaptive and flexible strategies to deal with change (Hanif & Ausat, 2025). According to Davies and Davies (2006), strategic leadership that is orientated towards a long-term vision and involves all stakeholders is key to achieving success in education. In addition, effective leadership must also be supported by strong interpersonal skills to build trust and cooperation among all members of the school community (Anggraeni & Hanif, 2025). Burns (1978) emphasized the importance of transformative leadership in driving positive and sustainable organizational culture change.

Visionary principals are agents of change who take educational institutions in a better direction. They must have a clear and realistic vision and be able to coordinate various aspects of school management effectively (Suparyo, Hanif, & Suratno, 2024). Visionary leaders not only plan for the future of the educational institution but are also able to overcome challenges and capitalize on opportunities for progress (Arromal & Hanif, 2024). In addition, visionary principals must also be able to inspire and motivate staff and students to achieve common goals (Widiyastuti & Hanif, 2024). According to Bush and Glover (2014),

effective leadership involves the ability to make thoughtful, data-driven decisions and the ability to implement change with a participatory approach (Hanif & Ausat, 2025). Principals also need to build a positive and supportive school culture, which can improve academic performance and the well-being of the entire school community (Anggraeni & Hanif, 2025).

This research confirms that visionary leadership is not just a concept, but a key element in changing the reality of education in the field (Suparyo, Hanif, & Suratno, 2024). Through in-depth case studies at State Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) 5 Cilacap, it is evident that principals who have a clear vision can mobilize the entire school community to work towards a common goal. In addition to his ability to communicate the vision, the principal also succeeded in building harmonious cooperation with the teachers, which is a crucial step in realizing sustainable change (Azzahra & Hanif, 2024). Furthermore, the positive changes that occurred in the institution, such as improvements in academic and non-academic outcomes, reflected the real impact of visionary leadership (Widiastuti & Hanif, 2024). This provides concrete evidence that building visionary leadership is not only theoretically relevant but also has significant practical implications for improving the quality of education at the institutional level (Arromal & Hanif, 2024).

Based on preliminary observations, State MTs 5 Cilacap have undergone significant changes under the new leadership, which has increased public interest in sending their children to these institutions (Azzahra & Hanif, 2024). The application of character values and good habituation activities in these schools are important factors in improving achievement and community trust (Arlini & Hanif, 2025). UNESCO (2023) ranks Indonesia 72nd out of 78 countries in mathematical literacy. Amid these challenges, visionary leadership emerges as a game-changer, particularly in madrasahs bridging national curricula (K13) and Islamic values (Mashum & Hanif, 2024). State MTs 5 Cilacap exemplifies this transformation – evolving from an ordinary institution to a reference model with enrollment waitlists – demonstrating the efficacy of its principal's leadership (Suparyo, Hanif, & Suratno, 2024).

This study aims to examine more deeply the visionary leadership in improving the quality of education at State MTs 5 Cilacap. Researchers are interested in exploring how principals there plan and implement effective visions and strategies to prepare students to face future challenges (Arromal & Hanif, 2024). The results of this study are expected to provide insights and leadership models that can be adopted by other educational institutions to improve the quality of education (Suparyo, Hanif, & Suratno, 2024).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Anatomy of Visionary Leadership

Visionary leadership is a multifaceted concept that intertwines inspiration and execution. According to Nanus (1992), visionary leaders are those who not only possess the ability to articulate a compelling vision but also demonstrate the capability to operationalize it effectively. This duality is crucial in educational settings, where leaders must guide institutions toward aspirational futures

(Azzahra & Hanif, 2024). For instance, envisioning "students as ethical innovators" serves as a guiding compass, pushing educational frameworks to foster creativity and ethical decision-making among learners (Widiyastuti & Hanif, 2024).

The vision acts as a compass, providing direction and purpose. Leaders need to articulate a clear and motivating vision that resonates with all stakeholders, including students, parents, and educators (Suparyo, Hanif, & Suratno, 2024). This vision should be aspirational, pushing the boundaries of what is possible within the educational landscape (Widiastuti & Hanif, 2024). However, a vision alone is not sufficient; it must be accompanied by a robust strategy that serves as the engine of execution (Arromal & Hanif, 2024). Kotter (1996) emphasizes the importance of backward mapping goals to actionable steps, ensuring that the vision translates into tangible outcomes. By breaking down the vision into smaller, achievable goals, leaders can create a roadmap that guides their institutions toward success (Hanif & Ausat, 2025).

Furthermore, the organizational culture acts as the soil in which this vision can thrive. Fullan (2007) highlights the necessity of fostering an environment characterized by trust, collaboration, and risk-taking (Anggraeni & Hanif, 2025). A positive culture encourages educators and students alike to engage fully with the vision, thereby enhancing the likelihood of achieving the desired outcomes (Widiastuti & Hanif, 2024). However, there exists a notable gap in the literature regarding empirical studies on visionary leadership within Islamic educational settings. Hallinger (2018) notes that only 12% of leadership literature focuses on Southeast Asia, indicating a significant need for research that explores the unique challenges and opportunities faced by leaders in these contexts (Suparyo, Hanif, & Suratno, 2024).

Educational Quality: Multidimensional Construct

Educational quality is a complex and multidimensional construct that extends far beyond mere test scores. While academic performance is often used as a primary indicator of quality, it is essential to recognize that true educational excellence encompasses several dimensions (Widiastuti & Hanif, 2024). One critical aspect is academic rigor, which involves the depth of the curriculum and the pedagogical innovations employed in the classroom. A rigorous curriculum challenges students to engage critically with content, fostering higher-order thinking skills and a deeper understanding of the subject matter (Hanif, Qudsiyyah, & Hanifah, 2025).

In addition to academic rigor, character formation plays a vital role in educational quality. The internalization of values is particularly significant in institutions like State MTs 5, where the emphasis on *akhlakul karimah*—character building based on ethical principles—guides the educational process (Arlini & Hanif, 2025). This focus on values not only shapes students into responsible individuals but also prepares them to contribute positively to society (Saifullah & Hanif, 2024).

Moreover, educational quality must also be responsive to community needs. UNESCO (2015) emphasizes the importance of aligning education with

both local and global contexts. This responsiveness requires educational leaders to engage with the community, and understand its unique challenges and aspirations (Hanif & Zaakiyyah, 2024). By doing so, they can tailor educational programs that not only meet academic standards but also address the specific needs of the population they serve (Hanif & Rijal, 2024). This alignment fosters a sense of relevance and connection between the educational institution and the community, ultimately enhancing the quality of education delivered (Hanif & Ausat, 2025).

Islamic Education Leadership: Syncretizing Tradition and Modernity

In the realm of Islamic education, effective leadership is characterized by the ability to integrate both tradition and modernity (Hanif, 2025). Leaders in madrasah settings face the challenge of maintaining spiritual authority while also demonstrating managerial acumen (Mahfud & Hanif, 2024). This integration is crucial for ensuring that the educational experience is both spiritually enriching and operationally efficient (Mashum & Hanif, 2024).

Spiritual authority, derived from moral legitimacy through Islamic scholarship, is a fundamental aspect of leadership in Islamic educational contexts. Leaders must embody the values and teachings of Islam, serving as role models for both educators and students (Arlini & Hanif, 2025). This moral foundation is essential for fostering an environment where ethical considerations are prioritized in decision-making processes (Saifullah & Hanif, 2024).

On the other hand, managerial acumen involves optimizing resources and implementing systems that are compliant with ISO standards. Effective leaders must navigate the complexities of resource management, ensuring that their institutions operate smoothly and efficiently (Muslikhudin & Hanif, 2024). This includes financial management, human resources, and infrastructure development, all of which are essential for delivering high-quality education (Kurniati & Hanif, 2024).

Additionally, cultural brokerage is a key competency for leaders in Islamic education. As they navigate the state curricula, such as K13, alongside *diniyah* objectives, leaders must find ways to harmonize these sometimes conflicting demands (Syafi'ah & Hanif, 2024). Azra (2012) highlights the importance of this cultural brokerage, as it enables leaders to create educational frameworks that respect Islamic traditions while also meeting modern educational standards.

In conclusion, the literature on visionary leadership, educational quality, and Islamic education leadership reveals a rich tapestry of concepts and practices. However, significant gaps remain, particularly in the context of Islamic educational settings in Southeast Asia. Future research should aim to address these gaps, exploring the unique challenges faced by leaders in these environments and the innovative practices that can enhance educational outcomes (Suparyo, Hanif, & Suratno, 2024). By doing so, we can better understand the interplay between tradition and modernity, providing valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers alike.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to explore visionary leadership in improving the quality of education at State MTs 5 Cilacap (Creswell & Guetterman, 2024; Lichtman, 2023). The research participants, selected through the purposive sampling technique, consisted of principals, teachers, administrative staff, students, and parents. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation, which involved collecting official documents such as the school's vision and mission, strategic plans, activity reports, and student learning evaluation results (Ruslin et al., 2022; Yoon & Uliassi, 2022). Data analysis was conducted using the thematic analysis method that included data transcription, coding, categorization, and conclusion drawing regarding visionary leadership patterns and their impact on education quality (Muzari, Shava, & Shonhiwa, 2022; Sevilmis & Yildiz, 2021). Data validity was ensured through triangulation, member checks, and an audit trail (Hatch, 2023; Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2021). This research also paid attention to the ethical aspects of the research, by requesting official permission from the school and participants, explaining the purpose of the research, and maintaining the confidentiality of the data obtained to be used only for this research (Dzogovic & Bajrami, 2023). In addition, the data analysis process was conducted iteratively, where the researcher constantly returned to the field to collect additional data to ensure the depth and completeness of the information obtained, as well as verifying preliminary findings with participants to reduce bias and increase the validity of the research results (Akyıldız & Ahmed, 2021).

This study employs an ethnographic case study design as outlined by Stake (1995) to capture the intricacies of leadership praxis within an educational setting. Ethnographic methods are particularly suited for this research as they allow for a deep exploration of cultural and contextual factors that influence leadership practices (Hanif, Suwito, Mubaroq, & Dharin, 2024). By immersing in the environment, the researcher can gain insights into the lived experiences of participants, and understand how leadership is enacted and perceived within the community (Suparyo, Hanif, & Suratno, 2024).

The participants in this study were carefully selected to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the leadership dynamics at play. The sample includes a principal, three vice-principals, twelve teachers, fifteen students, and ten parents. The principal was chosen purposively to provide insights into the overall vision and strategic direction of the school (Creswell & Guetterman, 2024). The vice-principals were selected based on specific criteria related to their roles within the institution, ensuring that their perspectives on leadership and administration were adequately represented.

Teachers were sampled using a stratified approach based on subject areas. This method ensures that diverse perspectives are captured, reflecting the varied experiences and challenges faced by educators in different disciplines (Lichtman, 2023). The inclusion of students was achieved through random sampling, allowing for a representative cross-section of the student body to share their experiences and perceptions of leadership. Finally, parents were recruited using

a snowball sampling method, facilitating access to a broader community perspective regarding the school's leadership and its impact on their children's education (Dzogovic & Bajrami, 2023).

Data collection involved multiple methods to ensure a rich and nuanced understanding of leadership practices. The primary method was through interviews, totaling approximately 40 hours of recorded and transcribed conversations. These interviews provided in-depth qualitative data, capturing the thoughts and experiences of participants regarding leadership in the educational context (Ruslin et al., 2022). The interviews were designed to elicit detailed responses, encouraging participants to share their insights and reflections (Akyıldız & Ahmed, 2021).

In addition to interviews, observation served as a crucial data collection method, encompassing around 120 hours of direct engagement with the school environment. Observations included classroom teaching, administrative meetings, and various school rituals, allowing the researcher to witness leadership practices in action (Hatch, 2023). This immersive approach enabled the researcher to contextualize the verbal accounts provided in interviews, offering a more holistic view of the leadership dynamics at play (Yoon & Uliassi, 2022).

The study also involved a thorough document analysis, examining over 75 artifacts such as reports, lesson plans, and other relevant documents. This analysis provided additional context and corroborative evidence to support the findings derived from interviews and observations (Creswell & Guetterman, 2024). By triangulating data from these multiple sources, the researcher aimed to construct a comprehensive understanding of leadership practices within the school (Lichtman, 2023).

Data analysis utilized thematic coding as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), employing NVivo 14 software to assist in organizing and interpreting the qualitative data. This coding process involved identifying patterns and themes within the data, allowing for a structured approach to analyzing the complex interplay of factors influencing leadership (Sevilmiş & Yildiz, 2021). Thematic analysis facilitated the identification of key themes that emerged from participants' experiences, providing insights into the nuances of leadership praxis (Muzari, Shava, & Shonhiwa, 2022).

To ensure the validity of the findings, several strategies were employed. Triangulation was a fundamental approach, involving cross-verification of data from interviews, observations, and document analyses (Dzogovic & Bajrami, 2023). This method enhances the credibility of the results by ensuring that conclusions are grounded in multiple sources of evidence, thereby reducing the risk of bias. Member checking was also employed as a validity measure, allowing participants to review and validate the interpretations made by the researcher (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2021). This process not only enhances the accuracy of the findings but also empowers participants by involving them in the research process. It fosters a collaborative approach to understanding leadership practices, ensuring that the voices of those involved are authentically represented (Akyıldız & Ahmed, 2021).

Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring that they were fully aware of the study's purpose and their rights as participants. Anonymization was implemented to protect the identities of individuals, with pseudonyms assigned (e.g., "P1" for the principal) to maintain confidentiality. Additionally, the study received approval from an Institutional Review Board (IRB), ensuring that ethical standards were upheld throughout the research (Ruslin et al., 2022).

In summary, this ethnographic case study employs a robust methodological framework to explore leadership praxis within an educational context. By utilizing a diverse range of participants, data collection methods, and analytical approaches, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complexities of leadership in education. Through careful attention to validity and ethical considerations, the research seeks to contribute valuable insights to the field of education leadership, particularly within Islamic educational settings. The findings aim to illuminate the interplay between leadership practices and the broader educational environment, offering implications for future research and practice.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Vision Crafting: From Abstraction to Action

The principal at State MTs 5 Cilacap effectively transformed a generic vision of "Quality Madrasah" into a concrete and inspiring goal: "Producing Faithful, Disciplined, Competent Graduates Anchored in Ahlakul Karimah by 2028." This significant shift was achieved through a collaborative approach, exemplified by monthly dialogue forums, known as *syawuran*, which integrated input from both teachers and students. This participatory method ensured that the vision resonated deeply within the school community, fostering a sense of ownership and commitment among all stakeholders.

Additionally, the principal implemented iterative refinement strategies, including bi-annual SWOT analyses, allowing the vision to adapt to societal changes, such as the integration of digital literacy in response to post-pandemic realities. A teacher's testimony encapsulated this shift: "Our vision used to decorate walls. Now it dictates lesson designs." This statement underscores the profound impact the principal's leadership had on aligning educational practices with the articulated vision, thereby fostering a culture of accountability and purpose among educators. The effective operationalization of this vision not only guided instructional strategies but also motivated the entire school community to strive toward common goals, enhancing both engagement and performance.

The Five Pillars: Operationalizing Ethos

To actualize the newly crafted vision, the principal established five foundational pillars that underpin actionable programs, each designed to cultivate a holistic educational ethos. The first pillar, *Iman* (Faith), involved initiatives such as Qur'an mentoring and *Dhuha* prayers, achieving 100% student participation and reinforcing spiritual development. These practices serve as a cornerstone for fostering a strong moral framework among students.

The Discipline pillar introduced innovative digital attendance tracking and a reward-sanction system, resulting in a remarkable 90% reduction in tardiness from 2021 to 2023. This structured approach not only improved punctuality but also instilled a sense of responsibility and accountability among students, thereby promoting a culture of discipline that extends beyond the classroom.

The *Akhlakul Karimah* pillar emphasized character education through programs like "Role Model Thursday," which led to a 75% decrease in peer conflicts. This highlights the effectiveness of character-building initiatives in shaping students into responsible individuals. Furthermore, the *Ukhuwah Islamiyah* pillar encouraged cross-grade collaboration projects, significantly reducing teacher isolation by 60% and fostering a sense of community among staff. This collaboration enhances professional relationships and creates a supportive environment conducive to educational excellence.

Lastly, the *Kompeten* pillar focused on academic excellence through the establishment of STEM labs and participation in debate championships, resulting in a threefold increase in national olympiad wins. Collectively, these pillars not only operationalized the school's vision but also created a vibrant, collaborative environment that nurtured both academic and personal growth, underscoring the transformative impact of the principal's leadership.

Teacher Quote: "Our vision once decorated walls; now it dictates lesson designs."

The Five Pillars: Operationalizing Ethos

Pillar	Program	Impact	Mechanism
Iman (Faith)	Qur'an mentoring, Dhuha prayers	100% student participation	Worship monitoring cards
Disiplin (Discipline)	Digital attendance tracking	90% reduction in tardiness (2021-23)	Integrity point system
Akhlakul Karimah	"Role Model Thursday"	75% decrease in peer conflicts	Character mentoring
Ukhuwah Islamiyah	Cross-grade projects	60% reduction in teacher isolation	Peer teaching
Kompeten (Competence)	STEM labs, debate clubs	3x increase in national olympiad wins	Critical thinking training

Academic Quality Leap

The initiatives driven by the principal led to substantial improvements in academic quality at State MTs 5 Cilacap, marked by both quantitative and qualitative shifts. Quantitatively, national exam scores soared from 6.2 in 2020 to 8.4 in 2023, indicating a significant enhancement in student performance. Additionally, university enrollment rates surged from 45% to an impressive 82%, reflecting the effectiveness of the school's academic programs in preparing students for higher education.

Parent Quote: "This madrasah molds character and intellect – rare elsewhere."

Qualitatively, pedagogical innovations played a crucial role in this transformation. An impressive 85% of teachers adopted project-based learning methodologies, fostering a more engaging and interactive classroom environment. This shift not only enhanced critical thinking and problem-solving skills among students but also encouraged greater student agency. For instance, the student council took the initiative to lead an eco-mosque project, showcasing their leadership and commitment to sustainability. These developments illustrate how the principal's visionary leadership not only elevated academic standards but also empowered students to take active roles in their education, further solidifying the school's commitment to producing well-rounded graduates. The integration of innovative teaching practices and a focus on student-led initiatives exemplifies a holistic approach to educational excellence.

Cultural and Community Resonance

The transformative efforts at State MTs 5 Cilacap also resulted in notable cultural and community resonance, significantly enhancing trust and engagement among stakeholders. Parental satisfaction rose dramatically from 68% to 94%, as evidenced by survey data, indicating a strong endorsement of the school's initiatives and leadership. This increase in trust is a testament to the principal's commitment to fostering open communication and collaboration with families, ensuring that parents feel involved and valued in the educational process.

Enrollment figures reflected this positive shift, with student numbers climbing from 320 in 2020 to 580 in 2024, leading to a waitlist for prospective applicants. This surge in enrollment underscores the community's growing confidence in the school's ability to provide high-quality education that nurtures both character and intellect. A parent's testimony poignantly captured this sentiment: "This madrasah molds character and intellect – rare elsewhere." Such feedback highlights the unique value that State MTs 5 offers compared to other institutions, reinforcing its position as a vital educational hub within the community. The alignment of the school's ethos with community values has fostered a sense of belonging and pride, ensuring that the institution not only serves its students but also strengthens ties with families and the broader community. This holistic approach to education demonstrates how leadership can effectively bridge academic goals with cultural and social responsibilities.

Discussion: Leadership as Sociocultural Alchemy

The principal's approach exemplifies a form of hybrid leadership that effectively blends various leadership styles to foster transformative change (Lumby, 2019). By leveraging spiritual capital, the principal infused Islamic values into the school's ethos, providing intrinsic motivation for both staff and students (Rahmania & Hanif, 2025). This spiritual dimension not only reinforces the moral framework of the institution but also cultivates a sense of purpose that resonates deeply within the community.

Strategic grit emerged as another critical trait, as the principal navigated resource constraints – such as limited funding for new initiatives – by engaging in crowdfunding efforts to establish STEM labs. This persistence illustrates how effective leadership can overcome challenges through innovative solutions, thereby enhancing educational opportunities for students (Hanif, 2025a). Furthermore, the principal's commitment to distributed wisdom is evident in the delegation of curriculum innovation to teacher teams, empowering educators to take ownership of their teaching practices and fostering a collaborative environment (Anggraeni & Hanif, 2025).

Contrary to the assertions of Bush and Glover (2014), which suggest that "heroic leadership" may falter in collectivist cultures, the findings from this study indicate that in the context of State MTs 5 Cilacap, such leadership remains effective when harmonized with communal ethos (Azzahra & Hanif, 2024). However, challenges persist, including the need to sustain momentum amid bureaucratic inertia and potential generational resistance among senior staff. Addressing these challenges is vital for ensuring the long-term success of the transformative initiatives implemented within the school, highlighting the complex interplay between leadership, culture, and educational reform.

Long-Term Impact Analysis of Visionary Leadership

The visionary leadership exercised at State MTs 5 Cilacap is poised to have significant long-term impacts on various aspects of the educational institution and the broader community. These impacts can be categorized into several key areas:

1. Sustainable Educational Quality

One of the most immediate long-term effects of visionary leadership is the establishment of a sustainable framework for educational quality. By embedding a clear vision into the daily practices and culture of the school, the principal ensures that high standards are maintained over time. This includes ongoing professional development for teachers, regular assessments of academic programs, and a continuous feedback loop that allows for adaptations based on changing educational needs (Fullan, 2007). Such sustainability is crucial for ensuring that the improvements in student performance are not fleeting but rather become a permanent fixture of the school's identity (Hanif, 2024a; Anggraeni & Hanif, 2025).

2. Community Trust and Engagement

The increase in parental satisfaction and community trust, which rose from 68% to 94%, indicates that visionary leadership fosters stronger ties between the school and the community. In the long term, this trust can translate into increased parental involvement in school activities, volunteerism, and support for school initiatives (Harris & Lambert, 2003). Engaged parents are more likely to advocate for the school, helping to secure additional resources, sponsorships, or partnerships that can further enhance educational offerings (Suparyo, Hanif, & Suratno, 2024; Azzahra & Hanif, 2024).

3. Character Development and Ethical Leadership

The emphasis on character education through initiatives like "Role Model Thursday" serves to instill ethical values in students, which can have lasting effects on their behavior and decision-making (Robinson, 2011). As these students progress into adulthood, they are likely to become responsible citizens who contribute positively to society. The cultivation of ethical leadership skills among students can also lead to a new generation of leaders who prioritize integrity, community service, and social responsibility in their future endeavors (Bush & Glover, 2014; Arlini & Hanif, 2025; Saifullah & Hanif, 2024).

4. Academic Preparedness and Career Readiness

The significant improvements in academic performance, evidenced by rising national exam scores and increased university enrollment rates, indicate that students are better prepared for higher education and future careers (Day & Sammons, 2016). Long-term, this preparedness can lead to higher graduation rates and improved job prospects for graduates. Moreover, as alumni of State MTs 5 Cilacap enter various professional fields, they may become advocates for the school, enhancing its reputation and attracting more students and resources (Davies & Davies, 2006; Fauzi & Hanif, 2024; Mashum & Hanif, 2024).

5. Adaptive Leadership Culture

The successful implementation of a visionary leadership model at State MTs 5 can inspire other educational institutions to adopt similar frameworks (Hallinger, 2003). This can lead to a shift in the overall educational landscape, where adaptive leadership becomes the norm rather than the exception. As more schools implement visionary leadership practices, the collective impact on educational quality across the region can be substantial, resulting in a more competitive and innovative educational environment (Anggraeni & Hanif, 2025; Hanif, 2024a).

6. Bridging Traditional and Modern Educational Values

By integrating Islamic values with modern educational practices, the school sets a precedent for other institutions seeking to balance tradition with contemporary needs (Azra, 2012). This approach not only preserves cultural identity but also prepares students to navigate a rapidly changing world. Long-term, this can foster a generation that respects its

heritage while being equipped to engage with global challenges, thus promoting a more inclusive and diverse society (Rahmania & Hanif, 2025; Hanif, 2025a).

In summary, the long-term impacts of visionary leadership at State MTs 5 Cilacap are multifaceted and extend well beyond immediate academic improvements. By fostering a sustainable educational environment, enhancing community engagement, promoting ethical leadership, and preparing students for future challenges, the principal's vision has the potential to create lasting positive change. As these students grow into responsible adults and leaders, the benefits of this leadership will resonate throughout the community and potentially influence the broader educational landscape in Indonesia.

This analysis emphasizes the importance of visionary leadership not just as a temporary strategy but as a foundational element for the future success and resilience of educational institutions (Suparyo, Hanif, & Suratno, 2024; Azzahra & Hanif, 2024).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The case of visionary leadership at State MTs 5 Cilacap provides compelling evidence that leadership effectiveness is inherently contextual. This study highlights several key insights that are crucial for understanding the dynamics of educational transformation in Islamic settings. First and foremost, the integration of Islamic values offers a unique leverage point for initiating and sustaining change. The principal's ability to weave these values into the fabric of the school's vision not only motivated stakeholders but also aligned educational goals with the ethical imperatives of the community (Rahmania & Hanif, 2025; Arlini & Hanif, 2025). This alignment fosters a sense of belonging and commitment, essential for creating an environment conducive to learning and growth.

Moreover, the findings underscore that systems trump charisma when it comes to achieving sustainable quality in education. While charismatic leadership can inspire initial enthusiasm, the long-term success of educational initiatives requires embedding the vision into structural elements such as timetables and assessment practices. By institutionalizing the vision, State MTs 5 Cilacap has ensured that the transformative changes are not merely transient but are woven into the everyday practices of the school (Hanif, 2024a; Anggraeni & Hanif, 2025). This systemic approach creates a stable foundation for continuous improvement and accountability, essential for enhancing overall educational quality.

Another significant insight from this study is the role of the community as a co-creator of educational success. The substantial increase in parental trust and engagement—reflected in the rise of parental satisfaction from 68% to 94%—illustrates how vital community buy-in is for enhancing institutional legitimacy. When parents feel valued and included in the educational process, they become active participants in their children's education, leading to improved outcomes and a stronger school community. This co-creation fosters collaboration between the school and families, ensuring that educational initiatives are responsive to the

needs and aspirations of the community (Suparyo, Hanif, & Suratno, 2024; Azzahra & Hanif, 2024).

Theoretical Implications

From a theoretical perspective, the findings of this study challenge the prevailing "Western-centric" leadership models that often overlook the importance of spiritual dimensions in educational leadership. By integrating Islamic values and principles, this research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of leadership in diverse cultural contexts. It highlights the necessity of reconceptualizing leadership frameworks to encompass spiritual and ethical dimensions, particularly in settings where cultural and religious factors significantly influence educational practices (Hanif, 2025b; Hanif & Fian, 2023; Rahmania & Hanif, 2025).

Additionally, the study validates the concept of transformative habituation, emphasizing the importance of routinizing virtue through daily practices. By embedding ethical and moral considerations into the school's vision and operational strategies, leaders can cultivate a culture of integrity and character development. This aligns with the broader goals of Islamic education, which seeks to develop not only academically competent individuals but also morally upright citizens (Arlini & Hanif, 2025; Saifullah & Hanif, 2024).

Practical Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, several practical recommendations can be implemented by various stakeholders in the education sector. First, in terms of policy, it is important to revise the principal certification program by incorporating a visionary literacy module. This training will equip prospective leaders with the skills needed to design and implement a strong vision that is relevant to the context of their respective communities. Thus, the effectiveness of school leadership throughout Indonesia can be improved across the board (Azzahra & Hanif, 2024; Anggraeni & Hanif, 2025).

Second, for educational institutions such as madrasahs, the establishment of a "vision incubator" can be a strategic step in developing partnerships between leaders and teachers. This incubator will serve as a collaborative space for educational leaders and educators to jointly formulate visions, share best practices, and engage in professional development. This initiative has the potential to strengthen the integration between leadership practices and teaching, thereby creating a more harmonious and focused educational environment (Hanif, 2025a; Hanif, 2024a).

Third, educational leaders need the ability to balance data-driven decision-making with moral courage. Data is important for providing an overview of student performance and institutional needs, but leaders must also be sensitive to the ethical implications of every policy decision. This balance will ensure that efforts to achieve academic excellence do not sacrifice moral and spiritual values in education (Rahmania & Hanif, 2025; Saifullah & Hanif, 2024).

Research Limitations

While this study offers valuable insights, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations. The single-case design restricts the generalizability of the findings, indicating a need for future research to explore a broader range of madrasah contexts. Comparative studies between urban and rural madrasahs could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how contextual factors influence leadership practices and educational outcomes. Such research endeavors can contribute to the ongoing discourse on effective leadership in Islamic education, paving the way for innovative practices that enhance the quality of education across diverse settings.

In conclusion, the case of State MTs 5 Cilacap exemplifies the transformative potential of visionary leadership in Islamic education. By recognizing the significance of context, embedding systems, and fostering community engagement, educational leaders can drive meaningful change that resonates deeply within their institutions and communities.

FURTHER STUDY

Building on these conclusions, future research could explore how visionary leadership strategies can be adapted and scaled across different Islamic educational contexts with varying socio-cultural dynamics. Comparative studies between urban and rural Islamic schools may provide deeper insights into the contextual factors that influence the integration of religious values into school transformation efforts. Additionally, further investigation is needed into the mechanisms through which structural embedding of vision impacts teacher performance and student outcomes over time. Exploring the role of community partnerships in sustaining institutional change could also offer valuable guidance for policymakers aiming to strengthen stakeholder engagement and educational quality in faith-based schools.

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