

Leadership Strategies of the School Principal in Improving the Quality of Learning at the Muaradua Public Elementary School (UPT SD Negeri 03)

Strategi Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah dalam Meningkatkan Mutu Pembelajaran di UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua

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Abstract

This study focuses on the principal's leadership strategy in improving the quality of learning at the UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua. The focus is directed at the principal's role as an instructional and transformational leader to create quality learning, which includes academic and non-academic aspects, as well as student readiness to face future challenges. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, the results of this study indicate that the principal's strategic leadership planning has been carried out in a focused and systematic manner. In its implementation, efforts to improve the quality of learning do not only focus on academic achievements but also include the development of non-academic aspects and 21st-century skills. This strategic success has a positive impact on improving the quality of the learning process, strengthening teacher performance and professionalism, and significant developments in student learning outcomes and character. Overall, the leadership implemented by the principal contributes significantly to the creation of a more meaningful and quality-oriented learning environment.

Keywords

Principal Leadership Strategy; Elementary School; Learning Quality; Instructional Leadership.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini berfokus pada strategi kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dalam meningkatkan mutu pembelajaran di UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua. Fokus tersebut diarahkan pada peran kepala sekolah sebagai pemimpin instruksional dan transformasional untuk menciptakan pembelajaran bermutu, yang mencakup aspek akademik, non-akademik, serta kesiapan peserta didik dalam menghadapi tantangan masa depan. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa perencanaan strategis kepemimpinan kepala sekolah telah dilakukan secara terarah dan sistematis. Dalam implementasinya, upaya peningkatan mutu pembelajaran tidak hanya berfokus pada capaian akademik semata, melainkan juga mencakup pengembangan aspek non-akademik dan keterampilan abad ke-21. Keberhasilan strategis ini berdampak positif pada peningkatan kualitas proses pembelajaran, penguatan kinerja dan profesionalisme guru, serta perkembangan signifikan pada hasil belajar dan karakter peserta didik. Secara keseluruhan, kepemimpinan yang diterapkan kepala sekolah berkontribusi nyata terhadap terciptanya lingkungan pembelajaran yang lebih bermakna dan berorientasi pada mutu.

Kata Kunci

Strategi Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah; Sekolah Dasar; Mutu Pembelajaran; Kepemimpinan Instruksional.

Introduction

The quality of learning is a primary indicator of an educational institution's success in achieving its transformative goals. In today's global and national context, education is no longer seen simply as the transfer of knowledge, but rather as a comprehensive process for developing superior, competitive human resources (HR), prepared to face the complexities of life in the future (Hariyono et al., 2025). Therefore, ensuring the quality of learning is the main mandate for every educational unit. According to Ramadhani (2023) Education at the elementary school (SD) level is where the foundation of education is laid, so the quality of learning at this level has a significant long-term impact. According to Fatimah (2025) This quality concept encompasses three main dimensions. First, the Academic (Cognitive) Dimension: Achieving subject competency standards and improving the quality of learning and basic numeracy. Second, the Non-Academic (Affective and Psychomotor) Dimension: Character development, instilling Pancasila values, and fostering positive spiritual and social attitudes. Third, the Future Readiness Dimension: Providing 21st-century skills, such as critical thinking, creativity,

collaboration, and communication (4Cs), as well as students' adaptive abilities to changes in technology and the environment. High quality learning ultimately leads to increased teacher professionalism and effective school management (Hariyono et al., 2025).

The quality of learning is a primary indicator of an educational institution's success in achieving its transformative goals. At the elementary school level, learning quality is measured not only by students' cognitive outcomes but also by their character development, 21st-century skills, and adaptive abilities (Rahmat & Husain, 2020). Achieving this quality requires a conducive school ecosystem, supported by solid management and strategic leadership. The principal plays a central and crucial role as the primary agent of change in the school. As an instructional leader, the principal is directly responsible for ensuring the quality of the teaching and learning process in the classroom (Sariwardani et al., 2025). This includes curriculum planning, clinical supervision, ongoing professional development for teachers, and creating a collaborative culture (El-Fadhil et al., 2025). Recent studies confirm that the effectiveness of principal leadership has a significant and positive, albeit indirect, impact on improving student learning outcomes (Majid, 2024). Improving the quality of learning in Indonesia, particularly in elementary schools, faces various challenges, including the quality gap between urban and rural schools, the availability of infrastructure and learning technology, and varying levels of teacher professional competence (Hendrik Dewantara, 2024).

In facing this complexity, an adaptive and planned leadership strategy is an absolute prerequisite. The Muaradua 03 Public Elementary School (UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua) is an educational institution in the South Ogan Komering Ulu Regency (South OKU) that faces specific challenges in its local context. This is particularly true in the context of implementing learning related to curriculum changes, where not all educators have the ability to quickly adopt these changes. The implementation of digital learning requires adequate resources, while schools still face difficulties in equalizing capabilities. As a school operating in the region, the principal is required to formulate and implement appropriate strategies. Various previous studies and research have also confirmed that principal leadership has a significant influence on improving the quality of learning, both through strengthening teacher performance, academic supervision, and developing a conducive school culture. Most of these studies place principal leadership as a critical variable in improving the quality of education and show a positive correlation between leadership style or strategy and the quality of the learning process and outcomes. Based on observations made so far, several research gaps can still be identified.

First, most previous research has tended to be conducted in urban school contexts or schools with relatively adequate resources. Research examining principal leadership strategies in the context of elementary schools in areas with limited facilities, infrastructure, and human resources is still relatively limited. Yet, the characteristics and challenges of schools in these areas are complex and require a different, more contextual leadership approach. Second, much previous research has focused more on the quantitative relationship between principal leadership and learning quality, thus failing to fully describe how these leadership strategies are planned, implemented, and evaluated in actual school practice. Consequently, understanding the principal leadership process as a strategic and dynamic effort to improve learning quality remains underdeveloped.

Third, the concept of learning quality in several previous studies is often limited to the cognitive learning outcomes of students. However, learning quality at the elementary school level is multidimensional, encompassing academic aspects, character building, and the development of 21st-century skills. Therefore, there is still a gap in research that examines learning quality holistically in relation to principal leadership strategies. Fourth, research that specifically examines principal leadership strategies in certain educational units as in-depth case studies, particularly in the Public Elementary School Units (UPT) in South Ogan Komering Ulu Regency, is still very limited. However, contextual studies based on location and school characteristics can produce empirical findings in the form of best practices that are relevant and applicable to other schools with similar conditions.

Based on these gaps, research is needed that specifically examines and analyzes the principal's leadership strategies in improving the quality of learning at the UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua. This will also help achieve educational equality in areas that have historically been underdeveloped in terms of principal leadership strategies. This research is expected to fill this gap by providing a deeper understanding of leadership strategies that are adaptive, contextual, and oriented toward holistically improving the quality of learning in elementary schools in this region.

The Nature of Strategy in the Context of Education, According to Arwan (2025) Conceptually, strategy is a bridge connecting the existing conditions of an organization, in this case a school, with the ideal vision it wants to achieve in the future. According to Adilah et al. (2024) Strategy can be understood through the 5P concept (Plan, Ploy, Pattern, Position, Perspective), which emphasizes that strategy is not only a systematic plan (Plan), but also a pattern of organizational behavior (Pattern), a way to outwit competitors (Ploy), a position in the external environment (Position), and a comprehensive view of the world (Perspective). Furthermore, recent research highlights the importance of strategic agility in educational leadership. Bastari et al. (2025) emphasizes that effective educational strategies need to be oriented towards lifelong learning and character building, not just academic mastery.

Leadership in a Strategic Perspective, Educational leadership is not just an administrative activity, but is a transformative process that influences, directs, and inspires the entire school community to move towards a shared vision. Sugiarto et al. (2025), defines leadership as the process of influencing others to work enthusiastically to achieve organizational goals, based on vision, values, and personal competencies. AlFarisi et al. (2022), emphasized that unlike leadership in the profit-oriented business sector, educational leadership emphasizes non-financial outcomes such as character development, critical thinking skills, and collaboration among students. This aligns with the findings of Nufus et al. (2024), which shows that strong instructional leadership has a direct impact on improving the quality of teaching and student learning outcomes. In addition, studies from Sari Komala (2025), emphasized that the success of leadership strategies in schools is influenced by three main factors: (1) clarity of vision and strategic direction, (2) the ability to build team capacity, and (3) the creation of a collaborative learning culture. Furthermore, research by Saragih (2025), highlights the development of the concept of digital leadership in Indonesian schools.

Integration of Strategy and Leadership for School Transformation, Effective educational leadership strategies are born from the synergy between visionary strategic planning and collaborative leadership style. According to Aliyyah et al. (2025) The successful implementation of leadership strategies in schools is greatly influenced by the organizational culture created by the leader. An inclusive, innovation-oriented, and collaboration-oriented culture can be the main foundation for schools that are adaptive to environmental changes. Therefore, the leadership strategy of elementary school principals is a key factor in determining the effectiveness of education delivery at the elementary level. Conceptually, a principal's leadership strategy is a synthesis of strategic planning and educational leadership practices that are consistently applied to achieve school goals. Recent research confirms that strategic and adaptive principal leadership has a significant influence on school climate, teacher performance, and student learning outcomes in elementary schools (Sofan et al., 2025). The essence of the Elementary School Principal's Leadership Strategy, the main focus of this strategy lies in optimizing human resources, especially class teachers, as well as creating a safe, inclusive, and conducive learning environment for the academic and character development of students (Arridlo, 2025). Recent research shows that instructional leadership has a significant influence on improving the quality of teacher learning and student achievement, especially at the elementary education level (Yudhi, 2025). Sugiarto (2025) emphasizes that effective school leadership at the elementary education level must be able to integrate academic vision, humanistic approaches, and participatory management practices.

There are several key leadership models that are relevant in the educational context, which are often not used in isolation, but rather integrated by adaptive principals. (Legi, 2024):

1. Instructional Leadership, This model places the principal as the main leader in the academic realm (Aslam et al., 2022).
2. Transformational Leadership, This model is very effective in driving organizational change and overcoming resistance to innovation needed for quality improvement (Suryadhiningrat et al., 2022).
3. Distributed Leadership. This model is based on the premise that effective leadership is a distributed activity, not just a hierarchical position (Suryapriadi et al., 2025).

The concept of learning quality, In the development of modern educational studies, the concept of quality has evolved from an administrative approach and compliance with formal standards to an approach that emphasizes learning transformation, educational equity, and the development of 21st

century competencies (Nuryani, 2024). The relationship between principal leadership and learning quality has been a major focus of educational leadership studies for the past two decades. Principals do not interact directly with students in the classroom, but they influence learning quality through various mediating mechanisms involving teachers, the school climate, and the overall learning management system (Rahmi et al., 2023). From a quality management perspective, quality learning is not only measured by the final results in the form of academic grades, but also by the quality of the learning process that takes place in the classroom.(Adien et al., 2025)Meanwhile, the output dimension is reflected in the achievement of student learning outcomes which include cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects (Simanjuntak et al., 2022). First, the quality of learning in elementary schools can be identified through a number of interrelated indicators. First, teacher performance in the learning process. Teachers with good pedagogical performance tend to be able to create meaningful, student-centered learning (Prasetiawati, 2025). However, at the elementary school level, learning outcomes are not solely measured through academic grades, but also through the development of students' character and social skills (Saputra et al., 2025).

The quality of learning is reflected in the extent to which the curriculum is translated into learning practices that are contextual, differentiated, and appropriate to the needs of students (Mugara & Ali, 2025). A positive school climate has also been shown to contribute to teacher motivation and student learning engagement (Dodent et al., 2022). The relationship between principal leadership and learning quality occurs through several primary mediating pathways. One of the most dominant pathways is the influence of leadership on teachers' working conditions. Supportive working conditions allow teachers to focus more on planning and implementing quality learning (Cahyaningtyas et al., 2024). Recent research shows that increasing teacher capacity is the most powerful lever in improving the quality of learning and student learning outcomes, especially in elementary schools (Asyauqiya et al., 2025). Through a clear vision and a strong school culture, improving the quality of learning is no longer seen as the sole responsibility of individual teachers, but as a collective commitment of the entire school community (Mahmudah et al., 2025). In the context of this research, the principal's leadership strategy at the UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua is positioned as a determining variable that drives the overall school system. Principal leadership influences learning quality by creating a conducive school climate, strengthening teacher capacity, and internalizing a vision and culture of quality. Therefore, improving the quality of learning in elementary schools cannot be separated from the quality of the principal's leadership strategy as the primary actor of educational change at the educational unit level.

Method

The type of research used in this study is descriptive qualitative. This study emphasizes revealing the meaning, process, and dynamics of leadership that occur naturally in the school environment, specifically at the UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua. Through this approach, the researcher seeks to understand the school's social, cultural, and organizational context holistically, thus obtaining a complete picture of the principal's leadership strategies in a real and actual context (Gunawan, 2022). The research location was at the UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua, South Ogan Komering Ulu Regency (South OKU). The research was conducted in February and March 2026 for 2 months, starting from the issuance of the research permit. The data collection techniques in this study were,

1. In-depth Interview, In-depth interviews are a data collection method that is carried out directly through a question and answer process with sources, both informants and key informants, in order to obtain detailed and comprehensive information (Indrawan & Yaniawati, 2017:136).
2. Participatory Observation, Observation can be understood as an activity of observing and recording in a structured manner various phenomena that appear in the research object.
3. Documentation Study (Document Analysis), The documentation method is a data collection technique by tracing various written sources related to the research object.

The data analysis technique used is the Miles and Huberman (1994) model, which consists of three activity flows carried out interactively and continuously:

1. Data Reduction, Summarizing, selecting the main points, focusing on leadership strategies, and discarding the unnecessary.
2. Data Display, Presenting reduced data in narrative, matrix or chart form to make it easier to understand.
3. Conclusion Drawing/Verification, Draw conclusions based on the findings of the data that has been presented and verify it again with the existing data.

Results

The Muaradua 03 Public Elementary School (UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua) was established in response to the need for access to quality basic education for the community in the Muaradua area and its surroundings. School Status and Accreditation: Public School Status: Under the auspices of the South OKU Regency Education Office. It currently holds an A rating, indicating that the school has met eight National Education Standards (SNP) with excellent quality in terms of management, learning processes, and graduation.

1. Vision and Mission

a. Vision of UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua

"To make students achieve in academic and non-academic fields, physically and mentally healthy, have character, are child-friendly and environmentally aware in the spirit of Pancasila"

b. Mission of UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua

1. Providing adequate learning facilities and infrastructure
2. Organizing co-curricular, intra-curricular, and extra-curricular activities
3. Organizing a healthy school movement (GSS)
4. Developing a program to improve the quality of school learning
5. Developing environmental education
6. Forming the character of students who care about and love the environment

UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua is an educational unit located in the center of Palembang city with a high level of public interest in sending their children to school. In the 2025/2026 academic year, the number of students who registered was 112 people and the total number of students at UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua was 724 people. Based on the data above, it can be seen that UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua has a high appeal in the community, as shown by the very significant increase in the number of sales of new student forms and the number of students that continues to grow every year. as emphasized by "Mrs. Umi Kalsum, S.Pd.SD" as the head of UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua who said

"Currently, our school is very popular among the public. This can be seen from the significant increase in sales of SPMB forms. The number of students continues to grow from year to year, so we continuously strive to improve the quality of our school to be even better, both in terms of the quality of learning and other aspects, so that we are able to produce quality and competitive students."
(Results of interview dated February 25, 2026).

The Head of UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua added that

"Our school remains committed to improving the quality of education by strengthening its flagship programs, particularly fostering academic and academic achievement, developing human resources, and creating a conducive learning environment. This ensures that students

not only develop academically but also possess excellent non-academic skills, reflecting the eight dimensions of a graduate's profile."
(Results of interview dated February 25, 2026)

Educators and educational staff are crucial components in the successful implementation of education at the UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua. The teaching staff at UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua have educational backgrounds relevant to their fields and are supported by adequate competencies. Furthermore, the school also strives to improve teacher quality through training and professional development.

Table 1. Data on educators at UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua for the 2025/2026 academic year

No	Name	Subjects	Education	Position
1.	Ade Anggraeni	Elementary School/Islamic Elementary School Class Teacher	S1	Teacher
2.	Afrilia Uthami	Elementary School/Islamic Elementary School Class Teacher	S1	Teacher
3.	Ali Sodikin		High school / equivalent	Educational Personnel
4.	Anggun Aprianti	Early Childhood Education Class Teacher	S1	Teacher
5.	April	Elementary School/Islamic Elementary School Class Teacher	S1	Teacher
6.	Arlen	Other	S1	Teacher
7.	Arwidatiani	Elementary School/Islamic Elementary School Class Teacher	S1	Teacher
8.	Aspariadi	Islamic education	S1	Teacher
9.	Bahori	Elementary School/Islamic Elementary School Class Teacher	S1	Teacher
10.	Dwi Ramadian	Elementary School/Islamic Elementary School Class Teacher	S1	Teacher
11.	Eli Yana		D3	Educational Personnel
12.	Endang Sulistyowati	Elementary School/Islamic Elementary School Class Teacher	S1	Teacher
13.	Febrio Nanda Tamara	physical education and Health Sciences	S1	Teacher
14.	Ferly Irawan	physical education and Health Sciences	S1	Teacher
15.	Freti Andini	Biology	S1	Teacher
16.	Karyati	Elementary School/Islamic Elementary School Class Teacher	S1	Teacher
17.	Kunariyah		Junior high school / equivalent	Educational Personnel
18.	Kurda Nursiah	Islamic education	S1	Teacher
19.	Legiman	physical education and Health Sciences	S1	Teacher
20.	Lili Susanti	Elementary School/Islamic Elementary School Class Teacher	S1	Teacher
21.	Maila	Islamic education	S1	Teacher
22.	Maya Sari	Elementary School/Islamic Elementary School Class Teacher	S1	Teacher
23.	Nur Endah Sri Wulandari	Other	D3	Educational Personnel
24.	Nurbaiti	Elementary School/Islamic Elementary School Class	S1	Teacher

		Teacher		
25.	Ohta Afrisna	Other	S1	Teacher
26.	Rika Oktavia		S1	Teacher
27.	Rizky Rimadona	Other	S1	Teacher
28.	Rohimin		Elementary school / equivalent	Educational Personnel
29.	Rusdiana	Elementary School/Islamic Elementary School Class Teacher	S1	Teacher
30.	Sartikawati	Elementary School/Islamic Elementary School Class Teacher	S1	Teacher
31.	Sherly Sercilia	Elementary School/Islamic Elementary School Class Teacher	S1	Teacher
32.	Tati Nopianti	Early Childhood Education Class Teacher	S1	Teacher
33.	Tika Erlisa	Early Childhood Education Class Teacher	S1	Teacher
34.	Umi Kalsum	Elementary School/Islamic Elementary School Class Teacher	S1	Headmaster
35.	Yasmadi	Elementary School/Islamic Elementary School Class Teacher	S1	Teacher
36.	Yeni Pitri Yani	Elementary School/Islamic Elementary School Class Teacher	S1	Teacher
37.	Yulia Pratiwi Utami	Elementary School/Islamic Elementary School Class Teacher	S1	Teacher

Source: General Administration Section of UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua

Based on the table above, it is shown that the number and level of education of teachers and educational staff at UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua are very supportive of learning activities, making them an asset in realizing the school's vision and mission, as stated by "Mrs. Umi Kalsum, S.Pd.SD" as the principal of UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua who said:

"The benchmark for increasing interest in UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua is the competence of the teachers where the teachers already have a S1 educational qualification in addition to that 95% of the teachers have been certified meaning that the teachers' competence has been measured and recognized by the state and every month the principal schedules training for teachers consisting of training related to improving competence and the latest is PM and KKA training, in addition to that UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua builds a pattern of interaction between leaders and teachers by positioning themselves as friends and partners so that the interaction pattern that is built makes it easy for teachers to always communicate and consult in improving the quality of learning."
(Results of interview dated March 4, 2026).

The infrastructure owned is in the form of a two-story school building, and one floor with a classroom consisting of 16 classrooms measuring 8x7 m, the number of students is 28-30 people and accompanied by 1 teacher, namely the homeroom teacher. Facilities include a prayer room, multipurpose building, school library, teacher's room, cooperative, UKS room, school garden, security post. For facilities available complete including the necessary devices such as laptops / computers, projectors, projector screens, speakers and the school facilitates digital-based learning media that support learning activities.

The data for this study were obtained through interviews with research informants, direct field observations, and analysis of documents available at the school. The informants included the principal, class teachers, subject teachers, students, and parents. This aligns with the principal's statement:

"Our school has a vision and mission, one of which is to become a superior school in both academic and non-academic fields. From there, we develop strategies based on the SKL

(Standard Standards) and national policies, which we then incorporate into the RKS (Work Plan) and RKAS (Work Plan) through joint meetings with all relevant stakeholders." (Interview, March 4, 2026)

Based on the observation results, the leadership strategy in improving the quality of learning at UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua was implemented through teacher training programs, communication with the community within the school and between schools.

Furthermore, document analysis shows that this program has been systematically designed within the school's work plan, including task allocation, training programs, and achievement targets. Therefore, it can be concluded that the principal's strategy to improve the quality of learning at the UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua is carried out in a planned, structured, and sustainable manner through a collaborative approach involving the entire school community and supported by parents.

Based on the results of interviews, observations, and documentation, it was found that the implementation of leadership strategies in schools is not free from various complex and multidimensional obstacles. These obstacles do not only originate from the technical aspects of learning, but also include managerial and pedagogical factors, as well as support for the student learning environment. The principal revealed that the main challenge in implementing the learning quality improvement program lies in the human resources (HR) factor, both from the teacher and student side, who have diverse characters and responses to the learning quality improvement program:

"The most significant challenge is human resources, as the people we lead have diverse personalities and characteristics. Some are enthusiastic, while others are less responsive, requiring ongoing coaching and motivation." (Results of interview dated March 4, 2026)

To address this, principals undertake various efforts, including training, guidance, and direct role models as leaders in learning quality improvement programs. At the classroom implementation level, teachers face challenges related to burnout, which is also a barrier to participating in teacher development activities.

"Sometimes boredom arises when participating in training activities and the curriculum is constantly changing." (Results of interview dated March 12, 2026)

Observations indicate that although resources, such as equipment and media, are available, their utilization is not yet optimal by all teachers, and a collaborative culture has not yet been fully established. Meanwhile, document analysis indicates that the program was systematically designed, but its implementation still faces challenges in terms of consistency and teacher participation.

Based on observations, teachers have begun implementing more varied learning approaches, such as group discussions and the use of engaging media. Furthermore, they provide individualized support for students experiencing difficulties. Therefore, it can be concluded that the principal's efforts to address barriers to learning quality improvement strategies at the UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua encompass several key aspects, namely:

1. Strengthening teacher competency through training in learning communities
2. Implementation of varied and adaptive learning methods,
3. Providing motivation and appreciation to teachers and students
4. Strengthening of sustainable facilities and programs, as well as
5. Increased cooperation between schools and parents.

Overall, these efforts show that the success of the strategy to improve the quality of learning depends not only on program planning, but also on the school's ability to adapt, collaborate, and make continuous improvements to the various obstacles faced. Based on the results of interviews with the principal, teachers, students, and parents, the leadership role of the principal in improving the quality

of learning at the UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua appears very dominant and comprehensive. The principal emphasized that improving the quality of learning through the school's vision and mission. Improving the quality of learning is placed as an important part of school development, especially in building reading, writing, and discussion habits.

"SD Negeri 03 Muaradua has a vision and mission, one of which is to become a school that excels academically and non-academically. So improving the quality of learning is indeed part of the direction of school development."
(Results of interview dated March 3, 2026)

This statement demonstrates that the principal's leadership is oriented toward improving the quality of learning integrated into the school's education system, not merely an additional program. The principal also demonstrates his role as a leader who actively mobilizes all members of the school community. Thus, it can be concluded that the principal's leadership in strengthening the culture of improving the quality of learning at the UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua is realized through active involvement, systematic management, motivation, and ongoing supervision. The principal functions not only as a policy maker, but also as a prime mover capable of building a collaborative learning culture within the school community and between schools.

Based on the results of interviews, observations, and documentation, the leadership strategy implemented by the principal showed a significant impact on improving the ability to improve the quality of student learning and numeracy as well as the quality of the learning process at school. This impact is not only seen in academic aspects such as student grades, but also in non-academic aspects such as student activity, self-confidence, and involvement in learning activities. Meanwhile, based on document analysis, the learning quality improvement program also showed concrete results, such as an increase in the number of students who excel in competitions at the sub-district, district, provincial and even national levels, as well as achievements in educational report cards. Thus, it can be concluded that the principal's strategy in improving the quality of learning at the UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua has had a significant positive impact, including:

1. Improving students' academic abilities
2. Increased interest in learning and participation in school activities,
3. Increasing students' self-confidence and creativity, as well as
4. Improving the quality of the learning process to be more interactive and participatory.

Overall, the strategies for improving the quality of learning that are implemented not only improve students' academic abilities, but also create a culture of active, creative, and sustainable improvement in the quality of learning in the school and family environment. Overall, the strategies implemented by the principal through academic supervision, teacher competency development, strengthening a culture of discipline and character, and encouraging learning innovation aim to direct the entire learning process to align with the school's vision of quality learning. The implementation of the vision and mission does not stop at the planning level, but is manifested concretely in daily leadership practices that always provide a comfortable and pleasant work atmosphere while remaining within the corridor of education based on educational norms. A pleasant work atmosphere provides motivation to bring out the best performance that is within oneself. Based on the findings of the observation and interview results, it can be analyzed that the implementation of the school's vision and mission at UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua is carried out through an integrated instructional and participatory leadership approach.

The principal not only acts as an administrative manager, but also actively carries out the function of instructional leadership by prioritizing improving the quality of the teaching and learning process. This aligns with the concept of instructional leadership, which emphasizes the principal's role in influencing the quality of learning through teacher development and academic process management. Overall, the analysis of the findings indicates that the principal's leadership strategy at the UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua has been aligned with the school's vision and mission. Instructional leadership ensures a focus on learning quality, while participatory leadership strengthens teacher

commitment and engagement. The synergy of these two approaches positively impacts the quality of the learning process, school climate, and teacher professionalism, ultimately supporting the achievement of the school's educational goals holistically.

Table 2. Research results on the impact and relationship of strategies with learning quality

No	Leadership Strategy	Implementation Form	Impact on the Learning Process	Relation to School Vision
1	Periodic academic supervision	Classroom observation and providing constructive feedback	Teachers improve methods, classroom management, and student engagement.	Ensure that learning takes place in quality and direction
2	Teacher competency development	KKG and internal school training	Improving teachers' pedagogical and professional competence	Supporting the vision of quality learning
3	Participative leadership	Teacher involvement in planning and evaluation	Improving teacher commitment and responsibility	Cultivating a collaborative work culture
4	Strengthening the culture of discipline	Positive habits and role models	A more orderly and conducive learning environment	Supporting the formation of student character
5	character building	Integration of character values in school activities	Students demonstrate discipline and responsibility	In line with the vision of character building
6	Encouraging learning innovation	Active and contextual learning	Learning is more interesting and meaningful	Developing students' potential holistically
7	Conducive school climate	Environmental planning and harmonious relationships	Increase student learning motivation	Supporting the success of quality learning

Discussion

The principal's strategic leadership planning is the primary foundation for achieving sustainable learning quality in educational units. Research at the UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua indicates that the principal's strategic leadership planning strongly aligns with the principles of instructional leadership. Instructional leadership positions the principal as a central figure directly responsible for the direction, quality, and effectiveness of the school's learning process (Istikomah & Hayati, 2025). The research findings revealed that the principal of UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua uses the school's vision and mission as the primary foundation in formulating all school work programs, particularly those related to learning planning and academic policies. The vision and mission are not merely positioned as formal administrative documents, but are internalized as strategic guidelines in educational decision-making. This is in line with the view Ahmad et al., (2026) which emphasizes that effective instructional leadership always starts from a clear learning vision that is understood and implemented consistently by all school members.

In the context of the UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua, the principal's strategic planning is directed at aligning the school's institutional goals with the actual needs of classroom learning. This strategy reflects the main characteristics of instructional leadership, namely the principal's ability to direct learning objectives, manage the curriculum, and facilitate improvements in teaching quality (Hatimah et al., 2025). Furthermore, the research results show that strategic leadership planning at the UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua is not understood narrowly as a purely administrative activity. The principal interprets planning as a strategic process directly oriented toward improving the quality of learning. This view aligns with the findings of Waruwu et al., (2025) which states that planning in instructional leadership should focus on activities that have a direct impact on classroom learning practices. Based

on the results of interviews and documentation studies, the principal developed a supervision program that took into account teacher needs, the results of previous learning evaluations, and student learning outcomes. This supervision program was designed not merely as a control tool, but as a means of developing teacher professionalism. This approach aligns with the concept of modern academic supervision, which emphasizes mentoring, reflection, and collaborative teacher capacity building (Posangi et al., 2025).

The implementation of the principal's leadership strategy at the UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua demonstrates leadership dynamics that are not only instructionally oriented but also contain strong characteristics of transformational leadership. This condition aligns with the contemporary view that effective school leadership is a combination of instructional and transformational leadership (Wekke et al., 2024). In daily leadership practice, the principal of UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua acts as a change agent capable of translating strategic planning into concrete actions at the operational level of learning. This reflects the essence of transformational leadership, which emphasizes the process of individual and organizational transformation toward better conditions (Iswahyudi et al., 2023).

Conclusions

Based on the results of research and discussion regarding the principal's leadership strategy in improving the quality of learning at UPT SD Negeri 03 Muaradua, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The principal's leadership strategy begins with planning the principal's leadership strategy. Improving the quality of learning is carried out in a focused and systematic manner. The principal formulates a program to improve the quality of learning by referring to the school's vision and mission, National Education Standards, and the needs and characteristics of students. This planning is developed by involving teachers and the school community to create a shared perception and commitment to its implementation. The implementation of the principal's leadership strategy is realized through the principal's role as an instructional and transformational leader. The principal actively supervises learning, fosters and develops teacher professionalism, manages the curriculum, and creates a conducive and collaborative school culture to support improvements in the quality of learning.
2. The implementation of the strategy is carried out in the form of efforts by the principal to improve the quality of learning. not only focuses on academic aspects, but also includes the development of non-academic aspects and 21st-century skills. Academic quality is improved through strengthening the quality of learning and numeracy, non-academic quality through the formation of student character and attitudes, and 21st-century skills through learning that encourages critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication. The implementation of the principal's leadership strategy is supported by the school's strengths in the form of teacher commitment and cooperation, a positive school culture, and the support of the school community. Meanwhile, obstacles faced include limited facilities and infrastructure, limited resources, and challenges related to the school's geographic and environmental conditions.
3. The impact of the principal's leadership strategy This is evident in the improved quality of the learning process, the increased performance and professionalism of teachers, and the positive developments in student learning outcomes and character. The leadership strategies implemented by the principal contribute to the creation of more meaningful and quality-oriented learning.

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