

## THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP IN DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE STUDENTS CHARACTER EDUCATION

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**Abstrak:** Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan inisiatif kepala sekolah dalam memajukan pendidikan karakter serta peran kepemimpinannya dalam pengembangannya. Analisis deskriptif adalah metode kualitatif yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Teknik seperti observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Berdasarkan temuan penelitian tersebut, kepala sekolah dapat dipandang berperan sebagai pemimpin dalam pengembangan pendidikan karakter melalui perencanaan, pelaksanaan, dan pengawasan kegiatan pengembangan pendidikan karakter. Prinsip tersebut telah memasukkan nilai-nilai karakter seperti keyakinan diri, nalar, logika, dan kreativitas ke dalam programer dan aktivitas yang dibuatnya. Melalui pengawasan, pemantauan, dan penilaian terhadap perencanaan, pelaksanaan, dan hasil pelaksanaan pendidikan karakter, kepala sekolah mengelola dan mengarahkan program pendidikan karakter. Semua pihak yang terlibat di sekolah terlibat dalam pelaksanaan pendidikan karakter.  
Kata kunci: kepemimpinan, kepala sekolah, karakter, sekolah

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**Abstract:** The goal of this study is to describe the principal's initiatives to advance character education as well as his or her leadership role in its development. Descriptive analysis is a qualitative method that was employed in this investigation. Techniques like observation, interviews, and documentation were used in this study. According to the study's findings, the school principal can be viewed playing a leadership role in the development of character education through the planning, carrying out, and overseeing of character education development activities. The principle has included character values like self-assurance, reason, logic, and creativity into the programmers and activities he has created. Through oversight, monitoring, and assessment of the planning, execution, and outcomes of character education implementation, the school principal manages and directs the character education programmer. All parties involved in the school are involved in the character education implementation.  
Keywords: leadership, principal, character, school

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### Introduction

Education is a deliberate and methodical endeavour to maximise students' potential. Education is also a national and societal effort to get the next generation ready for a better, more sustainable life. The legacy of culture and character that the community and the country have claimed as their own characterises sustainability. Education is therefore the process of passing down culture and national character to the next generation as well as the process of building national culture and character to raise the standard of living in society and the country in the long run. Students actively develop their potential, go through internalisation processes, and appreciate values as part of the national culture and character education process to become their personalities in socialising in society, developing a more prosperous community life, and developing a dignified national life (Aqib & Sujak, 2011). The job of accomplishing institutional goals in schools, as

institutions of formal education, has implications for achieving national education goals. Many parties play a role in the success of a school in achieving its goals (Zubaedi, 2011). Among these various parties is the school principal. The school principal has an important role because it is the principal who lays down various policies and rules related to the development of educational institutions, especially with the culture in Indonesia, which still makes the role of leader very dominant in the operational processes of the organization (Idris et al., 2023).

Character education aims to assist children's souls grow from their natural selves towards a more compassionate and superior civilization, both physically and spiritually. Character education can be linked into school management as one method of implementation. Management is the process of achieving a goal through and in collaboration with others (Fahmi, 2012). A team of people who cooperate to accomplish a common goal is another definition of management. The idea of using resources to accomplish goals is a part of management (Kamaruddin et al., 2023). People, materials, tools, working methods, capital, cash, and information are all examples of resources that make up management. Because resources are scarce, it is the manager's responsibility to use them wisely and effectively to forward goals (Idris & Mokodenseho, 2021). The management process is an ongoing process that begins with planning and decision-making, organising owned resources, using leadership to mobilise resources, and putting control in place. In the context of the world of education, planning, implementing, and assessing education in an effort to generate graduates who are in line with the vision, mission, and goals of education itself is referred to as education or school management (Gunawan, 2012). The school principal is the subject of the study since he serves as the school's manager and leader. The author's goal in this instance is to observe and examine how school character education is applied through school administration (Mulyasa, 2003). The success of character education implementation in schools is also influenced by the principal's leadership style, which includes the development of the vision, mission, rules, and school policies (Nugroho et al., 2023). It has been demonstrated that having a positive school culture, which includes punctuality, group prayer, strict behaviour management, and others, can help kids succeed in a variety of contests. Additionally, school leaders make an effort to include everyone who is interested in putting character education into practise, including teachers, school committees, education personnel, and the community (Rusman, 2009). In reality, though, not all teachers take an active role in developing students' character. Some teachers simply stop their duties (Sulhan, 2011). The parents are the same (Ichsan et al., 2023). Only a few people are worried about how children's characters are created. One cause is that you are working a lot and don't have time for excellent activities. Despite the fact that families are where children first develop their behaviours and personalities.

## **Method**

Descriptive analysis is the research technique that was employed, and it is qualitative. Qualitative data, including both primary and secondary sources, were collected. Teachers, school administrators, deputy administrators, and members of parent or school committees served as data sources for this study. In this study, interviews serve as the main source of data. The study's secondary data sources include written documentation from sources including school principals, teachers, organizational structures, and others, as well as observations and other forms of documentation. After data collection, the researcher conducts an analysis by first describing the data. Data description is carried out in two stages, namely: Data selection is to find out whether the data that has been collected meets the requirements for processing or not. The requirements in question are that any data obtained through interviews and documentation come from an accountable source. The documentation taken must be relevant to the data source that is completed and analysed with other data sources. Data obtained from interviews, observation, and documentation are separated according to their respective categories to obtain complete conclusions. The results of the selection and classification of data are then analysed and described to explain the research problem. Based on the unit of data analysis and the method used in this study, the data will be presented in the form of a qualitative descriptive analysis.

## **Findings and Discussion**

The vision, mission, and goals of the school can be considered as examples of the principal's leadership in planning. According to the findings of the document study, the school's mission is to realise Muslim people who are devout, accomplished, healthy, and creative. In 2012, the leadership's vision and mission were updated from those of the preceding principal's leadership. The deputy principal, teachers, administration, and school committee were all included in the development of the school's vision and mission by the principal. This vision reflects the ideals of the school as a basic educational institution with Islamic characteristics. While

the mission describes the steps taken to achieve a vision. The mission of the school is to promote piety, achievement, health, and creativity. In each of these missions, implied character values are to be developed in schools. On the mission of forming the character of pious children, the school instils religious values and honesty. This is the attitude and behaviour of submission to follow the dictates of the faith they follow. This can be seen in the habits of Islamic behaviour that are carried out. Among other things, the habit of greeting and shaking hands when meeting teachers, guests, and fellow friends; the habit of reciting the Qur'an before studying; the habit of praying in congregation for grades three, four, and five; and others. In its achievement mission, the school instils the values of discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, and respect for achievement. To create school achievement, all components of the school must work together. For example, having educators who are active in MGMP activities, actively participating in study competitions and Olympiads, and instilling good character values through various extracurricular activities also has the mission of cultivating a clean and healthy environment. Children are trained to care socially and for the environment and to be responsible for themselves, others, and their environment. For example, with madrasa cleaning competitions every 4 months, sorting organic, non-organic, and B3 waste, processing waste into fertiliser, and others. While the last mission is creative. It is envisaged that students will develop essential character qualities such as religion, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, independence, democracy, and others through participation in a variety of activities that support student activities.

The curriculum is needed by the teacher as a guide, both before carrying out learning activities in class, during learning, and even after the learning process takes place. The madrasa head is responsible for ensuring that every teacher under his leadership knows and understands each curriculum that is currently in effect, and then the principal acts to supervise. At the time the research was conducted, schools were still using the KTSP curriculum (Educational Unit Level Curriculum). Based on an interview with Mr. M. Jalaludin S, the deputy head of the school for curriculum, he explained his duties as a drafter and evaluator of the curriculum together with the school principal, teachers, school committee, education experts, and the city's ministry of religion office. The curriculum at school contains five subject groups. The school has developed and implemented a curriculum based on the seven principles of curriculum development and implementation. The school curriculum contains 12 subjects and three local content areas. Namely, tahfidz, English, and ICT. Local content material is adapted to community needs, student needs, and learning needs, but there is still local content that does not have a syllabus. The effective number of weeks in a year is 37. The time allocation for each learning hour is 35 minutes. Learning in low grades uses a class teacher approach for general subject types and subject teachers for religious subjects, local content, and high grades (grades 4, 5, and 6). The number of learning hours per week for grades 1 and 2 is 34 hours, grade 3 is 36 hours, and grades 4 to 6 are 43 hours of learning.

Character education is implemented through a variety of curriculum development methods, such as: independently developing a syllabus with the participation of all teachers from the concerned school; using the centre's various guidelines and syllabus examples as a guide when developing syllabuses at school. Teachers can develop syllabuses according to their needs. For instance, including or changing learning activities so that there are ones that foster character. Then, include or change the success indicators such that they reflect the character development of students. Additionally, assessment procedures may be added to or changed so that character development assessment techniques are available. Making lesson plans for each KD and creating meetings for each KD are the approach and programmer used in schools. The indicators are in line with the syllabus, and the lesson plan's learning activities are based on the syllabus's learning activities. Assessment in lesson plans develops from learning activities in the syllabus. Judging from the results of the documentation, the teachers have integrated character values into the lesson plans for the subjects they teach. Character values are put into practice during learning using a variety of strategies and techniques. Then practise it so it becomes a good habit. Like getting used to raising your hand before asking a question or giving an opinion. This school also carries out remedial programmes for students who have not completed them and enrichment programmes for students who have completed them, scheduled for each class. The school uses triumvirate publishers' books as teaching materials. The school principal allocates material and textbook funds from BOS funds obtained from the government. Teachers don't just follow or carry out learning based on learning activities in these books because character education has not been carried out adequately. The teachers therefore modify or alter the learning activities in the employed textbooks in accordance with what has been designed in the syllabus and lesson plan from a character education perspective. Or by adding learning activities that can develop character at the same time.

All teachers who have made lesson plans carry out learning in accordance with the learning implementation plan that has been prepared or arranged. In accordance with the peculiarities of the subjects,

the students, the teacher himself, and the actual conditions of the resources available in the school and surroundings, the principal grants the teacher freedom to create learning. To ensure that learning is participatory, inspiring, enjoyable, challenging, and motivating, teachers are free to select the most effective character education ideas, methods, and approaches to use with students. Learning techniques, the connection of subject matter to the area of character values, inculcation, role modelling, and institutionalisation are some of the principles employed in the development of education and national character in schools. Character education is not only implemented in the classroom by the teacher but is also carried out simultaneously by all individuals in the school so that a conducive atmosphere is built that encourages students to have commendable character. It is hoped that by habituating activities inside and outside the classroom, students will develop good character in themselves. Not only in schools but also in the family and community.

The administration of human resources for the implementation of character education in schools falls primarily under the purview of the school principal. Prior to giving educators and educational staff rewards and punishments, the school principal undertakes need analyses, planning, recruitment, and development. The principal explained that the teacher recruitment system was carried out by selecting teachers according to the competencies they had. In the 2013/2014 academic year, the school has 33 teachers who are in accordance with their educational background or have been certified according to the subject they teach. To improve and develop teacher competence both pedagogically, personality-wise, socially, and professionally, schools hold routine training once every three months. The training material is tailored to the needs of teachers, such as how to make good and correct lesson plans, teacher motivation, the use of learning media, and so on. The principal also gives gifts and sanctions (reward and punishment) to teachers and employees. If the teacher violates the rules, they are usually given moral sanctions. Like a warning, then a warning. For example, if a teacher is late, the penalty is the same as for the students. The gate does not open until 7:00 a.m. Meanwhile, if the teacher achieves something, he will also be given prizes in the form of certificates and souvenirs. Then it was included in the city-level achievement teacher competition. The condition is that attendance must be full every month, including complete learning and administration tools as well as ceremony attendance.

In coaching and guidance, the school provides guidance and counselling to meet students' personal development needs. For example, personal problems, social life, learning, and student career development are carried out by expert staff and class teachers together. because there is no BK teacher yet. The development of students' talents and interests is channelled through extracurricular activities. The school determines the types of extracurricular activities based on student activities and provides guidance to students in choosing extracurricular activities based on their talents and interests. Among them are paskibra, scouts, marawis, choir, qasidah, futsal, qira'at, calung, Arabic, and the science club. Each child may take part in a maximum of two extracurricular activities, as seen from the results of the student's interest and aptitude tests. In this extracurricular activity, students are expected to have good character values and be virtuous. Learning facilities and resources in schools are in accordance with school facilities and infrastructure standards and are guided by the regulation of the Minister of National Education No. 24 of 2007. The average classroom size is  $8 \times 7 = 56$  m<sup>2</sup>. The number of class 18 rooms has many study groups. The ventilation system is in accordance with the standards. The available classroom facilities include tables and chairs for a number of students. 1 teacher's desk, 1 cupboard, 1 shelf of students' work, 1 long board minimum  $60 \times 120 \times 1$  cm<sup>2</sup>, teaching aids, 1 blackboard minimum  $90 \times 200 \times 1$  cm<sup>2</sup>, 1 trash can, 1 wall clock, 1 electric socket. The number of students is 546, and the number of study groups is 18. The average number of students in grades 1–4 is of national standard, with 28 students per class. Learning tools and resources in schools use conventional learning media and IT multimedia. This school has multimedia: 20 student computers, 5 teacher/TU computers, 3 LCD projectors, and 1 set of English, MIPA, and Indonesian CDs and DVDs. Conventional equipment to support science, social studies, Indonesian, and mathematics learning. Adequate reference books for learning all subjects and other supporting books. This school also teaches divine values by providing a prayer room so that students are not constrained and are diligent in carrying out worship. The school also puts up the slogan "cleanliness is part of faith" and provides lots of trash bins for students to dispose of trash in. Education personnel in the facilities and infrastructure section are tasked with checking all school facilities and infrastructure. If there is damage, repairs are made accordingly. Maintenance of buildings and structures is carried out at least twice a year; this can be seen from the beautiful, clean, and well-maintained environmental conditions.

The management of education costs in schools can make a very significant contribution to character education. The principal noticed that education costs were also used to condition character education. Fund allocations for character education programmes and activities are outlined in the School Work Plan (RKS) and School Budget Activity Plans (RKAS). The principal involves teachers and employees in compiling the RKS.

This is done in order to promote the values of openness and transparency, especially in the preparation of the school budget. The budget is implemented according to the RKAS, and reporting is carried out routinely according to the month in the form of BKU and LPJ, quarterly, and semester. Every month, the school reconciles and reports SAI to the KPPN and to the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion, and it reports BMN assets to the KPKNL every semester. The school's efforts to obtain additional financial support are supported by several canteen traders who are expected to contribute annually to the maintenance fund. In addition, madrasahs have also collaborated with the world of banking and the business world, and there are madrasah cooperatives as a form of economic development within the madrasah environment. In addition to establishing good relations with the student's guardians, they also maintain good relations with the surrounding community by inviting local community leaders when there are religious activities. If there is a certain big event, the school and the committee cooperate with external parties (sponsors) in organizing the event in accordance with the agreed agreement.

Effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity are three-character characteristics that schools can include into the implementation of their programmes and extracurricular activities. The results obtained in meeting the required targets for national education standards show this effective character value. The plans and activities implemented generate or meet national education standards in accordance with objectives with available finances or at reasonable prices, resulting in the achievement of efficient character values. The results of national education standards are maximized. While the value of productive character is obtained through the implementation of programmes and activities that fulfil national education standards, the results are both quantitative and qualitative in accordance with the objectives. From the perspective of each person, programme implementers and activities in schools have enacted character values like: self-assured, logical, critical, analytical, creative, innovative, independent, responsible, patient, careful, willing to sacrifice, brave, trustworthy, honest, keeps promises, fair, ashamed to make mistakes, loyal, hardworking, diligent, tenacious/persistent, conscientious, initiative, positive thinking, discipline, anticipatory, The principal must effectively manage human resources if they want to adopt character-based school management. The support that parents and school committees provide for the programmes being implemented is essential to the program's successful implementation. Consequently, in order to receive assistance, schools must build cooperative connections.

Control in school administration entails oversight, observation, and assessment of the SNP's planning, execution, and outcomes. Control is exercised through a school's attempts to create or ensure that programmes are implemented and goals are achieved. The principal conducts supervision to address issues that develop throughout the implementation of the programmer. The school principal carries out monitoring in an effort to learn how well programmers and activities are being implemented in the face of challenges or abnormalities. The school principal, along with other stakeholders, examines and assesses the overall performance of the school for the many accomplishments of the SNP fulfilling programme after learning the benefits and drawbacks of putting the programmes and activities in place. In school management, the control process imposes character values on the actors (controllers), such as being honest, confident, rational, logical, critical, analytical, creative, innovative, trustworthy, fair, tenacious, conscientious, visionary, dedicated, open, orderly, sporty, and following the rules. Meanwhile, from a managerial or institutional standpoint, the character values that can arise or grow in this control are openness, objectivity, fairness, measurability (standards), and responsibility.

## Conclusion

The school principal's leadership role in improving character education in schools can be seen in the planning, implementation, and supervision of character education activity programmes. The vision, mission, and goals of the school show that they instil the character qualities of honesty, discipline, accountability, hard effort, creativity, and care in their planning. The principal involves all school stakeholders in developing the school's vision, purpose, and goals. The school principal's leadership role in the execution of character education activities can be seen in the tactics employed in developing character education, namely through learning activities. In order to have a nurturing effect on developing students' character, such as intelligent character, open-minded character, responsibility, and curiosity, the principal is responsible for and grants freedom to teachers to develop learning activities and choose the most effective character education strategies, methods, and techniques to apply to students. The second strategy is through the development of school culture and learning activities. This school culture appears in the habits of Islamic behaviour that are carried out. Among other things, the habit of greeting and shaking hands when meeting teachers, guests, and fellow

friends; the habit of reciting the Qur'an before studying; the habit of praying in congregation for grades three, four, and five; and others. The third strategy is that the principal succeeds in instilling the character values of discipline, hard work, creativity, and respect for achievement through co-curricular and extracurricular activities. The numerous accomplishments made by students at the sub-district, district, and international levels serve as proof of this. The character education programme is controlled and supervised by the school principal through oversight, monitoring, and evaluation of the planning, execution, and outcomes of character education. The control process in school management applies character values to the actors (controllers) themselves, including being trustworthy, fair, tenacious, conscientious, visionary, dedicated, open, orderly, sporty, and obedient to rules. All of the school's stakeholders, including stockholders, are involved in the implementation of character education. Planning, carrying out, and assessing school initiatives are activities that all teachers and staff members feel a part of. These results indicate that the school principal's leadership in advancing character education in classrooms has been successful.

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