

## KOUZES POSNER'S LEADERSHIP STRATEGY BY THE PRINCIPAL IN DEVELOPING TECHNOLOGY-BASED LEARNING INNOVATIONS IN THE ERA OF SOCIETY 5.0

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**Abstract:** *This study aims to analyze the leadership strategies of the principals of State Elementary Schools in Nganjuk District in developing technology-based learning innovations by referring to the theory of 5 leadership approaches by Kouzes & Posner; (1) Model The Way, (2) Inspire a Shared Vision, (3) Challenge the Process, (4) Enable Others to Act, (5) Encourage the Heart. This study uses a qualitative research method with the type of field study research, the researcher examines in depth the leadership strategy of the principal of SDN 1 Ganungkidul and the principal of SDN Kedungdowo as a school that has implemented technology-based learning in Nganjuk District, Nganjuk Regency. Data collection techniques using interviews, observation and documentation, data analysis techniques apply the Miles, Huberman and Saldana models which consist of; data collection, data condensation, data presentation and drawing conclusions or data verification. The research informants were namely 6 people; 1 principal, 1 class teacher at each grade level, and 1 student each grade 3 and grade 6 from SDN 1 Ganungkidul and SDN Kedungdowo. The research results show that the principal at SDN 1 Ganungkidul uses a transformational leadership, which strongly encourages innovation and experimentation in teacher technology use. This includes providing intensive training and providing access to the latest technology tools and resources. In contrast, the principal at SDN Kedungdowo applies a participatory leadership by involving teachers in decision-making regarding the technology used.*

**Keywords:** *Kouzes-Posner's Leadership, Principal Strategy, Innovation Technology-Based Learning.*

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis strategi kepemimpinan kepala sekolah SD Negeri di Kabupaten Nganjuk dalam mengembangkan inovasi pembelajaran berbasis teknologi dengan mengacu pada teori 5 pendekatan kepemimpinan oleh Kouzes & Posner; (1) Mencontohkan Jalan, (2) Menginspirasi Visi Bersama, (3) Menantang Proses, (4) Memungkinkan Orang Lain untuk Bertindak, (5) Mendorong Hati. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian studi lapangan, peneliti mengkaji secara mendalam strategi kepemimpinan kepala sekolah SDN 1 Ganungkidul dan kepala sekolah SDN Kedungdowo sebagai sekolah yang telah menerapkan pembelajaran berbasis teknologi di Kabupaten Nganjuk, Kabupaten Nganjuk. Teknik pengumpulan data menggunakan wawancara, observasi dan dokumentasi, teknik analisis data menerapkan model Miles, Huberman dan Saldana yang terdiri dari; pengumpulan data, kondensasi data, penyajian data dan penarikan kesimpulan atau verifikasi data. Informan penelitian tersebut terdiri dari 6 orang; 1 kepala sekolah, 1 guru kelas di setiap jenjang kelas, dan 1 siswa masing-masing kelas 3 dan kelas 6 dari SDN 1 Ganungkidul dan SDN Kedungdowo. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepala sekolah di SDN 1 Ganungkidul menggunakan kepemimpinan transformasional, yang sangat mendorong inovasi dan eksperimen dalam penggunaan teknologi guru. Ini termasuk memberikan pelatihan intensif dan

menyediakan akses ke alat dan sumber daya teknologi terbaru. Sebaliknya, kepala sekolah di SDN Kedungdowo menerapkan kepemimpinan partisipatif dengan melibatkan guru dalam pengambilan keputusan mengenai teknologi yang digunakan.

**Kata kunci:** Kepemimpinan Kouzez-Posner, Strategi Utama, Inovasi Pembelajaran Berbasis Teknologi.

## INTRODUCTION

Education in Indonesia is not yet evenly distributed throughout the country. Research by Wyman (2024) shows that there are still many Indonesians with low literacy levels (Wyman, 2024). The gap in educational attainment between regions is a challenge for the government, and this burden falls on school principals, who are required to lead their schools well. In order to realise this, the role of technology and information is needed to equalise education throughout Indonesia. This is reinforced by UNESCO data in the 2023 GEM (Global Education Monitoring) report, which states that Indonesia is one of the countries that prioritises technology for social and economic development. This can be the output of an education system that is supported by effective and efficient technology. According to a UNESCO case study in Indonesia, 59% of schools in Indonesia have implemented online learning platforms (GEM Report Team UNESCO, 2023). The implementation of this online learning system is becoming easier to implement because the majority of children aged 12 to 17 in Asian countries, including Indonesia, engage in online activities at least once a day.

School principals must develop strategic plans to achieve this. Research by Lestari (2016) states that the leadership of school principals has a significant impact on the success of schools in

producing high-quality student achievements, balanced with the performance of competent teachers (Lestari, 2016). A good school is able to create a creative learning environment through the use of innovative learning models that keep pace with the times. Wise educational leaders are required to be visionary in terms of the opportunities and resources available to the school in order to develop the school in accordance with its vision, mission and objectives (Fransiska et al., 2020; Seriyanti et al., 2021). In the Nganjuk District, various primary schools demonstrate varying levels of technology adoption, which is largely influenced by the style and strategy of the head teacher's leadership. The idealism of the head teacher is assessed based on their ability to achieve the vision, mission and objectives of the school that have been entrusted to them, coupled with changes in the education system in today's increasingly sophisticated era with the growth of digital technology, particularly in technology-based learning innovations (Ihsan & Masruroh, 2025).

According to research by Priamansyah, the use of increasingly sophisticated and practical communication and information technology via the internet facilitates a more effective and efficient learning process. This cannot be separated from the need for a leader who can empower the available learning resources to

achieve common goals within a school (Primansyah et al., 2025). Technology-based learning innovations in primary schools can include the use of interactive digital media, online learning platforms, educational applications, and the integration of information and communication technology in the student evaluation and assessment process. However, the implementation of these innovations is greatly influenced by the leadership of the head teacher as a manager, learning leader, and strategic policy maker in the school environment.

Schools are granted full autonomy in education to create an effective and efficient learning environment for students, such as developing a vision, mission and objectives tailored to the school's resources in accordance with its geographical location or surrounding social conditions. SDN 1 Ganungkidul has a vision that reads, 'The realisation of a superior generation with Pancasila student characteristics, who care for the environment and have a scientific and technological perspective based on faith and piety.' The school has a vision to produce a young generation with a scientific and technological perspective and to become an excellent generation for the Indonesian nation. This requires the involvement of learning innovations that are in line with technological developments in the modern era. SDN 1 Ganungkidul has taken steps to create a technology-based learning environment for its students to prepare them for further education and to become an excellent generation as outlined in the school's vision.

In line with the vision of SDN Kedungdowo, which is to make the nation's generation 'Faithful and Devout to God Almighty, Noble in Character, Achieving, Cultured and Environmentally Aware', an accomplished generation of the nation begins with a comfortable, effective and efficient learning environment for students. A suitable learning environment can be created when the roles of teachers, learning materials, students and infrastructure are in line with the curriculum plan that has been developed based on the educational needs of the time. Indonesia has undergone curriculum changes in order to keep pace with developments in education that are competing with developments in technology and information, thus requiring effective and efficient learning innovations. The role of the principal of SDN Kedungdowo has various missions to realise the school's vision, one of which is to implement innovative, effective, and participatory learning by applying participatory management involving the entire school community to become a solid team.

The various statements above show that the novelty of this research lies in learning innovations that keep pace with the times but are still led by the same headmaster over a certain period of time. This poses a challenge for researchers to identify, understand, and analyse each leadership strategy employed by headmasters in each primary school.

## METHOD

This study adopts case studies as the main strategy to gain an in-depth understanding of school principals' leadership strategies in developing technology-based learning innovations (Arif, 2024; Sahra et al., 2025). This study uses descriptive qualitative research by adopting a case study that allows researchers to examine two primary schools that have implemented technology-based learning but with different leadership approaches. The principal leadership variable indicators refer to Kouzes and Posner's (2014) theory, which has five leadership approaches in education, including; (1) Model The Way, (2) Inspire a Shared Vision, (3) Challenge The Process, (4) Enable Others to Act, (5) Encourage The Heart (Kouzes & Posner, 2014). The variable indicator of learning innovation refers to; (1) Course Management Systems and Course Delivery Systems, (2) Student administration, (3) Student Assessment, (4) Staff/Teacher Management (Peters, 2020).

The two schools used as case studies were SDN 1 Ganungkidul and SDN Kedungdowo in Nganjuk District, which were selected based on their success in integrating technology into the learning process. The informants in this study consisted of all the principals, teachers, and students at the two public elementary schools in Nganjuk District, namely SDN 1 Ganungkidul and SDN Kedungdowo. There were six informants: one headmaster, one teacher from each grade level, and one student from each of grades 3 and 6. Students were selected based on their grade level (low grades:

grades 1, 2, and 3; high grades: grades 4, 5, and 6), with one representative from each low and high grade level. The analysis technique involved the systematic processing and compilation of data obtained from the field, which required a deep understanding and conceptual sensitivity to make the data easily understandable to readers. In this study, the researchers used Miles and Huberman's data analysis theory, as cited in the third edition of their book *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*. Miles et al. (2014) explain that data analysis techniques consist of three steps. '...We see analysis as three concurrent flows of activity: (1) data condensation, (2) data display, and (3) conclusion/drawing verification...' Data analysis techniques begin immediately when saturated data is collected, and it is possible to use data analysis even when data collection is not yet complete. '... In this view, qualitative data analysis is a continuous...' Therefore, the three steps in data analysis techniques are interrelated and constitute a continuous and repetitive process to produce data and information that can answer research questions (Miles et al., 2014).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate that the leadership strategies of the principals of SDN 1 Ganungkidul and SDN Kedungdowo have different perspectives but still lead to one goal of developing technology-based learning innovations. Based on observations, interviews, and documentation involving the head teachers, teachers, and students, the data obtained shows that the leadership

strategy of the head teacher of SDN 1 Ganungkidul tends to be transformative, in contrast to the leadership strategy of the head teacher of SDN Kedungdowo, who applies a participatory leadership strategy.

### **Comparative Analysis of Leadership Strategies of Principals at SDN 1 Ganungkidul and SDN Kedungdowo**

The leadership styles of the principals at SDN 1 Ganungkidul and SDN Kedungdowo differ markedly in terms of the strategies employed by each principal. The principal of SDN 1 Ganungkidul adopts a transformational leadership strategy, where he acts as a leader who inspires and empowers the entire school community to innovate, while the principal of SDN Kedungdowo adopts a participatory leadership strategy, where the principal involves teachers in decision-making related to the selection of technology used in the school. The researchers refer to the integration of school leadership theory by Kouzes & Posner (2014) and technology-based learning innovation by Peters (2020).

### **School Principal Leadership Strategy Based on Kouzes Posner**

#### **1. Model The Way**

School leadership plays a very important role in school management, especially in terms of curriculum development, teacher empowerment, learning innovation, and the achievement of educational goals. This study compares the leadership strategies implemented by the principals of SDN 1 Ganungkidul and SDN Kedungdowo in the context of school management and learning

development. The principal of SDN 1 Ganungkidul encourages teachers to experiment with new learning methods, including project-based learning (PBL) and educational technology (Seriyanti et al., 2021).

The principal of SDN Kedungdowo has a vision that focuses more on character building and improving student discipline as the basis for better academic achievement. Although technology is also introduced in learning, the principal at SDN Kedungdowo prioritises a holistic approach that encompasses the physical, mental and social aspects of students. The implementation of character-based education and the selective and appropriate use of technology are part of their strategy. The principal of SDN Kedungdowo has a vision that focuses slightly more on character building and improving student discipline as a basis for better academic achievement. Although technology is also introduced in learning, the principal at SDN Kedungdowo emphasises a holistic approach that encompasses the physical, mental and social aspects of students. The implementation of character-based education and the selective and appropriate use of technology are part of their strategy. Technology-based learning innovation is becoming an increasingly important aspect of educational development in the digital age. The headmaster plays a key role in designing and implementing strategies that support

the application of technology in learning (Mulyasa, 2022). In Nganjuk Regency, there are two primary schools that demonstrate different approaches to developing technology-based learning innovations, namely SDN 1 Ganungkidul and SDN Kedungdowo. Although both focus on improving the quality of education through technology, each school has a distinctive leadership strategy and a different approach to integrating technology into the teaching and learning process.

Education is seen as a means of fostering international understanding, a social platform for collective intelligence and creativity, moving away from traditional economic perspectives. At the heart of this model is educational innovation for social democracy, which focuses on openness, peer learning and creative work. This model encourages mass participation, creativity, distributed leadership, and collaboration, and promotes values such as self-organisation and autonomy. Innovation in social innovation and open education, facilitated by digital networks, can play an important role in democratising digital systems and enhancing social experimentation in the digital age (Kouzes & Posner, 2014; Peters, 2020).

## 2. Inspired a Shared Vision

The principal of SDN 1 Ganungkidul does not only convey the vision in formal meetings. He

uses a personal approach, speaking heart-to-heart with senior teachers who may be resistant, mentioning the benefits of reducing workloads or increasing professional prestige. The vision is communicated using powerful and contextual metaphors through social media, email, or school chat groups, so that all members of the school community (teachers, staff, students) can immediately understand and put it into practice. The implementation of 'Inspire a Shared Vision' at SDN 1 Ganungkidul shows that technological innovation will stagnate if it is only viewed as an administrative obligation or a physical project. Its success lies in the ability to transform it into a collective narrative about a desired future. This gave rise to SDN 1 Ganungkidul's vision, which is "To become an educational institution that produces students who are clever, smart, and advanced. (Intelligent, Religious, Cultured, Scientific, Leader-minded, Patriotic, Environmentally-conscious, Independent, Safe, Champions)."

The principal of SDN Kedungdowo played a key role in creating and communicating a technology-based learning vision to all elements of the school. The principal began this process by discussing the importance of technology in learning in the modern era, encouraging all teachers to realise how technology can improve the quality of learning and help students to be more active and independent in their learning

(Kouzes & Posner, 2014). By providing concrete examples, the headmaster demonstrated the benefits of using technology such as interactive learning applications, online learning platforms, and digital educational tools to support a more engaging and effective teaching and learning process. The school's vision is 'To be an elementary school that excels in achievement, Islamic character, and environmental awareness,' and its mission focuses on innovative learning, strengthening Islamic character, preserving local culture, and developing learning technologies to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

### 3. Challenge The Process

The implementation of 'Challenge The Process' at SDN 1 Ganungkidul shows that technological innovation does not have to start from perfect readiness, but from the courage to question old habits, seek opportunities for improvement, and take small experimental steps. The role of leaders (principals and motivational teachers) is to initiate and facilitate this experimental process by creating a safe environment for learning from failure and scaling success. With this approach, technological innovation becomes an organic and collective process that grows from within the school, in line with the existing context and resources, rather than a top-down programme that is imposed. Teachers are encouraged to work in small teams (2-3 people) to

try the same tools, then reflect on the results together. Two Year 4 teachers collaborated to create a digital question bank using Google Forms, and the school accepted the risk that not all experiments would be successful. When the internet connection failed while using Quizizz live, teachers learned to have a backup plan (printed questions or offline assignments). The risk of 'failure' was seen as part of the learning process, not a reason to stop.

The principal of SDN Kedungdowo is open to feedback from teachers, students, and parents regarding the implementation of technology in learning. When challenges arise, such as network limitations, lack of digital literacy, or resistance to change, the principal sees them as opportunities to improve the process. He conducts continuous evaluations and develops new strategies that are more effective and realistic. This is in line with the implementation theory of Kouzes & Posner (2014), where the term 'challenge the process' is truly experienced by the principal to improve the competence of teachers to adapt to changes in the modern era of education. Thus, the application of Challenge the Process at SDN Kedungdowo shows that innovative leadership requires the courage to step out of one's comfort zone, the ability to see opportunities in challenges, and a commitment to creating positive change for the school ecosystem (Kouzes & Posner, 2014).

#### 4. Enable Others to Act

The headteacher of SDN 1 Ganungkidul, as a good leader, provides opportunities for others to develop by giving them support, resources and the freedom to act. The headteacher at SDN 1 Ganungkidul empowers teachers to take the initiative in teaching and gives students the freedom to express their creativity. In line with the principle of Tut Wuri Handayani, the principal at SDN 1 Ganungkidul can give teachers the freedom to innovate in teaching and support students in exploring their interests. For example, the principal can give more autonomy in designing the curriculum or implementing new teaching methods that are more suited to the needs of students (Ghufron, 2020; Indra & Kustati, 2024).

The principal of SDN Kedungdowo provided concrete support in the form of technology training, mentoring, and the provision of supporting facilities. This support made teachers feel valued and empowered, giving them the confidence to try innovative teaching methods. The principal also showed openness to input and ideas from teachers, which further strengthened their sense of shared ownership of school programmes. The application of the Enable Others to Act principle in Kouzes and Posner's leadership theory is evident

in the leadership style of the principal of SDN Kedungdowo. This principle emphasises the importance of empowering others, building collaboration, and creating an environment that supports the involvement of the entire school community (Kouzes & Posner, 2014).

#### 5. Encourage the Heart

The principal at SDN 1 Ganungkidul can apply the Encourage the Heart principle by actively recognising the achievements of teachers and students. The principal can give awards to teachers who have successfully implemented innovative learning methods or to students who have shown improvement in academic and character development. The principal can help teachers and students feel proud of their school identity by emphasising that every small achievement contributes to the school's overall vision and mission. This will foster a sense of ownership and enthusiasm to continue improving and achieving common goals (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

The leadership strategy of the Principal of SDN Kedungdowo has succeeded in creating a warm and supportive work environment, where every teacher feels safe to try, fail, and learn again. When teachers encounter difficulties in implementing technology-based learning, the principal provides guidance and encouragement not through criticism, but through motivation and personal

support. This is in line with Kouzes and Posner's principle that leaders must celebrate values and small victories to keep the team's spirit alive. The headmaster's approach, which embodies the theory of 'encouraging the heart,' reminds us that behind the data, curriculum, and technology, education is essentially a human endeavour to advance other human beings (Kouzes & Posner, 2014). By 'encouraging the heart,' SDN Kedungdowo not only increases teacher motivation, but also restores the meaning of the teaching profession as a valued calling, a visible contribution, and a celebrated role.

### **Technology-Based Learning Innovation**

The learning innovations implemented by these two schools have similar work programmes, which include AI (Artificial Intelligence) coding training for teachers and educational staff. The training, which involved external parties, produced different outcomes for each school. The headteachers had their own strategies for developing technology-based learning innovations, using different approaches for teachers and students. Researcher integrated their findings with Peters' research theory as a reference for this study's indicators (Peters, 2020).

#### **1. Course Management Systems and Course Delivery Systems**

The implementation of course management systems and course delivery systems at SDN 1 Ganungkidul is adaptive and minimalist, dominated by the use of Google Classroom as a passive

Course Management System and WhatsApp as the main means of communication. The use of actual Course Delivery Systems (interactive virtual classrooms) is very limited due to infrastructure constraints. Google Classroom is the only Course Management System that is used consistently, especially by teachers of grades I-VI. Its functions are mainly utilised as a digital repository for sharing materials (in the form of PDFs, links, videos), collecting photo/writing assignments, and announcing information (Wati et al., 2022). The assessment and structured discussion features have not been optimally utilised. Meanwhile, the implementation of Course Management Systems and Course Delivery Systems at SDN Kedungdowo has significantly changed the learning landscape, offering efficiency, transparency, and flexibility. However, this transformation has also highlighted structural challenges such as the digital divide and the burden of adaptation on teachers. The successful utilisation of technology in primary education environments such as SDN Kedungdowo is highly dependent on a learner-centred approach, equitable infrastructure support, and the awareness that technology is a means to achieve educational goals, not the goal itself (Peters, 2020).

#### **2. Student administration**

Peters (2020) emphasises the importance of balancing

administrative aspects and character development in creating educational goods. At SDN Kedungdowo, student administration does not only focus on academic aspects, but also includes aspects of student character development, such as cooperation, discipline, and a sense of responsibility (Peters, 2020). This administration assists schools in identifying students' non-academic potential that can be further developed (Aisyah et al., 2023). SD Negeri 1 Ganungkidul, located in a rural area of Nganjuk Regency, East Java, is representative of primary schools operating in a context of regional resources and challenges. This study aims to comprehensively analyse the implementation of the education administration system at SDN 1 Ganungkidul, focusing on managerial, institutional, and learning support aspects. The education administration system at SDN 1 Ganungkidul has been running based on the basic principle of accountability and meets the minimum standards for school administration services. This system is supported by responsive school leadership and the involvement of the school committee.

### 3. Student Assessment

According to Peters, good education should not only focus on short-term results, such as exam scores or academic achievements, but also on developing character and more holistic skills that can be applied in real life (Wyman, 2024).

The formative assessment proposed by Peters aims to support students' continuous development rather than merely measuring their achievements at a specific point in time. In practice at SDN 1 Ganungkidul, this could mean using project-based assessments, class discussions, or assignments that allow students to learn from continuous feedback. The application of Student Assessment theory in Peters' (2020) article at SDN Kedungdowo shows that holistic, inclusive, and individually-based assessment is key to creating relevant and sustainable educational innovation. With an assessment system that accommodates student diversity, provides constructive feedback, and incorporates technology, SDN Kedungdowo has created a learning environment that supports students' academic and character growth (Peters, 2020).

### 4. Staff/Teacher Management

The management of teaching staff at SDN 1 Ganungkidul should facilitate collaborative leadership, where teachers are not only led by the head teacher, but also empowered to take an active role in decision-making related to teaching practices and school policies. The interview results suggest that the principal at SDN 1 Ganungkidul could hold regular forums or meetings where teachers can share experiences, discuss challenges faced in teaching, and plan joint innovations in classroom teaching practices. On the other hand, the application of the Staff Teacher

Management theory based on Peters' (2020) view at SDN Kedungdowo shows that teaching staff management based on collaboration, empowerment, and continuous professional development is a major factor in creating sustainable educational innovation (Peters, 2020). Through transparent, inclusive, and goal-oriented management, SDN Kedungdowo has succeeded in creating a work environment that supports teachers to continue to innovate and improve the quality of their teaching (Fransiska et al., 2020).

## CONCLUSION

The headteacher plays a very important role in leading and encouraging the application of technology in learning at school. The two headteachers studied applied different leadership strategies, which had an impact on the extent to which technology was integrated into learning. At SDN 1 Ganungkidul, the headteacher adopted a transformational leadership approach, acting as an inspiring leader who empowered the entire school community to innovate. This headteacher set a direct example in the use of technology and actively encouraged teachers to participate in technology training sessions. This strategy proved effective in increasing the motivation of teachers and students to use technology in teaching and learning activities. Principals who have a clear vision of the importance of technology in education are able to create an atmosphere conducive to the application of technology-based innovation in schools.

On the other hand, SDN Kedungdowo adopted a participatory leadership strategy, whereby the head teacher involved teachers in decision-making regarding the selection of technology to be used in the school. This approach provides space for teachers to speak and share ideas about the technological tools that best suit their needs in the learning process. Although this leadership strategy has also shown positive results in terms of technology acceptance by teachers and students, the main challenges faced are the lack of structured training and insufficient resources to support the maximum application of technology in schools.

Factors supporting the success of the headteachers' leadership strategies in both schools included the headteachers' commitment to providing technology training for teachers, as well as adequate facilities and infrastructure support. Headteachers who ensure that teachers receive regular training and have access to the technological tools necessary to support technology-based learning can more easily overcome obstacles in the implementation of technology in the classroom. However, the inhibiting factors found in this study include the headteacher's limited time to directly supervise the use of technology, as well as resistance from some teachers who feel unprepared to use technology in learning. This shows that the success of technology in learning is highly dependent on the readiness of all elements of the school.

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