

## THE PRINCIPAL'S HOLISTIC LEADERSHIP IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION AT STATE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL 10 BATANG HARI REGENCY JAMBI PROVINCE

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### Abstrak

Penelitian ini berfokus pada kinerja kepala sekolah di SMA Negeri 10 Batang Hari yang ditemukan beberapa masalah seperti administrasi guru yang tidak tepat waktu, kurangnya pengawasan, dan rendahnya motivasi tenaga pendidik. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kinerja kepala sekolah dalam meningkatkan mutu pendidikan di sekolah tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan studi dokumentasi. Partisipan penelitian meliputi kepala sekolah, guru, staf, dan perwakilan komite sekolah. Data dianalisis dengan teknik reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan sesuai model Miles dan Huberman. Uji keabsahan data dilakukan melalui triangulasi sumber dan teknik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepala sekolah telah menjalankan peran sebagai educator, manager, administrator, supervisor, leader, inovator, dan motivator dengan cukup baik. Kepala sekolah memimpin perencanaan mutu berbasis visi-misi, menggerakkan guru dan komite secara partisipatif untuk mewujudkan program terarah dan berkelanjutan. Strategi yang diterapkan antara lain kepemimpinan partisipatif, pengembangan profesional guru, pemberian penghargaan, dan penciptaan lingkungan kerja yang kondusif. Strategi tersebut mendorong tumbuhnya budaya kerja yang positif, semangat inovasi, dan peningkatan mutu pembelajaran secara berkelanjutan.

**Kata Kunci:** Kepala Sekolah, Kepemimpinan Holistik, Mutu Pendidikan, Sekolah Menengah Atas

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### Abstract

This study focuses on the performance of the principal at SMA Negeri 10 Batang Hari, where several issues were identified, such as delayed teacher administration, lack of supervision, and low educator motivation. Therefore, this research aims to analyze the principal's performance in improving the quality of education at the school. The study employs a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques including observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. Research participants consist of the principal, teachers, staff, and school committee representatives. Data were analyzed using data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing techniques based on the Miles and Huberman model. Data validity was tested through source and technique triangulation. The results show that the principal has performed well in the roles of educator, manager, administrator, supervisor, leader, innovator, and motivator. The principal leads quality planning based on the school's vision and mission, mobilizes teachers and committees participatively to realize well-directed and sustainable programs. The strategies implemented include participative leadership, teacher professional development, reward systems, and the creation of a conducive work environment. These strategies encourage the growth of a positive work culture, innovation spirit, and continuous improvement in learning quality.

**Keywords:** Principal, Holistic Leadership, Education Quality, Senior High School

### INTRODUCTION

Global changes marked by the advancement of science and technology have had a significant impact on all aspects of human life, including education. The wave of globalization demands that every individual possess high competence, strong competitiveness, and the ability to adapt to the dynamics of the times (Sinaga et al., 2025). Amid these demands, education serves as the primary instrument for improving the quality of human resources and determining a nation's progress. However, social realities indicate that the quality of education in Indonesia still faces various fundamental challenges (Sofo, 2018). The quality of learning, school management, and teacher professionalism remains relatively low across various levels of education (Sagala, 2019). This condition is exacerbated by weak leadership at the school level, which affects the optimal



implementation of school programs, lowers teacher motivation, and limits innovation in the teaching and learning process (A. Duignan, 2014).

This social reality is also reflected in the local context, as seen at SMA Negeri 10 Batang Hari in Jambi Province, where the quality of education has yet to meet expectations. Although the principal has established a clear vision and mission, their implementation in practice faces several challenges, including insufficient academic supervision, weak monitoring of teacher performance, and a lack of innovation in learning activities. The gap between leadership idealism and managerial reality at the school level has become a critical issue that requires in-depth examination to identify effective leadership strategies for improving the quality of education at the senior high school level (Khilji, 2022). Theoretically, the literature on educational leadership emphasizes that the principal plays a vital role in determining the direction and success of a school (Đurišić & Bunijevac, 2017; Munawwarah et al., 2024). As a manager, the principal must be able to manage all school resources based on the principles of teamwork that foster empathy, solidarity, and collective responsibility (Andriani et al., 2018; Liebowitz & Porter, 2019). Meanwhile, leadership performance, as a concrete manifestation of skills, authority, and capability, influences others in achieving common goals (Baptiste, 2019; González-Falcón et al., 2020).

Effective leadership is characterized by the ability to mobilize, direct, and motivate members of the organization to work independently and productively (Al Rahbi et al., 2017). Within the paradigm of modern educational management, principals are required to master the EMASLIM functions (Educator, Manager, Administrator, Supervisor, Leader, Innovator, and Motivator) (Graham, 2018). Furthermore, the theories of Instructional Leadership and Distributed Leadership emphasize the importance of the principal's role in leading the learning process while fostering participatory collaboration among teachers and educational staff (Daniëls et al., 2019). Based on this framework, the present study aims to analyze the principal's performance in improving the quality of education at SMA Negeri 10 Batang Hari. The research focuses on how the principal implements their roles as a manager, supervisor, and instructional leader, as well as on formulating concrete strategies to enhance the quality of education at the school.

The main argument of this study is grounded in the view that the quality of education is highly dependent on the effectiveness of school leadership. The principal is not merely an administrative controller but also a transformational figure capable of inspiring, motivating, and empowering teachers and educational staff to innovate. Servant and transformational



leadership models are considered the most relevant to the demands of modern education, which emphasize collaboration, empathy, and social responsibility. By understanding the dynamics of the principal's performance at SMA Negeri 10 Batang Hari, this study is expected to provide both practical and theoretical contributions to the development of strategies for improving educational quality in Indonesia.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is grounded in the theory of educational quality and the concept of holistic leadership, which serve as analytical tools to understand the principal's role in improving school performance. The theory of educational quality emphasizes that education should not be measured solely by academic achievement but also by the development of competencies, values, and learning environments that support students' holistic growth. Educational quality is a multidimensional construct encompassing input, process, and outcome indicators that ensure effectiveness, efficiency, equity, and continuous improvement within educational institutions (Girmanová et al., 2022). A quality education system involves coherent alignment between curriculum design, teaching practices, assessment, and school management to produce meaningful learning outcomes (Kyriakides et al., 2020). It also requires active participation from all stakeholders, including teachers, students, parents, and policymakers, in fostering a culture of excellence. Therefore, quality education demands effective management, teacher professionalism, adequate resources, and a sustainable improvement process supported by visionary and holistic leadership (Arcaro, 2024).

In this context, leadership becomes a key factor that determines the direction and culture of educational institutions. The concept of holistic leadership integrates cognitive, emotional, moral, and spiritual dimensions in guiding and inspiring the school community. Holistic leadership emphasizes the unity of mind, heart, and spirit, enabling leaders to create balance between managerial effectiveness and human-centered values (Daniëls et al., 2019). It views leadership as an integrative process that nurtures the intellectual growth, emotional resilience, and ethical awareness of all school members. A holistic leader does not only focus on administrative and instructional supervision but also fosters a shared vision, pays attention to teachers' well-being, and upholds ethical principles and value-based decision-making (Dhiman, 2017). Through the implementation of a holistic leadership approach, the principal acts as a transformational agent capable of harmonizing intellectual, emotional, and moral aspects to enhance the overall quality of education (Gordon, 2022).

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The leadership of the school principal is one of the determining factors in improving the quality of education in schools. An effective principal is a leader who can integrate managerial, supervisory, and instructional leadership functions in a balanced manner. In the context of holistic leadership, the principal is not only an administrative controller but also a moral, social, and spiritual figure who fosters a positive school culture (Muljawan, 2018). The concept of moral leadership positions the success of a principal as being measured by their ability to cultivate shared values, commitment, and a sense of collective responsibility within the school community (Kamaludin, 2023). Meanwhile, the concept of distributed leadership emphasizes the importance of collaboration among principals, teachers, staff, and school committees in decision-making processes, enabling each individual to feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for the school's progress (Lumby, 2019; Mifsud, 2024).

Within the national framework, an ideal principal is one who fulfills the EMASLIM functions. These functions play a crucial role in establishing a participatory work system, enhancing teacher professionalism, and creating a conducive and productive school climate (Hidayatullah & Dahlan, 2019). A holistic approach to school leadership integrates cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions into educational management practices, ensuring that every policy is oriented toward the comprehensive development of students (Arifin & Adha, 2021). In addition, the quality of education is determined by the extent to which schools are able to optimally develop the potential of both teachers and students through sustainable management practices (Supadi, 2021). Visionary and reflective leadership fosters a learning environment that encourages innovation, collaboration, and the continuous improvement of teacher performance (Musfah, 2023).

Holistic leadership contributes significantly to improving teacher performance and the quality of learning, as it provides teachers with opportunities to play an active role in school program planning and evaluation (Wu, 2024). This approach enables principals to implement transformational and servant leadership styles that enhance work motivation and foster a sense of belonging among educators (Isroani & Huda, 2022).

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the principal's role in improving the quality of education at SMA Negeri 10, Batang Hari Regency. This approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to uncover the meanings, dynamics, and leadership processes contextually, based on the direct experiences of the informants.

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The research subjects include the principal, teachers, educational staff, and parents of students, who were selected through purposive sampling based on the relevance of their roles and involvement in school management. The data consist of primary sources obtained through interviews and observations, as well as secondary data in the form of school documents and other supporting written materials.

Data collection was carried out using three main techniques: participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document study. Observation was used to understand the social situation and leadership practices directly within the school environment, while in-depth interviews were conducted to explore the principal's perceptions and leadership strategies. Documentation complemented these two techniques by providing administrative and contextual evidence. Data were collected iteratively until saturation was reached when no new relevant information emerged.

The data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis model, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The analysis process was conducted simultaneously with data collection to maintain consistency and coherence of the findings. Data validity was ensured through triangulation of sources, techniques, and methods, as well as through member checking with key informants to verify the accuracy of interpretations. This approach is expected to yield a comprehensive, credible, and contextually grounded understanding of the principal's performance in enhancing educational quality at SMA Negeri 10, Batang Hari Regency.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Planning and Implementation of Education Quality Improvement

The principal holds a key position in determining the direction of school policy and the quality of education. Based on the results of observations and interviews, it was found that the principal of SMA Negeri 10 Batang Hari plays an active role in managing all school resources through systematic planning, collaborative program implementation, and continuous evaluation. In terms of planning, the principal develops the School Work Plan (RKS) and the School Activity and Budget Plan (RKAS) in a participatory manner, involving teachers and educational staff. The principal strives to ensure that every school program is designed based on actual needs in the field and oriented toward improving the quality of learning. The principal stated that:

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“We begin every program formulation with an analysis of the school’s condition. I always invite teachers, staff, and the school committee to collaboratively develop the RKS and RKAS so that they feel a sense of ownership. Our goal is to ensure that the school programs are not merely documents, but truly serve as practical guidelines for action” (Interview with Principal, 4 June 2025).

This approach reflects the principal’s ability to perform strategic managerial functions, in which the school’s vision is translated into operational actions through coordination and the participation of all school stakeholders. The principal delegates responsibilities to each vice principal and departmental coordinator according to their respective areas while maintaining direct supervision. The principal also emphasizes open communication through regular coordination meetings that serve as forums for evaluating achievements and addressing challenges. This demonstrates that the principal functions not only as an administrative controller but also as a facilitator who fosters synergy among all members of the school community. In implementation, the principal actively involves both internal and external stakeholders:

“In planning meetings, we are invited to determine program priorities based on a SWOT analysis. For instance, we discuss limitations in facilities and infrastructure as well as opportunities for collaboration with universities. All inputs are documented and used as the foundation for the final plan” (Interview with religion teacher, 9 June 2025).

In addition, the principal places great emphasis on monitoring and evaluating performance. Evaluation is not limited to final outcomes but also involves observing teachers’ work processes, discipline, and classroom teaching practices. Evaluation is conducted through direct observation and academic supervision that focuses on guidance rather than formal control. In the interview, the principal emphasized that:

“If there are teachers who still struggle with lesson plan preparation or teaching methods, I don’t reprimand them directly; instead, I provide guidance. Usually, I ask them to make revisions, and we discuss the improvements together. This is done during our monthly evaluation meetings, where each department reports both challenges and achievements” (Interview with Principal, 4 June 2025).



This coaching-oriented approach reflects a leadership style focused on teacher capacity development, aligning with the principles of instructional leadership that emphasize improving the quality of the teaching and learning process. From a transformational leadership perspective, the principal demonstrates exemplary behavior and the ability to build collective enthusiasm among teachers and educational staff. The principal serves not only as a director but also as an inspiring and morally supportive figure. Teachers acknowledge the principal's strong commitment to discipline and responsibility.



Figure 1. Interview with Principal

The principal's transformational leadership is also evident in the ability to foster teachers' self-confidence and creativity. The principal provides space for teachers to innovate in their teaching practices, including developing project-based and locally contextualized learning models. This openness and support for innovation illustrate the principal's efforts to cultivate an adaptive and progressive organizational culture. By creating a positive work climate, the principal successfully nurtures a sense of belonging and shared responsibility in achieving the school's goals.

### **Principal Strategies for Improving Education Quality**

The principal's strategy is not merely reactive to existing problems but has established an integrated ecosystem for quality improvement. Through an instructional leadership approach, the principal is actively involved in lesson design, classroom observation, and the provision of constructive feedback. The strategies implemented must be comprehensive, integrated, and sustainable, taking into account the local context and the





specific challenges faced by the school. This is reflected in the following statement:

“We strive to develop strategies grounded in local wisdom. For example, we integrate literacy activities with Batang Hari’s cultural traditions so that students feel a closer connection to the learning materials” (Interview with Principal, 4 June 2025).

It is within this context that the principal’s strategies are designed and implemented. These strategies do not emerge from a theoretical vacuum of educational management but from daily interactions with the school’s lived realities. The principal’s role is to ensure that these strategies are not merely read or documented but are genuinely embraced and practiced by everyone aboard the great vessel called SMA Negeri 10 Batang Hari. The heterogeneity of students’ backgrounds from children of farmers to those of office employees already familiar with digital devices demands a flexible yet standards-based learning approach. Likewise, the dynamics among teachers, with varying levels of technological proficiency and openness to new methods, represent everyday realities that cannot be overlooked.

#### **a. Implementing activities for improving the quality of education**

The improvement of educational quality at SMA Negeri 10 Batang Hari is developed through a systemic approach that views the school as a dynamic and adaptive learning organization. This approach emphasizes the importance of continuously strengthening internal capacity through the enhancement of teaching quality and the cultivation of a culture of excellence. The principal has shifted the planning paradigm from an administrative orientation toward a participatory and data-driven model.

At the beginning of each academic year, the principal leads the school’s internal evaluation process involving teachers, students, and the school committee. Data are collected from national examination results, minimum competency assessments, and satisfaction surveys of all school stakeholders. The principal emphasized, “We strive to develop strategies grounded in local wisdom. For example, we integrate literacy activities with Batang Hari’s cultural traditions so that students feel a closer connection to the learning materials” (Interview with Principal, 4 June 2025). Observation findings indicate that the decision-making process operates in an inclusive manner, in which every school stakeholder is given the opportunity to express opinions and identify priority needs.

The results of the surveys and discussions were then reviewed in a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) facilitated directly by the principal. In this

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forum, teachers raised issues related to damaged projectors, student council representatives highlighted concerns about facility cleanliness, and the school committee inquired about the transparency of BOS fund utilization. All inputs were collected as qualitative data to support continuous improvement (Interview with curriculum representative, 6 June 2025).

Based on the results of the FGD, a SWOT analysis was conducted to map the school's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The principal then led the process of revitalizing the school's vision and mission by translating them into SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) operational goals. One concrete target agreed upon was to "increase the average National Examination score in Mathematics from 78.5 to 81.0 within two academic years" (Interview with teacher, 9 June 2025). This target was discussed in a working meeting with teachers and staff to ensure that every program received collective support and fostered a shared sense of ownership.

#### **b. Curriculum and Learning Development**

The development of the School Based Curriculum (KOS) serves as a key strategy for quality improvement at SMA Negeri 10 Batang Hari, adapting the national curriculum to align with students' characteristics, local potential, and the demands of contemporary developments. The principal promotes differentiated learning by providing teachers with opportunities to innovate through the use of technology and the surrounding environment, thereby making learning more contextual, meaningful, and responsive to students' needs. One teacher stated:

"We are given the freedom to develop project-based learning. For example, I encouraged students to create a podcast featuring Batang Hari's local folktales" (Interview with teacher, 9 June 2025).

This approach demonstrates the principal's strong support for project-based and problem-based learning innovations. The principal encourages teachers to integrate 21st-century skills into their instruction, ensuring that learning focuses on the development of students' character, competence, and critical thinking. Furthermore, the principal promotes a comprehensive assessment system encompassing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains through portfolios, performance evaluations, and self-assessments as a foundation for continuous learning evaluation and teacher professional development.



### c. Teacher Professional Development

Based on the research findings, teacher professional development at SMA Negeri 10 Batang Hari is carried out systematically and continuously through a collaborative school culture. The principal recognizes that improving teacher competence cannot rely solely on sporadic external training; therefore, he reactivated internal Teacher Working Groups (KKG) and Subject Teacher Councils (MGMP) grounded in practical, experience-based learning. A teacher mentioned having participated several times in Merdeka Curriculum training sessions facilitated by the school (Interview with teacher, June 9, 2025). Each month, teachers of similar subjects gather to share innovations, such as using podcasts for teaching short stories or interactive games to explain algebraic concepts. This collaborative model fosters an effective horizontal learning community, as professional learning occurs directly and contextually among colleagues.

This professional development model is further strengthened through a mentoring program for novice teachers, in which senior teachers serve as mentors within a supportive, collegial environment while maintaining a clear focus on achieving specific competencies. Young teachers receive direct guidance from experienced mentors, and the principal provides direction and encouragement to ensure that they do not feel overwhelmed in the process (Interview with teacher BK, 9 June 2025).



Figure 2. Collaborative Learning Observation

To maintain motivation, the principal implements an appreciation system, such as awarding certificates to teachers who successfully improve



class performance or whose innovations are adopted by their peers. Based on observations, these simple forms of recognition have effectively fostered a positive culture, a sense of appreciation, and sustained enthusiasm for innovation in teaching and learning (Observation, 12 June 2025).

The principal implements a needs assessment to map individual teacher competency gaps and designs professional development programs using a differentiated approach tailored to each career stage. Beginning teachers participate in induction and intensive mentoring programs, while experienced teachers are provided with leadership training and classroom action research workshops. The principal also established a Professional Learning Community (PLC) as a forum for reflection and collaborative discussion. According to the Vice Principal for Curriculum, the PLC serves as a space for teachers to examine and improve their own practices based on field findings (Interview with curriculum representative, 6 June 2025). Through continuous coaching and peer mentoring, the principal demonstrates transformational leadership that fosters a reflective learning culture and a commitment to quality improvement.

### **Holistic Leadership of the Principal at SMA Negeri 10 Batang Hari**

The implementation of quality improvement strategies is inseparable from various challenges. Internal challenges such as resistance to change, limited competence, and resource constraints require appropriate adaptive strategies. The principal develops change management capacity to manage resistance and build commitment to change (Interview with Principal, 4 June 2025). External challenges such as policy changes, community dynamics, and technological developments require adaptive leadership skills. The principal develops a system to anticipate external changes. Flexibility and agility in responding to these changes become the key to success (Sartini et al., 2024).

The principal develops strategies through the strengthening of partnerships and collaborations to overcome the school's existing limitations. Optimizing cooperative networks becomes a key priority. The development of an entrepreneurial mindset in school management is encouraged to create alternative sources of funding (Observation, 5 June 2025). The sustainability of quality improvement programs is a major concern in the principal's leadership strategy. The development of standardized systems and procedures serves as a key approach to ensuring program continuity. Documentation of best practices and lessons learned is carried out systematically. Therefore, innovation becomes the main driver for continuous improvement. The principal creates a climate that supports innovation by providing space for experimentation and learning from



failure. An innovation incubator program has been developed to nurture and expand creative ideas from members of the school community.

The principal's strategy for improving the quality of education at SMA Negeri 10 Batang Hari represents a complex and multidimensional construct. However, the success of this strategy largely depends on the principal's ability to integrate various approaches and ensure alignment between vision, resources, and implementation.

#### **a. Resource Management**

In achieving the school's vision and mission, the principal manages resources by understanding the existing limitations and actively building strategic partnerships. Rather than waiting for programs from the Department of Education, the principal takes a proactive approach. His engagement with potential partners is always grounded in the principle of mutual benefit. With local businesses and industries (DUDI), such as palm oil factories and local handicraft enterprises, he initiates short-term industrial internship (*prakerin*) programs for eleventh-grade students. In return, he offers that the school will also provide basic skills training for the partner's employees, fostering a reciprocal and sustainable collaboration (Interview with curriculum representative, 6 June 2025).

Through the School Committee, transparent communication is established by openly presenting school progress reports, including financial reports, during regular meetings. Parents are not merely asked for financial contributions but are also encouraged to participate in non-academic activities, such as serving as guest speakers during career day events or assisting in supervising extracurricular activities (Interview with teacher, 9 June 2025).

#### **b. Partnership and Network Development**

The development of partnerships with business and industry sectors is carried out through a mutually beneficial approach. The principal identifies potential collaborations that can provide added value for enhancing students' competencies. Programs such as industrial internships and guest lectures by industry practitioners are continuously developed. These partnerships are also utilized to design curricula that are relevant to the needs of the labor market. Collaboration with higher education institutions is established to strengthen teacher capacity and improve the quality of learning. Joint research programs, community service initiatives, and the development of innovative learning models are the main focus of these collaborations. Universities also serve as partners in acceleration programs for gifted students and other enrichment initiatives (Observation, 5 June 2025).





Networks with other schools, both within and outside the region, are developed to share best practices and engage in mutual learning. Programs such as sister schools, study visits, and teacher and student exchanges serve as mechanisms to broaden insights and experiences. These networks also provide a platform for collaboration in the development of educational programs (Observation, 9 June 2025).

The principal of SMA Negeri 10 Batang Hari is able to integrate two critical roles: an effective manager and a transformational leader. In performing managerial functions, he emphasizes participatory planning, collaborative implementation, and reflective evaluation. In his transformational role, he demonstrates exemplary behavior, supports innovation, and shows a strong commitment to serving and empowering all members of the school community. The transformational-servant leadership approach is also reflected in the principal's concern for teachers' well-being and work comfort. He frequently adopts a personal approach with teachers facing challenges, whether related to their professional duties or personal matters. Through empathetic and service-oriented leadership, the principal has successfully strengthened both emotional and professional relationships between the school leadership and staff.

With a participatory, inspirational, and service-oriented leadership style, the principal plays a key role in creating a conducive and quality-focused learning environment (Subhaktiyasa et al., 2023). Therefore, the principal of SMA Negeri 10 Batang Hari holds a dual role: on one hand, as a manager who plans, organizes, and controls school programs; on the other hand, as a learning leader who instills values, vision, and motivation among all members of the school community. The principal is not solely administratively oriented but strives to position teachers and staff as strategic partners.

Through a participatory-holistic leadership approach, the principal is able to cultivate collective commitment, which serves as the foundation for improving educational quality. This aligns with democratic leadership theory, which emphasizes involvement, empowerment, and two-way communication (Wahyuni & Maunah, 2021). This study demonstrates that the school's vision, mission, and goals are formulated clearly, measurably, and in alignment with contemporary developments. The vision and mission are not merely slogans but serve as a compass for every policy. The principal actively disseminates them through teacher meetings, staff gatherings, school committee sessions, and daily activities.

These policies reflect the principal's ability to develop the school as a learning organization a true learning community (Sari & Somantri, 2019).



Teachers are not only implementers of policies but also lifelong learners continuously enhancing their competencies. As a result, classroom instruction becomes more innovative, student learning outcomes improve, and a culture of professionalism is strengthened.

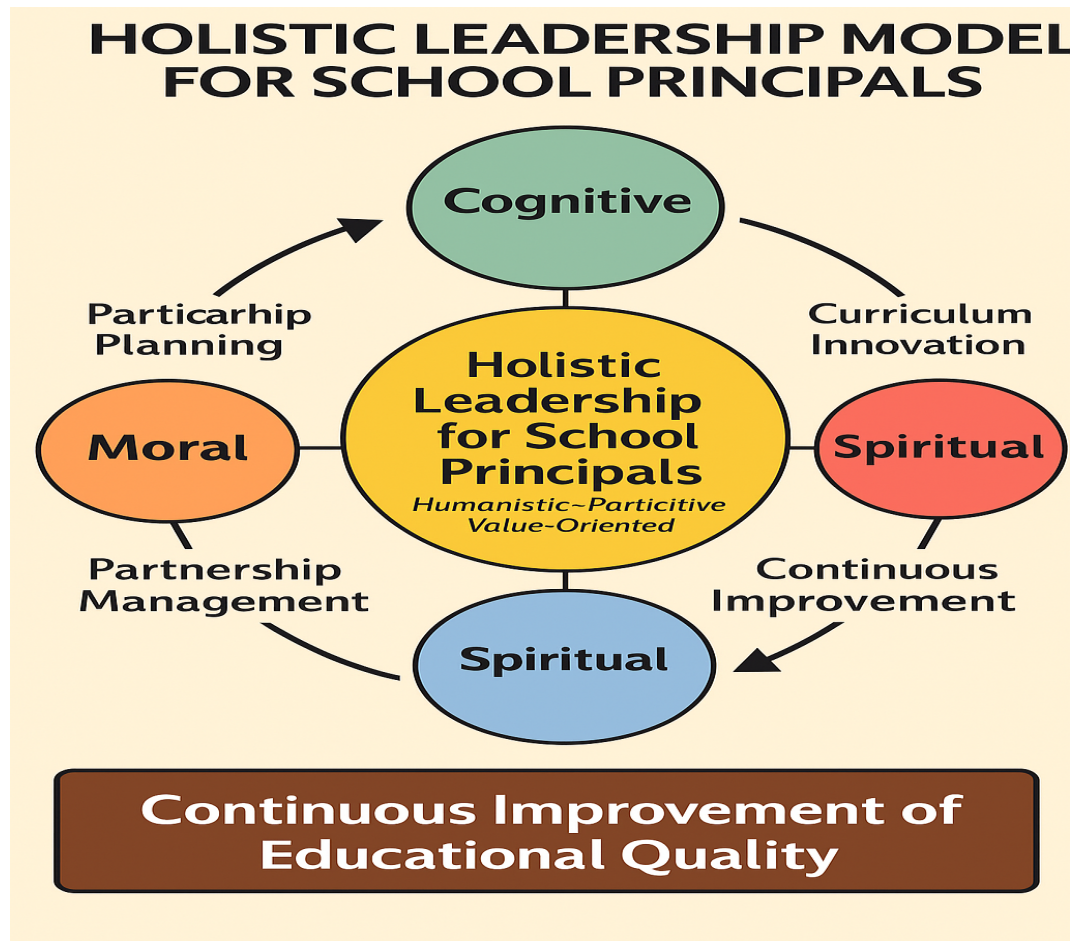


Figure 3. Principal's Holistic Leadership Model

This, in turn, encourages the principal to provide open recognition and rewards for the achievements of teachers and staff, including financial support for innovative programs. The school's physical environment is arranged for comfort: classrooms, laboratories, and the library are improved; a harmonious work atmosphere is cultivated; and discipline is upheld through exemplary behavior. In the managerial aspect, the principal implements a participatory planning system that involves all school stakeholders in the development of the RKS and RKAS based on data. This approach fosters a sense of ownership and collective responsibility toward the school's goals (Mushthofa et al., 2022). In the transformational

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dimension, the principal serves as an inspirational figure who cultivates trust, commitment, and a spirit of innovation among teachers and educational staff. This collaboration strengthens school governance while promoting a shift in organizational culture toward adaptive and sustainable learning (Wahyuni & Maunah, 2021).

The principal has revitalized the KKG, MGMP, and Professional Learning Community (PLC) forums as collaborative spaces where teachers can share best practices and reflect on their teaching. This initiative stems from a quality improvement strategy aimed at developing teacher professionalism. It is further reinforced through mentoring and coaching programs, especially for novice teachers (Febry et al., 2025).

This approach fosters teachers' self-confidence and work motivation. The collaborative model aligns with the principles of distributed leadership, emphasizing horizontal learning among colleagues as a form of ongoing professional empowerment (Muharram et al., 2024). This study found that the principal's holistic leadership positions curriculum innovation and contextualized learning as key strategies for quality improvement. Adaptation of the School Operational Curriculum (KOS) is carried out by considering students' characteristics and local potential. This is evident in the principal's encouragement for teachers to implement project-based learning and problem-based learning that are relevant to local wisdom.

In this context, the principal acts as an instructional leader, providing space for teacher creativity while ensuring that learning is oriented toward the development of 21st-century competencies (Connolly et al., 2019). This strategy enhances student engagement, teacher creativity, and the relevance of learning to real-life contexts. The holistic leadership practiced by the principal integrates managerial, moral, and spiritual values, ensuring that decisions are based not only on efficiency but also on humanity and empathy. By emphasizing participatory, reflective, and learning-oriented leadership, the principal has successfully created a sustainable and competitive educational ecosystem, positioning SMA Negeri 10 Batang Hari as a model of holistic leadership practice in education in the digital era.

## CONCLUSION

This study found that the principal's holistic leadership is a key factor in improving the quality of education at SMA Negeri 10 Batang Hari. Important findings indicate that the principal is able to harmoniously integrate managerial, transformational, and spiritual roles in managing the educational institution. Through a participatory and collaborative approach, the principal develops data-driven planning systems, empowers



teachers through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), and fosters contextualized learning innovations grounded in local wisdom. A leadership style emphasizing empathy, exemplary behavior, and active involvement of all school members has been shown to enhance teacher professionalism, cultivate a reflective culture, and encourage collective participation in achieving sustainable educational quality.

The main strengths of this study lie in its comprehensive qualitative approach, utilizing data triangulation through in-depth observation, interviews, and documentation. The research also demonstrates strong empirical relevance to the Indonesian educational context, particularly in implementing value-based leadership and collaborative learning. The use of direct quotations from informants adds validity and authenticity to the data, while sharp thematic analysis provides a holistic picture of the principal's leadership dynamics in practice.

However, this study has several limitations. First, its focus on a single school limits the generalizability of the findings. Second, it does not fully quantify the long-term impact of holistic leadership on student learning outcomes. Additionally, external dynamics such as regional education policies and socio-economic factors were not explored in depth. Nonetheless, the findings provide significant theoretical and practical contributions to understanding an educational leadership model oriented toward collaboration, innovation, and humanistic values.

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