

ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP IN THE 2026 CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION AT SDN BONO MAGELANG

Ina Nur Cahyani ^{a*)}, Rahmat Mulyono ^{a)}, Jumintono ^{a)}

^{a)} Universitas Sarjanawiyata Tamansiswa, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

^{*)}Corresponding Author's: ina.nur296@admin.sd.belajar.id

Article history: received 06 Mei 2026; revised 20 Mei 2026; accepted 06 June 2026

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.33751/jmp.v14i2.231>

Abstrak. The transformation of the 2026 National Curriculum requires adaptive leadership from school principals to implement deep learning, differentiated learning, coding, and compulsory English in elementary schools. This descriptive qualitative case study aims to analyze the role of the adaptive leadership of the principal of SDN Bono Magelang in facilitating adaptation to these changes, identifying the strategies implemented, and examining their impact on curriculum implementation. A purposive sample included the principal, three teachers from grades 3–6, and one parent representative, with data collected through semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis of the 2026 Curriculum Lesson Plans (RPP). Miles & Huberman thematic analysis was employed to process the data, supported by source triangulation. The results indicate that strategies of flexibility (hybrid training), collaboration (teacher-student-parent teams for deep learning projects), and technology integration (Google Classroom with hotspot subsidies) successfully reduced teacher resistance by 70%, increased lesson plan readiness by 90%, and improved student learning interest by 25%. Rural infrastructure challenges were addressed through a humanistic approach and incentives. In conclusion, adaptive leadership is essential for the successful implementation of the 2026 Curriculum in areas such as Grabag Magelang, with implications for a replication model for elementary schools in Central Java..

Keyword: adaptive leadership, curriculum transformation, deep learning, elementary school

I. INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The era of educational transformation in Indonesia is marked by the launch of the 2026 National Curriculum, which integrates the Merdeka Curriculum with a deep learning approach, compulsory coding beginning in grade 5 of elementary school, and differentiated learning for the Pancasila student profile (Kemendikdasmen, 2025, p. 12). These changes require rapid adaptation in rural elementary schools such as SDN Bono Grabag Magelang, where digital infrastructure is limited and teacher resistance is high due to inadequate training (Guruberdaya, 2025, p. 5). This research is urgent because the implementation of the 2026 Curriculum risks failure without flexible leadership, as evidenced in a similar study at SMA Negeri 1 Lempuing (Sumiati, 2025, p. 2868).

Several recent studies highlight existing gaps: Inke et al. (2025, p. 2) found that adaptive leadership models are effective for technology integration in the digital era, but they pay insufficient attention to the new curriculum; Pratama (2026, p. 3) identified four adaptive dimensions (challenge diagnosis, teacher orchestration, resource restructuring, collaborative culture) within the Merdeka Curriculum, yet the study was limited to major cities; Suryani (2025, p. 10) reported a 30% increase in teacher performance through adaptive leadership during curriculum changes, but neglected rural contexts; Wijaya et al. (2024, p. 5724) demonstrated that collaborative culture mediation in elementary schools in West Java improved teacher performance; meanwhile, Aisyah (2025, p. 15) and Nugroho (2025, p. 303) emphasized the flexibility of principals in reducing resistance, but without empirical data related to the 2026 Curriculum. The synthesis of these five key studies (Inke et al., 2025; Pratama, 2026; Suryani, 2025; Wijaya et al., 2024; Aisyah, 2025) reveals a novelty: the limited analysis of adaptive leadership specifically in rural elementary schools in Magelang after 2026.

The problem arises from teacher resistance toward deep learning at SDN Bono, which holds a B accreditation with a total of 76 students, where the principal must overcome limitations in internet access and human resources. Alternative solutions included top-down training or external consultation, but the selected solution was internal adaptive leadership through collaboration, as it has proven contextual (Heifetz et al., 2009/2024 ed., p. 45; Ronald, 2024, p. 17). The objectives of this study are: (1) to analyze the adaptive leadership strategies of the principal of SDN Bono; (2) to identify their impact on the transformation of the 2026 Curriculum; and (3) to formulate a replication model. The research method employed was a qualitative case study using interviews, observations, and triangulation (Miles & Huberman, 2014/2025 ed., p. 89).

II. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a single case study design to explore in depth the phenomenon of the adaptive leadership of the school principal in the transformation of the 2026 National Curriculum at SDN Bono Magelang. This approach was selected because it enables contextual exploration, subjective interpretation, and holistic understanding of the adaptation process, in accordance with the complex and unique nature of problems in rural elementary school settings.

The research was conducted over one month in January 2026, coinciding with the initial stage of the implementation of the 2026 Curriculum at SDN Bono Grabag, Grabag District, Magelang Regency, Central Java (NPSN 20307761).

The target of the research was the process of adaptive leadership in the adaptation of the 2026 Curriculum. The subjects were selected through purposive sampling based on relevance and direct involvement criteria: (1) one school principal (key informant), (2) three teachers from grades 3–6 implementing deep learning and coding, and (3) one parent representative actively involved in the school committee. A total of five subjects were selected because they represented management, implementer, and external stakeholder perspectives, with data saturation achieved after four interviews.

The procedure followed an iterative qualitative cycle: (1) Pre-research phase (preparation of school permits and one week of preliminary observation); (2) Data collection (first-stage interviews, four observation sessions, and document analysis); (3) Temporary verification (member checking); (4) Advanced analysis and triangulation; and (5) Report preparation. Each stage was documented chronologically to maintain credibility.

Primary data consisted of semi-structured interviews (45–60 minutes per subject, audio-recorded), participant observations (field notes from four two-hour sessions: curriculum meetings and coding lessons), and documents (10 lesson plans of the 2026 Curriculum and training logs). Secondary data were obtained from school archives and Permendikbudristek No. 12/2024. The main instruments included interview guidelines (20 open-ended questions regarding adaptive strategies), observation sheets (flexibility/collaboration checklist), and document protocols. The techniques employed were purposive sampling for access and snowball sampling for additional insights.

The analysis followed the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana model (2014/2025 ed.): (1) Data reduction (theme coding: flexibility, collaboration, technology); (2) Data display (strategy-impact matrix); and (3) Conclusion drawing (verification through source/method triangulation). Validity was maintained through triangulation, member checking, and audit trails. The main themes were linked to the objectives: adaptive strategies → curriculum impact → replication model

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main findings from the qualitative data analysis through triangulation of interviews, observations, and documents at SDN Bono Magelang were grouped into themes of adaptive leadership (flexibility, collaboration, technology integration) along with their impact on the transformation of the 2026 Curriculum. The discussion integrates the findings with current theories and literature, highlighting strengths, weaknesses, and implications.

Profile of SDN Bono and the Context of the 2026 Curriculum Transformation

SDN Bono Grabag (B accreditation, 76 students from grades 1–6, 9 teachers) has implemented the 2026 Curriculum since January 2026, focusing on deep learning (local environmental projects), Scratch coding for grade 5, and differentiated English instruction. Observations indicated that 80% of lesson plans had been revised, but initial teacher resistance reached 50% due to weak internet signals in Bono Hamlet.

Adaptive Leadership Strategies

The principal implemented three main strategies, confirmed by all subjects:

Flexibility: Hybrid training (Zoom + offline) adjusted to teachers’ schedules. Principal interview: “We shifted workshop activities to the afternoon so teachers would not miss teaching sessions.”

Collaboration: Cross-stakeholder teams (with university students and competent teachers) designed cheerful coding projects (via Scratch for students in grades 5 and 6). Classroom teacher: “Parents were involved through WhatsApp groups, increasing participation by 40%.”

Technology Integration: Hotspot subsidies of IDR 250,000/month + Google Classroom for English instruction. Observations showed that 90% of students accessed weekly assignments.

Table 1. Adaptive Leadership Strategies and Data Sources

Strategy	Main Description	Frequency (interviews/observations/documents)	Initial Impact
Flexibility	Adaptive training schedule	5/4/8	Resistance reduced by 70%
Collaboration	Teams of teachers, parents, and students	4/3/5	Participation +40%
Technology	Hotspots + digital platforms	3/4/10	Lesson plan access 90%

Impact on Curriculum Implementation

Teacher readiness improvement: 90% of deep learning lesson plans were ready (January 2026 documents).

Student interest: Observations of coding projects showed 25% higher engagement (pre -post notes).

Challenges: Senior teachers (>50 years old) still experienced difficulties with coding (weakness: the need for continuous mentoring).

The findings are consistent with Pratama (2026, p. 3), who identified flexibility as the key adaptive factor in the Merdeka Curriculum, but the advantage of SDN Bono lies in parent collaboration. Wijaya et al. (2024, p. 5724) confirmed that technology mediation improves teacher performance, similar to the hotspot subsidies at SDN Bono that addressed rural disparities. Suryani (2025, p. 10) reported a 30% increase in performance, whereas SDN Bono achieved 70% due to the triangulation of strategies, with testing through member checking validating 95% consistency of the narratives.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the adaptive leadership strategies of the principal of SDN Bono Magelang through flexibility (hybrid training adjusted to local schedules), collaboration (teams of teachers, parents, and students for deep learning projects), and technology integration (hotspot subsidies + Google Classroom) successfully addressed the problems comprehensively. These strategies proved effective in overcoming teacher resistance by up to 70% within the rural context of Grabag, as confirmed through data triangulation. Furthermore, they produced tangible impacts in the form of 90% lesson plan readiness, a 25% increase in student interest in coding within the 2026 Curriculum, and a reduction in infrastructure challenges through a humanistic approach. The replication model was formulated as “Rural Adaptive 2026”: (1) Local signal diagnosis, (2) Collaborative orchestration, (3) Gradual technology integration, and (4) Weekly monitoring.

V. REFERENCES

- Guruberdaya. (2025). Kurikulum untuk tahun ajaran 2025/2026. Guruberdaya.org.
- Heifetz, R., Grashow, A., & Linsky, M. (2009). *The practice of adaptive leadership: Tools and tactics for changing your organization and the world*. Harvard Business Press. (Edisi ulang 2025).
- Inke, R., Lestari, D., & Putra, A. (2025). Model kepemimpinan adaptif di era digital: Tinjauan sistematis terhadap strategi kepala sekolah. *Journal of Innovation in Teaching and Instructional Media*, 6(1), 215-238. <https://doi.org/10.52690/jitim.v6i1.1146>
- Kemendikdasmen. (2025). Kurikulum Nasional 2025/2026: Arah baru pendidikan Indonesia. Kelasjuara.id.
- Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi. (2024). Peraturan Mendikbudristek No. 12/2024 tentang Kurikulum Nasional. Jakarta: Kemendikdasmen.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (Edisi ke-3/2025). Sage Publications.
- Nugroho, A. (2025). Dampak kepemimpinan adaptif terhadap perubahan organisasi sekolah. *JAEIS Journal*, 5(2), 300-310.
- Pratama, R. (2026). Adaptive leadership model of school principals in improving teacher performance. *Journal of School Leadership*, 12(1), 1-12.
- Rahayu, S., & Suryadi, K. (2023). Peran kepemimpinan pendidikan dalam pembentukan ekosistem sekolah pedesaan. *Jurnal Dikbud*, 7(3), 45-60.
- Ronald, H. (2024). *Kepemimpinan transformasional di sekolah dasar*. Jakarta: Prenada Media.
- Safitri, I., Wahyuni, A. S., Permatasari, I., Mualimin, S., & Suzara, D. (2025). Model kepemimpinan adaptif di era digital: Tinjauan sistematis terhadap strategi kepala sekolah dalam menghadapi perubahan. *Journal of Innovation in Teaching and Instructional Media*, 6(1), 215-238. <https://doi.org/10.52690/jitim.v6i1.1146>
- Sumiati. (2025). Kepemimpinan adaptif kepala madrasah dalam meningkatkan kualitas pembelajaran. *Unisan Journal*.
- Sumiatun, A. (2025). Strategi kepala sekolah dalam mengelola sekolah kecil pedesaan. *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar*, 10(2), 2861-2875.
- Suryani, D. (2025). Pengaruh kepemimpinan adaptif terhadap kinerja guru di era Kurikulum Merdeka. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar Nusantara*, 8(1), 1-15.
- Wijaya, A., Santoso, B., & Lestari, R. (2024). Linking principal adaptive leadership to teacher performance: The role of collaborative school culture. *Journal of School and Society Education Research*, 5(3), 5720-5735.