

Visionary Principal Leadership in Driving School-Based Management in the 3T Region of Morotai Island

Fahmi Jaguna^{1*}, Jasmal Martora², Irawati Sabban¹, Abd Sarman Sibua¹, Alfatah Sibua¹

¹ PGSD Universitas Pasifik Morotai, Indonesia

² Oxford Brookes University, England

ffahmidjaguna@gmail.com, jasmalmartora@gmail.com,

sabbanirawati@gmail.com, sarmansibua89@gmail.com, alfatahsibuataha@gmail.com

corresponding author: ffahmidjaguna@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

School principal leadership is a strategic determinant of the successful implementation of School-Based Management (SBM), particularly in primary schools located in Indonesia's Remote, Frontier, and Outermost (3T) regions, where educational development is constrained by limited resources and restricted access to quality educational services. This study aims to examine the characteristics of visionary school leadership, the strategies employed to drive SBM implementation, and their implications for educational quality and school autonomy at SD Muhammadiyah 1 Pulau Morotai. A qualitative approach with a case study design was employed. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis involving the principal, teachers, the school committee, parents, and the school supervisor. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, while research trustworthiness was ensured through source, method, and time triangulation, member checking, and an audit trail. The findings reveal that visionary leadership is reflected in the principal's ability to formulate and communicate a shared vision, foster a collaborative school culture, optimize local resources, and strengthen partnerships with the Muhammadiyah organization, Save the Children, Stimulant Institute, and the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of Universitas Pasifik Morotai. These practices enhance SBM implementation, improve teachers' professional capacity, increase community participation, and strengthen school autonomy. The study contributes to the literature by proposing an Island-Based Collaborative Visionary Leadership Model, demonstrating that effective SBM in 3T regions depends not only on managerial competence but also on social capital, institutional collaboration, and context-responsive educational governance tailored to island communities.

Keywords: educational governance, educational leadership, qualitative case study

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INTRODUCTION

The transformation of primary education governance in the twenty-first century has positioned school leadership as a strategic determinant of the successful implementation of School-Based Management (SBM). The global shift from centralized administrative control toward decentralized and autonomous school governance requires principals to move beyond conventional managerial responsibilities and assume the role of visionary leaders capable of articulating institutional direction, inspiring organizational change, mobilizing school communities, and leveraging local potential to improve educational quality. Contemporary scholarship consistently demonstrates that visionary leadership is positively associated with improved instructional quality, teacher professionalism, organizational culture, and the effectiveness of SBM implementation (Leithwood et al., 2020; Hardiansyah, 2022; Ariani, 2022). Within this perspective, school principals function as strategic agents who bridge institutional aspirations with community expectations through adaptive, collaborative, and sustainable leadership practices.

The significance of visionary leadership becomes even more pronounced in Indonesia's Remote, Frontier, and Outermost (3T) regions. These areas are characterized by geographical isolation, limited infrastructure, unequal distribution of qualified human resources, and restricted access to educational services, creating considerably greater challenges for SBM implementation than those encountered in urban settings. Such contextual constraints demand school leaders who can transcend traditional administrative roles and

become transformative agents capable of establishing strategic partnerships, empowering teachers, strengthening community participation, and utilizing local resources as valuable social capital for school development (Leithwood et al., 2020; Hardiansyah, 2022; Firman et al., 2023). Consequently, the effectiveness of SBM is determined not only by policy frameworks and regulatory compliance but also by the leadership capacity to translate institutional vision into meaningful and sustainable educational practices.

Pulau Morotai represents one of Indonesia's distinctive 3T regions and provides a relevant context for examining the dynamics of educational leadership under challenging circumstances. Despite noticeable improvements in regional development over recent years, substantial educational challenges remain, particularly concerning the equitable distribution of school quality, teacher capacity development, institutional governance, and community engagement. Within this setting, school principals are expected to formulate long-term strategic visions that integrate institutional priorities with the evolving needs of local communities. Visionary leadership, therefore, becomes an essential mechanism for cultivating innovative, adaptive, and continuously improving school cultures capable of responding effectively to contextual challenges (Leithwood et al., 2020; Suwartini, 2022; Yantoro & Sholeh, 2022).

From a theoretical standpoint, visionary leadership is a leader's ability to articulate a compelling future direction, communicate strategic goals effectively, foster collective commitment, and mobilize organizational resources toward shared objectives. Within the SBM framework, vision extends far beyond a formal administrative statement; it serves as the guiding foundation for decision-making, organizational development, instructional improvement, stakeholder empowerment, and institutional sustainability. Accordingly, the relationship between visionary leadership and SBM is mutually reinforcing. The stronger a principal's capacity to develop and institutionalize a shared vision, the greater the likelihood that SBM is implemented effectively to enhance educational quality and organizational performance (Hardiansyah, 2022; Ariani, 2022; Firman et al., 2023).

Previous empirical studies have predominantly examined the influence of school leadership on teacher performance through academic supervision, professional development, instructional guidance, and organizational culture enhancement (Sumarni et al., 2020; Nurmala, 2021; Sahippuddin, 2021; Ariani, 2022). Other investigations have explored SBM implementation as a general strategy for improving educational quality (Hardiansyah, 2022; Firman et al., 2023), while research on school managerial leadership has largely focused on organizational change processes or educational management during the COVID-19 pandemic (Yantoro & Sholeh, 2022). Although these studies have significantly enriched the field of educational management, they generally examine isolated relationships among leadership variables and provide a limited understanding of how visionary leadership functions as an integrated driving force that simultaneously mobilizes all dimensions of SBM, particularly within primary schools located in geographically isolated 3T regions.

This research gap underscores the need for a more comprehensive investigation of visionary school leadership in primary schools in island and border areas. Educational leadership in 3T contexts involves challenges that extend beyond internal organizational management. School principals are required to establish social legitimacy, foster sustainable community partnerships, address resource constraints, and ensure the continuity of school improvement initiatives despite structural limitations. These contextual realities underline that effective SBM depends not only on administrative competence but also on visionary leadership that can align institutional transformation with local socio-cultural conditions. Accordingly, this study seeks to expand current theoretical understanding by examining visionary leadership as the principal catalyst for integrated SBM implementation grounded in local characteristics and community needs.

This study was conducted at SD Muhammadiyah 1 in Pulau Morotai. The school is purposively selected because it occupies a strategic position as one of the leading private primary schools in the administrative center of Pulau Morotai and has demonstrated notable institutional development compared with comparable schools in the surrounding area. Beyond its progressive governance practices, the school actively promotes collaboration with local communities, maximizes the utilization of local resources, and consistently applies SBM principles across its organizational management. Furthermore, the principal has actively aligned

the school's vision with community expectations through character education initiatives, teacher professional development, collaborative school culture, and strengthened parental and community engagement. These institutional characteristics provide an appropriate empirical setting for examining the implementation of visionary leadership within the SBM framework in a representative 3T educational environment.

Conceptually, this study is based on the interaction among three principal constructs. Visionary school leadership is positioned as the primary determinant of SBM implementation effectiveness. This leadership dimension encompasses the ability to formulate a strategic vision, establish effective communication within the organization, empower teachers, strengthen community collaboration, and manage institutional change. The implementation of SBM is reflected through curriculum management, human resource development, educational facilities management, community participation, governance transparency, and continuous improvement of educational services. The interaction between these constructs is expected to contribute to enhanced school quality, reflected in stronger organizational culture, higher teacher professionalism, and more effective educational service delivery. This conceptual framework highlights visionary leadership as the strategic mechanism that connects institutional vision with sustainable SBM practices, thereby reinforcing organizational effectiveness within resource-constrained educational settings (Leithwood et al., 2020; Hardiansyah, 2022; Firman et al., 2023).

Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze how visionary school leadership drives the implementation of School-Based Management at SD Muhammadiyah 1 Pulau Morotai as a representative primary school in Indonesia's 3T region. Specifically, the study seeks to identify the principal's strategies for fostering organizational culture, strengthening community participation, empowering teachers, and integrating the school's strategic vision with local educational needs. The scholarly contribution of this research lies in extending the current body of knowledge on visionary educational leadership within geographically isolated primary school contexts, an area that remains underrepresented in the existing literature. The findings are expected to enrich contemporary discussions on educational leadership while providing practical implications for school leaders, local governments, and educational policymakers in designing SBM policies that are more responsive to the unique characteristics of island and border communities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Characteristics of Visionary School Leadership

Visionary school leadership represents a contemporary leadership paradigm that emphasizes shaping the future of educational organizations by formulating a compelling vision, implementing strategic change management, developing human resources, and cultivating an adaptive school culture capable of responding to evolving educational environments. Unlike administrative leadership, which primarily focuses on operational efficiency and procedural compliance, visionary leadership positions the principal as a transformational change agent who aligns institutional aspirations with community expectations and responds proactively to global educational developments (Ylimaki & Brunderman, 2019; Liu et al., 2021). Within contemporary educational leadership theory, principals are expected not merely to administer organizational resources but to inspire teachers, facilitate professional collaboration, and create learning environments that sustain continuous school improvement and educational excellence.

Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2020) identify four fundamental dimensions of effective school leadership: setting organizational direction, developing human capacity, redesigning organizational structures, and strengthening instructional programs. Collectively, these dimensions demonstrate that visionary leadership extends beyond the articulation of strategic goals and is reflected in concrete actions that foster collaborative organizational cultures, encourage innovation, and support continuous institutional learning. Complementing this perspective, Liu et al. (2021) report that instructional and distributed leadership significantly enhance teacher efficacy by promoting supportive school climates and strengthening professional collaboration among educators. These findings underscore the argument that visionary leadership is a multidimensional process that links organizational vision with sustainable educational transformation.

Conceptually, visionary principals exhibit several distinguishing characteristics, including the capacity to formulate long-term strategic goals, communicate institutional vision persuasively, make evidence-informed decisions, encourage innovation, empower teachers, establish productive partnerships with communities, and cultivate organizational cultures characterized by adaptability and continuous improvement (Bandur, 2018; Almager et al., 2021). Effective principals also demonstrate a high level of environmental awareness, enabling them to anticipate external challenges and transform them into opportunities for institutional growth. Consequently, visionary leadership serves as a strategic foundation for developing learning organizations capable of maintaining educational quality in dynamic and increasingly complex educational contexts.

Visionary Leadership as a Driving Force for School-Based Management Implementation

School-Based Management (SBM) is widely recognized as a decentralized educational governance approach that grants schools greater authority to manage resources, design educational programs, and make decisions based on local priorities and contextual needs. The essence of SBM extends beyond administrative decentralization; it promotes participatory governance by actively engaging teachers, parents, school committees, and local communities in educational planning and decision-making processes (Bandur, 2018). Accordingly, the effectiveness of SBM largely depends on the principal's leadership capacity to mobilize diverse stakeholders toward shared institutional objectives.

Bandur (2018) demonstrates that the successful implementation of SBM in Indonesia is strongly associated with the quality of school leadership, particularly in fostering community participation, ensuring transparent governance, and strengthening institutional accountability. These findings indicate that visionary leadership acts as a catalyst connecting educational policies with practical school management at the local level. Similarly, Ylimaki and Brunderman (2019) argue that visionary leadership enhances organizational capacity by promoting collective learning, distributed leadership practices, and reflective organizational cultures, thereby facilitating sustainable school transformation rather than short-term organizational change.

Within the SBM framework, principals assume multiple strategic roles as planners, facilitators, motivators, instructional supervisors, and innovators. Visionary school leaders formulate institutional visions based on comprehensive needs assessments, design participatory development programs, allocate resources strategically, and ensure that every school initiative directly improves teaching and learning quality. Almager et al. (2021) further demonstrate that instructional leadership emphasizing coaching and professional mentoring substantially strengthens teachers' professional competencies while reinforcing the successful implementation of school policies. Consequently, the relationship between visionary leadership and SBM is mutually reinforcing: strong leadership enhances the effectiveness of school governance, while SBM provides institutional conditions that encourage participatory and transformational leadership practices.

School Leadership Strategies for Addressing Challenges in Indonesia's 3T Regions

Indonesia's Remote, Frontier, and Outermost (3T) regions present educational conditions that differ substantially from those of urban environments. Limited transportation infrastructure, uneven teacher distribution, inadequate educational facilities, restricted technological access, and geographical isolation create complex management challenges for school leaders. Under these circumstances, visionary leadership becomes a critical mechanism for strengthening institutional resilience by optimizing local resources and fostering collaborative engagement among educational stakeholders (Ylimaki & Brunderman, 2019).

The first strategy consistently highlighted in the literature involves strengthening social capital through partnerships with local communities, regional governments, religious organizations, and private-sector institutions. Such collaborative networks enable schools to access financial, material, and human resources beyond those available through formal school funding mechanisms (Bandur, 2018). A second strategy emphasizes teacher empowerment through academic supervision, continuous professional development, peer learning, and professional learning communities. Empirical evidence presented by

Quendangan et al. (2023) indicates that effective instructional leadership significantly improves teacher efficacy, ultimately contributing to enhanced student academic achievement.

Another essential strategy is fostering an innovative school culture by integrating locally available resources into teaching and learning. In island regions such as Pulau Morotai, natural environments, local history, cultural traditions, and indigenous knowledge represent valuable educational resources that can enrich classroom learning while reducing dependence on limited physical infrastructure. Roberts et al. (2022) argue that principal professional development should prioritize contextual instructional innovation, enabling schools to adapt effectively to changing educational environments. Furthermore, principals are encouraged to strengthen collaborative leadership by distributing leadership responsibilities among teachers, thereby developing resilient, adaptive, and high-performing educational organizations.

The Impact of Visionary Leadership on Educational Quality and School Autonomy

International research consistently demonstrates that visionary leadership exerts substantial influence on educational quality. Its impact extends beyond improvements in student learning outcomes to include the development of positive school cultures, enhanced teacher professionalism, stronger organizational commitment, and increased institutional capacity (Liu et al., 2021). Principals possessing clear strategic visions create organizational climates that encourage innovation, collaboration, reflective practice, and continuous learning, enabling the entire school community to pursue shared institutional goals effectively.

Within the School-Based Management perspective, educational quality is understood as the outcome of interactions among leadership, organizational culture, instructional effectiveness, and community participation. Consequently, visionary leadership serves as the central integrating mechanism that aligns these interconnected dimensions within an effective and sustainable school governance system. Akomodi (2025) demonstrates that instructional leadership represents a strategic factor in improving teaching quality through teacher capacity building, systematic academic supervision, and the establishment of reflective professional cultures within schools.

Beyond improving educational quality, visionary leadership also significantly strengthens school autonomy. Schools led by visionary principals generally demonstrate greater capacity to manage institutional resources efficiently, promote educational innovation, establish strategic partnerships, and cultivate organizational cultures that can adapt to changing internal and external environments. Such institutional autonomy represents a critical indicator of successful SBM implementation because schools become increasingly capable of sustaining continuous organizational development through internally generated capacity rather than relying exclusively on external interventions (Bandur, 2018; Ylimaki & Brunderman, 2019).

Drawing on this theoretical synthesis, the present study proposes a conceptual framework in which visionary school leadership serves as the principal driving force shaping the effectiveness of School-Based Management through four interconnected processes: strategic vision formulation, teacher empowerment, organizational culture development, and community collaboration. Effective implementation of SBM subsequently contributes to improved educational quality and enhanced school autonomy, particularly within primary schools located in Indonesia's Remote, Frontier, and Outermost (3T) regions. Based on this perspective, visionary leadership should not be viewed merely as an individual competency of school principals but rather as a transformational organizational mechanism that systematically connects institutional vision with adaptive, participatory, and quality-oriented school governance practices capable of sustaining long-term educational improvement.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative, intrinsic case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of how visionary school leadership facilitates the implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) in the authentic context of a primary school in Indonesia's Remote, Frontier, and Outermost (3T) region. A qualitative methodology was considered the most appropriate because the study sought to explore the complexity of

leadership processes, organizational interactions, decision-making practices, and school governance from the perspectives and lived experiences of those directly involved. Rather than measuring relationships among variables, the research aims to generate a rich, contextualized understanding of leadership practices situated in their natural settings (Aspers & Corte, 2021; Creswell & Creswell, 2024; Denzin & Lincoln, 2023).

The research design was grounded in the intrinsic case study tradition developed by Creswell and Yin. According to Creswell and Creswell (2024), a case study enables researchers to investigate a bounded system through intensive data collection from multiple sources of evidence, thereby producing a comprehensive understanding of a contemporary phenomenon. Similarly, Yin (2025) argues that case study research is particularly appropriate for addressing how and why questions when the phenomenon under investigation cannot be separated from its real-life context. In this study, the bounded case comprised the practices of a visionary principal in driving the implementation of School-Based Management within a primary school located in a 3T area. This design, therefore, provides an appropriate methodological framework for examining the dynamic relationships among leadership, organizational culture, and school governance within a specific educational context.

The study was conducted at SD Muhammadiyah 1 Pulau Morotai, located in Pulau Morotai Regency, North Maluku Province, Indonesia. The school was selected through purposive sampling because it possesses characteristics closely aligned with the research objectives. As one of the leading private primary schools in the regency's administrative center, the school has demonstrated consistent institutional development, actively established partnerships with local communities, effectively utilized local resources, and sustainably implemented the principles of School-Based Management. Furthermore, the principal has consistently demonstrated visionary leadership through strategic planning, character education initiatives, teacher professional development, and the cultivation of a collaborative school culture. These characteristics make the school an appropriate and information-rich setting for investigating visionary educational leadership within a 3T context.

Fieldwork was undertaken between May and June 2026. The research process consisted of five sequential stages: research preparation, data collection, data analysis, validation of findings, and report preparation. During the preparation stage, the researcher developed the research proposal, designed interview protocols, observation guidelines, and documentation checklists, and obtained institutional research approval. Data collection involved classroom and school observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Data analysis was conducted concurrently with data collection, allowing emerging findings to inform subsequent field activities. The final stage focused on validating the findings through triangulation procedures and preparing the research report in accordance with established qualitative research standards.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in implementing School-Based Management. The principal served as the key informant because of his central leadership role within the school. Supporting participants included the vice principal, 6 classroom teachers, the chairperson of the school committee, 2 parents representing the school community, and 1 school supervisor, for a total of 12 participants. Participant selection was guided by three criteria: a minimum of two years of professional experience at the school, active participation in school planning and development, and substantial knowledge of SBM implementation. The final number of participants was determined by the principle of data saturation, in which data collection ceased once additional interviews yielded no new concepts or analytical themes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2025; Patton, 2022; Maxwell, 2021).

Data were collected through three complementary qualitative techniques. First, moderate participant observation was conducted to examine the principal's leadership practices, school meetings, instructional supervision, teacher coordination activities, and collaborative initiatives involving community stakeholders. This approach enables the researcher to observe naturally occurring leadership behaviors while maintaining an appropriate level of engagement within the research setting.

Second, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted using an interview guide designed around the conceptual dimensions of visionary leadership and School-Based Management. The semi-structured format provided sufficient flexibility to probe participants' experiences, perceptions, and

interpretations while ensuring consistency across interviews. This approach facilitated a comprehensive exploration of leadership strategies, organizational decision-making, teacher empowerment, and stakeholder participation.

Third, document analysis was employed to strengthen the credibility of the findings. Documents included the school's vision and mission statements, the School Development Plan (*Rencana Kerja Sekolah*), the School Budget and Activity Plan (RKAS), meeting minutes, instructional supervision reports, SBM-related policy documents, and other institutional records relevant to school governance (Creswell & Creswell, 2024; Tracy, 2022). Documentary evidence was used to corroborate observational and interview data and to provide additional contextual information regarding school management practices.

Consistent with qualitative research principles, the researcher serves as the primary research instrument (human instrument), supported by interview protocols, observation sheets, and document review checklists. Prior to field implementation, these instruments were developed based on indicators derived from the literature on visionary leadership and School-Based Management. To strengthen content validity, all research instruments underwent expert review by two specialists in educational management before being employed during fieldwork.

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2022), consisting of four interconnected processes: data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. These analytical activities were conducted iteratively throughout the research process rather than sequentially after data collection. Interview recordings were transcribed verbatim, after which coding was conducted using open, axial, and selective coding, as recommended by Saldaña (2021). Conceptually similar codes were grouped into broader analytical categories and subsequently synthesized into overarching themes that explained how visionary leadership facilitated the implementation of School-Based Management. The interpretation of findings adopted an inductive analytical approach, integrating empirical evidence with the study's conceptual framework to generate theoretically meaningful explanations.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the research, the study adopted the quality criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba through multiple validation strategies. Credibility was established through source triangulation, methodological triangulation, time triangulation, member checking, and prolonged engagement in the research setting. Source triangulation involved comparing information obtained from the principal, teachers, school committee members, parents, and the school supervisor. Methodological triangulation compared evidence generated through interviews, observations, and documentary analysis, while time triangulation involved collecting data across different periods during the fieldwork to assess the consistency of participants' responses (Denzin & Lincoln, 2023; Flick, 2022).

Dependability was strengthened through the maintenance of a comprehensive audit trail documenting each stage of the research process, including instrument development, fieldwork procedures, analytical decisions, and interpretation of findings. Confirmability was ensured by preserving field notes, interview transcripts, coding records, and documentary evidence, thereby allowing analytical decisions to be independently examined and verified. Lastly, transferability was enhanced through the provision of rich, contextualized descriptions of the research setting, participant characteristics, organizational environment, and leadership practices, enabling readers to determine the applicability of the findings to educational contexts sharing similar institutional and geographical characteristics (Maxwell, 2021; Ravitch & Carl, 2021; Silverman, 2022).

By adopting this methodological framework, the study is expected to generate a nuanced, empirically grounded understanding of how visionary school leadership drives the implementation of School-Based Management in Indonesia's disadvantaged, frontier, and outermost regions. Beyond documenting leadership practices in a single institutional context, the findings are anticipated to advance theoretical scholarship on educational leadership while providing practical insights for strengthening school governance in island and border communities facing comparable educational challenges.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics of Visionary School Leadership at SD Muhammadiyah 1 Pulau Morotai

The findings indicate that the leadership practices demonstrated by the principal of SD Muhammadiyah 1 Pulau Morotai embody the essential characteristics of visionary school leadership. This leadership orientation is reflected in the principal's ability to construct a shared institutional vision, embed that vision within the school's organizational culture, and align all educational programs with long-term institutional goals. Rather than functioning merely as a formal statement, the school's vision *"To nurture a generation characterized by noble character, intellectual excellence, and cultural awareness grounded in faith and piety"* serves as the strategic foundation for policy formulation, program planning, instructional supervision, and institutional evaluation.

The principal emphasizes that the success of the school's vision depends fundamentally on collective understanding and ownership among all stakeholders:

"A school's vision should never remain a statement displayed on a wall. Teachers, the school committee, parents, and even the wider community must understand the direction the school intends to pursue so that every program contributes to the same institutional purpose." (Principal Interview, May 2026)

This statement illustrates a transformational leadership approach in which organizational vision is continuously communicated and reinforced throughout the school community. Rather than being treated as an administrative requirement, the vision functions as a shared organizational commitment that guides strategic decision-making. These findings are consistent with Leithwood et al. (2020), who argue that effective school leadership begins with setting organizational direction before developing human capacity and organizational culture. Likewise, Hallinger (2020) and Bush (2020) maintain that visionary leadership constitutes a fundamental prerequisite for sustainable school improvement and long-term educational transformation.

Teachers further confirm that the school's vision consistently guides institutional planning at both strategic and operational levels.

"Whenever we prepare annual programs, semester plans, or instructional activities, we are encouraged to examine whether they genuinely contribute to character development, academic achievement, and the school culture envisioned by our institution." (Teacher Interview, May 2026)

These findings demonstrate that the principal has successfully established strong alignment between institutional vision, strategic planning, and program implementation. While previous studies by Ariani (2022) and Nurmala (2021) primarily emphasize the principal's role in academic supervision, the present study reveals a broader leadership function. Within the context of SD Muhammadiyah 1 Pulau Morotai, visionary leadership extends beyond supervisory responsibilities and serves as an integrative organizational mechanism that links every school activity to long-term strategic objectives.

In addition, the study contributes theoretically to the literature on educational leadership. Previous scholarship generally conceptualizes visionary leadership as the ability to formulate organizational direction and inspire institutional change (Leithwood et al., 2020; Day et al., 2020). The present findings underscore that in Indonesia's Remote, Frontier, and Outermost (3T) regions, visionary leadership evolves into a context-responsive model that integrates national educational priorities with local community needs. Consequently, visionary leadership is not simply a strategic management capability but also an adaptive process through which institutional goals are contextualized according to the social, cultural, and geographical realities of island communities.

Table 1. Major Themes of Visionary School Leadership

Themes	Empirical Evidence	Theoretical Implications
Shared institutional vision	The school vision is collectively understood by teachers, parents, and stakeholders	Strengthens collective organizational commitment
Vision communication	The vision guides planning, implementation, and evaluation	Enhances strategic alignment across school programs
Context-responsive leadership	Integration of local cultural values and Muhammadiyah educational principles	Extends visionary leadership theory within 3T contexts
Collaborative organizational culture	Teachers actively participate in institutional planning	Promotes participatory governance and organizational engagement

Visionary Leadership as the Driving Force Behind School-Based Management

The findings further demonstrate that visionary leadership serves as the primary catalyst for the effective implementation of School-Based Management (SBM). The principal viewed successful SBM as a collective endeavor that depends not only on teacher professionalism but also on the meaningful participation of the school committee, the Muhammadiyah organization, parents, and the broader community as strategic educational partners.

The chairperson of the school committee explains:

“We are consistently involved in preparing school programs, monitoring the use of government operational funds, and evaluating school activities. The principal is highly receptive to suggestions and recommendations from the community.” (School Committee Interview, May 2026)

This evidence underscores that SBM at SD Muhammadiyah 1 Pulau Morotai effectively incorporates the principles of participation, transparency, and accountability. Decision-making processes are conducted collaboratively, providing school committee members with substantive opportunities to contribute to institutional planning and evaluation. These findings reinforce earlier studies by Hardiansyah (2022) and Firman et al. (2023), which emphasize the pivotal role of school leadership in strengthening SBM implementation. However, the present study extends existing knowledge by demonstrating that community members function not merely as administrative supporters but as strategic partners in institutional development and school governance.

Parental engagement also emerged as a significant component of SBM implementation. Parents actively participate through regular communication forums, discussions regarding students' academic and personal development, character education initiatives, and various school improvement programs.

One parent states:

“The school frequently invites us to discuss our children's development. We genuinely feel that we are partners in the educational process rather than simply sending our children to school.” (Parent Interview, May 2026)

This finding indicates that relationships between the school and families have evolved into genuine collaborative partnerships characterized by shared responsibility for educational outcomes. Contemporary educational research consistently demonstrates that strong school–family partnerships contribute to improved student achievement, stronger character development, and more effective implementation of educational policy (Connolly et al., 2019; Harris, 2021). Accordingly, the implementation of SBM at SD Muhammadiyah 1 Pulau Morotai illustrates that sustainable school improvement depends not only on internal organizational capacity but also on the quality of external stakeholder relationships.

Another essential finding concerns the institutional role of the Muhammadiyah organization as a source of organizational support. Moral guidance, institutional networking, ideological development, and long-term organizational partnerships substantially strengthen the school's capacity to initiate and sustain educational innovation.

The principal explains:

“Muhammadiyah represents one of our greatest institutional strengths because it provides moral support, organizational guidance, and extensive networks that enable the school to continue developing over the long term.” (Principal Interview, May 2026)

This finding differs from much of the existing SBM literature, which primarily conceptualizes successful School-Based Management in terms of school autonomy and decentralized decision-making (Neeleman, 2019). The present study demonstrates that, within private primary schools located in Indonesia's 3T regions, successful SBM is also shaped by institutional social capital generated through religious organizations and community-based networks. This perspective broadens the theoretical understanding of SBM by incorporating institutional collaboration as an essential determinant of effective educational governance.

The findings, therefore, underscore that visionary leadership strengthens School-Based Management not only by improving internal organizational processes but also by expanding collaborative relationships beyond the school. Leadership, in this context, serves as a strategic mechanism that connects institutional vision, community participation, organizational trust, and educational innovation within a sustainable governance framework.

Table 2. Conceptual Model Emerging from the Findings

Dimensions	Key Findings	Theoretical Contribution
Visionary Leadership	Vision communication, teacher empowerment, context-responsive leadership	Extends visionary leadership theory for schools in Indonesia's 3T regions
School-Based Management	Community participation, transparent governance, and institutional collaboration	Demonstrates that SBM effectiveness is reinforced by institutional social capital
Educational Outcomes	Stronger school culture, higher teacher commitment, sustainable community partnerships	Proposes a collaborative SBM model driven by visionary leadership and locally embedded partnerships

School Leadership Strategies for Addressing Challenges in Indonesia's 3T Regions

The findings demonstrate that the visionary leadership of the principal of SD Muhammadiyah 1 Pulau Morotai is manifested through a range of adaptive strategies designed to address the unique constraints faced by Indonesia's Remote, Frontier, and Outermost (3T) regions. Rather than perceiving limited infrastructure, restricted access to teacher professional development, and shortages of instructional resources as barriers to school improvement, the principal reframed these challenges as opportunities to foster innovation by leveraging locally available assets. Accordingly, the entire school community was encouraged to maximize the use of local resources while simultaneously expanding institutional partnerships to strengthen the school's organizational capacity and long-term sustainability.

The first strategic initiative involved optimizing local resources. The principal encouraged teachers and community members to utilize locally available materials, environmental resources, and indigenous knowledge as integral components of both school management and instructional practice. This approach not only reduced dependence on external assistance but also reinforced community ownership and responsibility for school development.

One teacher explains:

“Whenever the school needs additional facilities or learning resources, we frequently collaborate with community members to utilize materials that are readily available in the surrounding environment.”
(Teacher Interview, May 2026)

These findings indicate that the principal successfully transformed structural limitations into organizational strengths by mobilizing community social capital. Unlike Neeleman (2019), who primarily conceptualizes school autonomy in administrative terms, the present study delineates that within 3T settings, the effectiveness of school autonomy depends fundamentally on the principal's capacity to establish productive relationships with the surrounding community. Consequently, the implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) in island regions evolves beyond decentralized administration toward a community-based school governance model, where local participation becomes a central driver of institutional effectiveness.

The second strategic initiative focused on strengthening institutional partnerships. Throughout the study, the school maintained active collaboration with Save the Children, Stimulant Institute, the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP), Universitas Pasifik Morotai, and several community-based organizations. These partnerships supported teacher professional development, strengthened students' literacy and numeracy competencies, promoted instructional innovation, and facilitated the implementation of evidence-informed school improvement programs. Within this collaborative framework, the principal served as a network leader, connecting the school with external institutions and mobilizing diverse organizational resources, despite operating in a resource-constrained environment. This finding extends previous studies by Hardiansyah (2022) and Firman et al. (2023), which identify leadership as the primary driver of SBM, by demonstrating that institutional networking represents a strategic organizational capability for strengthening school capacity in geographically isolated regions.

The third strategy centered on cultivating a collaborative organizational culture. The principal consistently promoted professional norms characterized by collaboration, discipline, reflective practice, and continuous improvement. Teachers were encouraged to exchange effective instructional practices, conduct systematic reflection on teaching and learning, and actively participate in institutional decision-making processes. These practices fostered the development of a learning organization capable of responding adaptively to educational change and contextual challenges. While this finding supports the arguments advanced by Hallinger (2020) and Harris (2021), the present study further demonstrates that collaborative culture within schools located in 3T regions is strengthened not only through distributed leadership but also through the integration of local communal values that function as organizational social capital.

Table 3. School Leadership Strategies for Addressing Challenges in 3T Regions

Strategies	Implementations	Practical Implications
Optimization of local resources	Utilization of local environmental assets and community participation	Improves resource efficiency while strengthening community ownership
Institutional partnerships	Collaboration with Save the Children, Stimulant Institute, FKIP Universitas Pasifik Morotai, and community organizations	Enhances teacher capacity and promotes instructional innovation
Organizational culture development	Collaborative practices, professional discipline, reflective learning, and continuous improvement	Strengthens adaptive learning organizations capable of sustainable development

The Impact of Visionary Leadership on Educational Quality and School Autonomy

The findings further reveal that visionary leadership has generated substantial improvements in both educational quality and institutional autonomy. The most evident impact was the enhancement of teachers' professional capacity through the establishment of collaborative professional learning communities, facilitated

by the principal in partnership with external organizations. Collaboration with Save the Children, Stimulant Institute, and the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Pasifik Morotai enabled teachers to participate regularly in professional development workshops, academic discussions, instructional reflection sessions, and continuous capacity-building activities focused on literacy, numeracy, and educational assessment.

One teacher explains:

"We now meet much more frequently to discuss instructional strategies, literacy, numeracy, and student assessment. Through our professional learning community, we have gained many new ideas that have improved our classroom practices." (Teacher Interview, May 2026)

These professional learning communities strengthened teachers' pedagogical competence while simultaneously fostering a collaborative culture of knowledge sharing and continuous professional growth. Although these findings reinforce previous studies by Ariani (2022) and Nurmala (2021) on the importance of teacher professional development, they offer a broader perspective by demonstrating that professional competence is enhanced not solely through instructional supervision but also through collective organizational learning supported by strategic institutional partnerships.

A second major impact concerns the school's increased institutional autonomy. The principal's ability to establish collaborative networks, empower teachers, and maximize local resources enabled the school to initiate and sustain numerous educational programs without relying exclusively on government assistance. These findings delineate that visionary leadership functions as a transformational mechanism that simultaneously strengthens internal organizational capacity and expands external institutional support. This perspective complements the theoretical frameworks proposed by Leithwood et al. (2020), Day et al. (2020), and Bush (2020) by demonstrating that, within the context of Indonesia's 3T regions, effective educational leadership should be evaluated not only by improvements in student learning outcomes but also by its capacity to foster organizational resilience, institutional self-reliance, and sustainable community collaboration.

Table 4. The Impact of Visionary Leadership on Educational Quality

Impacts	Empirical Evidence	Theoretical Contributions
Teacher professionalism	Professional learning communities, training programs, and reflective instructional practice	Visionary leadership functions as a catalyst for organizational learning
Educational quality	Strengthened literacy, numeracy, and instructional innovation	Reinforces the effectiveness of School-Based Management
School autonomy	Strategic partnerships and optimization of local resources	Supports the development of adaptive, collaborative, and self-sustaining schools

Overall, the findings underscore that the visionary leadership at SD Muhammadiyah 1 Pulau Morotai has developed a distinctive model of School-Based Management that differs from those reported in previous studies. School effectiveness is shaped not merely by institutional autonomy or the effectiveness of instructional supervision, but also by the principal's capacity to integrate strategic vision, community social capital, institutional partnerships, and a collaborative organizational culture into a coherent governance framework. This study, therefore, extends contemporary theories of educational leadership by proposing that, in Indonesia's Remote, Frontier, and Outermost regions, visionary leadership evolves into a collaborative, context-responsive model that simultaneously strengthens organizational resilience and promotes sustainable improvements in educational quality.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study demonstrate that visionary school leadership plays a pivotal role in driving the implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) at SD Muhammadiyah 1 Pulau Morotai, a

representative primary school located in one of Indonesia's Remote, Frontier, and Outermost (3T) regions. The principal's leadership was manifested through the consistent formulation and communication of a shared institutional vision, the systematic integration of that vision into all school programs, and the cultivation of collective commitment among teachers, the school committee, parents, and the wider community. Consequently, the school's vision functioned not merely as a formal institutional statement but as a strategic framework guiding organizational decision-making, resource management, and continuous improvement of educational quality. These findings address the central research question by demonstrating that the effectiveness of SBM implementation in 3T contexts is strongly determined by the principal's capacity to exercise visionary, collaborative, and context-responsive leadership that reflects local educational realities.

The study further reveals that visionary leadership in geographically isolated regions exhibits distinctive characteristics that differ from those commonly reported in mainstream educational leadership literature. Rather than relying solely on conventional managerial functions, the principal strategically mobilized community social capital, established partnerships with diverse external institutions, strengthened a collaborative organizational culture, and incorporated local resources into school governance and educational development. Collaborative initiatives involving Save the Children, Stimulant Institute, the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP) at Universitas Pasifik Morotai, the Muhammadiyah organization, and local community stakeholders substantially enhanced teachers' professional capacity, strengthened literacy and numeracy programs, and expanded the school's organizational resources. These findings underscore that, within island and border communities, the success of School-Based Management depends less on administrative decentralization alone than on the principal's ability to cultivate sustainable collaborative networks that reinforce institutional capacity.

The principal theoretical contribution of this study is the introduction of the Island-Based Collaborative Visionary Leadership Model, proposed as a conceptual framework for strengthening School-Based Management in Indonesia's 3T regions. The model comprises four interrelated components: (1) visionary leadership capable of articulating and sustaining strategic organizational change; (2) the development of a participatory and collaborative school culture; (3) the optimization of community social capital through institutional partnerships; and (4) the integration of local resources and contextual knowledge into school development and governance. Together, these interconnected dimensions establish a context-sensitive framework for SBM implementation that is more responsive to the educational realities of island and frontier communities. Accordingly, the proposed model extends existing educational leadership theory, which has predominantly been developed within urban schools or educational environments characterized by comparatively abundant institutional resources.

Despite these contributions, the study is subject to several limitations. As a single-case investigation conducted within one primary school, the findings cannot be generalized to all schools across Indonesia's diverse 3T regions. Future research should therefore undertake multisite investigations across islands, borders, and remote communities using complementary qualitative and quantitative approaches to examine the transferability and empirical validity of the proposed conceptual model. Further scholarly efforts are also recommended to develop standardized measurement instruments for the Island-Based Collaborative Visionary Leadership Model and to construct an adaptive School-Based Management framework specifically designed for geographically isolated educational settings. Such research would provide stronger empirical foundations for advancing both educational leadership theory and evidence-based policy development while supporting sustainable improvements in the governance and quality of primary education throughout Indonesia's disadvantaged, frontier, and outermost regions.

Credit authorship contribution statement

The **first author** contributed to conceptualization, methodology, investigation, data collection, formal analysis, data curation, original draft preparation, visualization, and manuscript editing. The **second author** was responsible for supervision, data validation, project administration, critical review, and manuscript refinement. The **third author** contributed to instrument development, data analysis, interpretation of findings,

table preparation, and literature review. The **fourth author** performed research validation, substantive review, final editing, reference harmonization, and approved the final version of the manuscript for publication.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that this study was conducted independently and without any conflicts of interest, whether financial, professional, or personal, that could have influenced the research process, data analysis, interpretation of the findings, or manuscript preparation. All results presented in this article are reported objectively and faithfully reflect the empirical evidence generated throughout the study.

Ethical Declaration

This study was conducted in accordance with established research ethics principles. All participants provided informed consent voluntarily after receiving comprehensive information regarding the study's objectives, data collection procedures, potential benefits, and their rights as research participants. Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty or adverse consequences. The confidentiality of participants' identities, personal privacy, and all research data were rigorously protected throughout the research process and subsequent dissemination of the findings.

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