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Principal Management in Forming Teacher Character: Aligning School Governance with SDG 4 and SDG 8

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To examine the principal's management in shaping teacher character, which is the foundation for realizing a school culture with integrity and sustainability. **Method:** The research was conducted with a qualitative approach through a multi-site study design, involving observation, in-depth interviews with principals, teachers, and students, as well as document review. Data were analyzed using cross-case analysis techniques to reveal the principal's management patterns in shaping teacher character. This study aims to analyze: (1) Planning, (2) Organizing, (3) Implementation; and (4) Supervision of the principal in shaping teacher character in managing schools at SMP Negeri 3 Krian, Sidoarjo. **Results:** 1) Planning: The Principal of SMP Negeri 3 Krian applies flexible, contextual, and participatory methods through intensive communication between school members. 2) Organizing: The Principal of SMP Negeri 3 Krian applies a collaborative and humanistic approach that prioritizes interpersonal communication and a sense of family to increase teachers' sense of belonging. 3) Implementation: The Principal of SMP Negeri 3 Krian applies a persuasive, cultural, and humanistic approach through informal communication to build a harmonious work environment. 4) Supervision: The Principal of SMP Negeri 3 Krian chooses a humanistic and interpersonal approach through informal observation and open personal coaching. **Novelty:** The research places the context of teacher character formation as the primary focus, not merely as a supporting variable for improving competence or performance. This focus offers a novel contribution because teacher character is the foundation for creating a school culture of integrity and sustainability for SDG 4 and SDG 8.

INTRODUCTION

Principals hold significant responsibility for managing human resources (HR) in schools, including teachers, educational staff, and students as a unified school community. Beyond basic administration, principals must cultivate a supportive work environment that fosters educators' professional growth and maximizes student achievement (Lijun & Te, 2024; Owbor Grace, 2025). By aligning the diverse needs of staff and learners, they bridge operational goals with academic success. Ultimately, strategic HR management by a principal shapes the school's culture, driving collaboration and ensuring that every member of the community excels. Furthermore, the phenomenon of teachers frequently skipping school, engaging in bullying, ignoring student conflicts, and being overly preoccupied with side jobs has further tarnished the image of educators (Jesseman, 2025; Windvoël, 2023). This series of incidents has shifted public attention to the importance of the principal's role as a leader fully responsible for his subordinates' attitudes and behavior. Good character is essential for teachers, as they serve as role models for students (Feliza, 2025; Jumatullailah et al., 2024; Mahmoudi, 2025). A friendly, polite, yet authoritative character is reflected in a teacher's personality while teaching. However, as mere human beings, teachers have limitations, making the principal's role in planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising their performance crucial. Teacher character directly correlates with the

quality of learning. Research by (Yasin et al., 2024) confirms that teacher character significantly influences student motivation and academic outcomes. Similarly, (Sofi et al., 2025) states that teacher personality is crucial, as without a positive personality, learning messages will not be effectively conveyed to students. This personality challenge is increasingly apparent in today's era of digital openness. Maskun et al. (2019) and (Marici et al., 2023) have long warned that teachers should be careful in their actions, dress, and speech to set a good example. However, in reality, principals are often confronted with teachers who dress immodestly, engage in verbal bullying, arrive late to class, smoke on school grounds, and even engage in inappropriate behavior in order to go viral on social media. This is where teachers' high-quality pedagogical competence in classroom management needs to be supported by consistent coaching. According to (Kakarla, 2024), (Mthanti & Msiza, 2023), and (Ayumi & Nasution, 2025) principal development must address teachers' daily problems while fostering creativity. Therefore, Principals must intelligently carry out their core functions, rooted in solid knowledge of management and leadership. Acting as educators, they shape the school's academic vision (Mincu, 2022), fostering a culture of continuous learning for both students and staff (Ahsan, 2024; Stalmeijer et al., 2023). As managers and administrators, they ensure operational efficiency by organizing resources, managing budgets, and maintaining precise documentation to keep the institution running smoothly. Transitioning into strategic roles, they serve as visionary leaders who set long-term goals, navigate complex challenges, and unite diverse stakeholders toward a shared purpose. Finally, as motivators, principals inspire dedication, boost staff morale, and create a positive, inclusive environment where everyone feels empowered to excel. By seamlessly blending these five distinct pillars, an effective principal transforms routine school administration into dynamic, goal-oriented leadership that drives institutional success.

This leadership concept is particularly relevant when studied in Sidoarjo Regency, a buffer zone of the Surabaya metropolitan area that has seen rapid educational development at the junior high school (SMP) level. The socioeconomic dynamics in this region have given rise to diverse school cultures and distinct managerial patterns between public and private schools. In general, previous research has shown that effective human resource management by principals fosters a harmonious work environment and a sense of collective responsibility for SDG 4 and SDG 8 (Faruq et al., 2024)

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach, a type of research based on empirical evidence or facts found in the field and presented in the form of verbal descriptions, documents, or visuals (Moleong, 2014). As a field study, the main focus is to deeply understand the background, actual conditions, and social interactions that occur in the school environment. Therefore, the qualitative method in this study serves as a mechanism to extract data sourced from informants, observed behavior, and relevant documents, thus producing a comprehensive picture. This study specifically examines how the principal's management is implemented at SMP Negeri 3 Krian, and how these managerial strategies contribute to the formation of teacher character in each school. Qualitative research was chosen because the focus of the study is on behavior,

experiences, and social interactions that occur naturally in the school environment without any special treatment for the research subjects.

In this study, data was collected in-depth through interviews, observations, and documentation studies. According to (Arikunto, 2010), a Site Case Study is conducted intensively, in detail, and in-depth within a limited social unit, making it relevant for examining principal management practices in two different school contexts. Through this approach, researchers can examine the differences and similarities in principal management practices and identify common patterns that emerge in teacher character formation. The research process was carried out systematically, starting with initial data collection until saturation was reached, followed by data filtering, combining findings, and conducting a comprehensive analysis.

This research was conducted at SMP Negeri 3 Krian as the primary location. The research was planned to last two months. The preliminary study began in December 2025 to conduct an initial identification of the research problem, followed by field data collection from February to March 2026. The subject of this study focused on the principal's management in shaping teacher character at SMP Negeri 3 Krian. Data analysis in this study was conducted by systematically identifying, organizing, and compiling all field notes, interview transcripts, and documents obtained during the research process. This stage includes reviewing the collected data, organizing, grouping, and synthesizing the information for proper management. Next, the researcher sought to identify patterns, meanings, and relationships within the data, which were then presented in a coherent, systematic report. This study employed qualitative analysis, focusing on three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification. Four criteria are used to ensure the validity of the data in this study. These four criteria include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, as proposed by Miles and Huberman (1984).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The Principal of SMP Negeri 3 Krian's planning to shape teacher character demonstrates strong alignment with the primary managerial function of educational organizations. In line with the theories of George R. Terry, Robbins, and Coulter, the principal plans systematic task delegation through competency-based work programs to create space for innovation that fosters teacher independence (Willis et al., 2022). The implementation of school rules, regulations, work standards, and SOPs is also structured in a targeted manner as a foundation for discipline and professional responsibility, which strengthens the planning theory of Malayu S.P. Hasibuan and F.C. Winkel (Rahayu et al., 2025; Ridhasyabina et al., 2025). In terms of exemplary behavior, the principal integrates school cultural values into planning documents that target not only academic aspects but also moral character. This approach fulfills the role of the principal, according to (Prabowo, 2024; Syarifah et al., 2026), and aligns with Thomas Lickona's theory of character development through knowing, doing, and desiring good values. Furthermore, increasing teacher motivation and work commitment is stimulated through the planning of a reward system and periodic professional development programs, such as supervision and coaching, which is in line with the concept of habituation from Berkowitz and Bier. To build integrity, the principal implemented transparent policies and a code of ethics that encouraged teachers to internalize the

value of honesty concretely during objective assessments. Finally, the principal's effective leadership was demonstrated through collaborative planning, such as the formation of learning communities and intensive team coordination. According to Bush and Glover, this collaborative strategy successfully increased awareness, built the capacity of the school community, and created a harmonious work environment to support optimal learning quality.

Based on a study of educational management and leadership theory, research findings from SMP Negeri 3 Krian indicate a strong link between the principal's organizational practices and the theoretical concepts advanced by experts. Organizing is the process of grouping activities, assigning authority, and establishing working relationships to achieve organizational goals effectively (Nurhikmah, 2024). This is reflected in the practice of the Principal of SMP Negeri 3 Krian, who delegates tasks and authority to teachers based on their competencies, supported by a clear organizational structure and a Decree on the division of tasks. Strategic assignments to high-achieving teachers also demonstrate that organizing is not only administrative but also an effort to optimize human resource potential, so that teachers feel a clear role that helps increase self-confidence and independence. The research findings at SMP Negeri 3 Krian reinforce existing theories that principal organization is a strategic process encompassing work structure, clear role allocation, value reinforcement, and professional collaboration. The practices of the principal of SMP Negeri 3 Krian demonstrate the integration of managerial functions and moral leadership, as outlined by experts. Therefore, effective organization has been shown to not only improve teacher performance but also foster sustainable professional character in managing learning at the school.

The results of this study align with Pujasari's (2017) perspective, which emphasizes that the principal, as a role model in implementing character values such as discipline, responsibility, and cooperation, can increase teacher commitment to their duties. The principal of SMP Negeri 3 Krian provides motivation, recognition, and constructive feedback to teachers. Documentation of these activities demonstrates recognition of teachers' achievements, resulting in increased motivation, work enthusiasm, and commitment to professional learning. The implementation of teacher character building at SMP Negeri 3 Krian also aligns with the concept proposed by (Anisah, 2023; Murcahyanto & Mohzana, 2023), which states that character building is carried out through ongoing coaching, monitoring, and evaluation, strengthening school culture, and recognizing good practices. This is evident in academic supervision, performance monitoring, collaborative forums such as internal MGMPs, and the formation of work teams that encourage collaboration among teachers. Thus, the four main dimensions—exemplary behavior, coaching, strengthening culture, and ongoing evaluation—have been implemented in an integrated manner. Based on this description, it can be concluded that the principal of SMP Negeri 3 Krian has implemented a systematic approach to teacher character development and is aligned with existing theoretical foundations. The principal serves not only as an administrator but also as a learning and moral leader, capable of developing teachers who are confident, disciplined, have integrity, are motivated, and can collaborate to improve the quality of learning.

Based on theoretical studies, principal supervision is a strategic instrument that functions not only as administrative control but also as a continuous professional development process. This aligns with research findings at SMP Negeri 3 Krian, which

showed that supervision is carried out through trusting teachers, accompanied by targeted monitoring and supervision. This concept is relevant to Terry's opinion, which states that "supervision or controlling is a systematic process to ensure that activities are implemented according to plan and that corrections are made if deviations occur" (Suchyadi et al., 2022; Sutarno, 2023). In practice, supervision at SMP Negeri 3 Krian not only ensures performance outcomes but also shapes teachers' self-confidence and independence through a supportive, dialogical coaching approach.

Supervision that encourages collaboration and two-way communication between teachers demonstrates that the principal of SMP Negeri 3 Krian applies a humanistic and collaborative approach to supervision. This aligns with modern supervision concepts that emphasize the importance of reflective dialogue and collaboration in professional development. Thus, supervision not only shapes individual teacher character but also fosters a conducive collective work culture. The findings of this study reinforce the theory that principal supervision is a planned, ongoing, and values-based professional development process. Effective supervision at SMPN 3 Krian integrates monitoring, guidance, and role modeling, thus developing teachers who are not only pedagogically competent but also possess strong character as educators and role models for students.

Discussion

In terms of role modelling, the principal's planning at SMP Negeri 3 Krian, which is grounded in school values and culture, demonstrates the principal's strategic role as an educational leader. This aligns that the principal serves as an educator, manager, administrator, supervisor, leader, innovator, and motivator (Siregar, 2024; Yakob et al., 2025). Research findings indicate that the principal not only plans academic aspects but also builds character through role modelling, which teachers then internalize in their daily behavior. This supports Thomas Lickona's theory that character development encompasses knowing, doing, and being willing, which, in practice, is evident in teachers' attitudes toward discipline, responsibility, and integrity. The planning of a reward system, reinforcement, and professional development for teachers at SMP Negeri 3 Krian demonstrates a strategy for increasing motivation and work commitment. This aligns with the views of (Hidayat & Hidayat, 2024; Nurhayati & Hanif, 2025; Sutrisno et al., 2023) who stated that character formation is not solely through knowledge, but also through habituation, experience, and reflection. The principal's planned supervision, evaluation, and coaching programs provide teachers with hands-on experience for continued development. This is evident in the increased work ethic, professionalism, and active involvement of teachers in learning.

Regarding integrity, the principal's planning at SMP Negeri 3 Krian, through a transparent code of ethics, rules of procedure, and policies, demonstrates a systematic effort to build a culture of honesty and responsibility. This reinforces the concept that planning is not merely administrative but also normative and strategic in shaping organizational values. Teachers not only understand the value of the integrity conceptually but also internalize it in practices, such as objective assessment and professional responsibility. Thus, the principal's planning successfully shapes teachers' moral character in line with educational goals. The planning of collaborative activities and teamwork at SMP Negeri 3 Krian reflects effective educational leadership. This aligns with Tony Bush and Derek Glover's findings that effective educational leadership

is characterized by the ability to set direction, build commitment, and develop the capacity of the school community (Bush & Glover, 2025). The principal's planned learning community program, team coordination, and collaborative work culture can enhance caring and cooperation among teachers. These findings demonstrate that careful planning not only improves individual performance but also fosters a harmonious, conducive work environment that enhances the quality of learning.

An organization serves to create role clarity, coordinate work, and foster shared responsibility (Liu & Watson, 2023). Findings at SMP Negeri 3 Krian support this theory, as the principal established a structured work mechanism through a coordination system, an activity schedule, and a clear division of responsibilities. This implementation has been proven to assist teachers in managing time, determining priorities, and carrying out tasks with discipline and responsibility. This condition indicates the development of self-regulation in teachers as a result of a well-organized work system. From a moral leadership perspective, (Ansori et al., 2024; Thien et al., 2023) emphasized that the principal, as a moral leader, must be able to build a value-based school community. This aligns with research findings showing that the principal of SMP Negeri 3 Krian exemplifies discipline, responsibility, and integrity. This exemplary behavior not only impacts teachers but is also observed by students as a model worthy of emulation. Thus, organization is not only structural but also cultural in shaping norms and work ethics within the school environment. In the context of character education, Lickona emphasized that character formation requires a systemic approach involving the entire school community. Research findings indicate that the principal of SMP Negeri 3 Krian applies the principles of fairness and transparency in the division of tasks and responsibilities, enabling teachers to demonstrate honesty, objectivity, and consistency in their work. Furthermore, the formation of structured work teams and collaborative groups strengthens cooperation and caring among teachers. This demonstrates that the organizational structure has supported the formation of a school culture conducive to the internalization of character values.

In terms of character formation, this study's findings align with Lickona's view, which holds that character is the integration of moral values, self-control, and good behavioral habits developed through continuous practice. The principal of SMP Negeri 3 Krian consistently instills the value of discipline through supervision of attendance and punctuality, as well as ongoing coaching supported by monitoring and evaluation. This has resulted in increased teacher discipline, responsibility, and commitment in carrying out their professional duties. Thus, character formation occurs not only at the conceptual level but also in daily work practices. This study's findings also support the opinion of (Ak Bujang et al., 2025; Pardosi & Utari, 2022) who stated that effective principals are those who demonstrate exemplary behavior, consistency, and high integrity, thereby influencing teachers' professional culture and behavior. The principal of SMP Negeri 3 Krian not only provides direction but also consistently demonstrates behavior that teachers can emulate. This contributes to the formation of a professional work culture in which teachers are encouraged to improve the quality of learning and maintain a strong work ethic. The results of this study align with (Siahaan et al., 2023; Sumar et al., 2025) perspective, which emphasizes that the principal, as a role model for implementing character values such as discipline, responsibility, and cooperation, can enhance teachers' commitment to their duties. The principal of SMP Negeri 3 Krian provides motivation, recognition, and constructive feedback to teachers.

Documentation of these activities demonstrates recognition of teachers' achievements, thereby increasing motivation, work enthusiasm, and commitment to professional learning. The implementation of teacher character building at SMP Negeri 3 Krian also aligns with the concept proposed by (Mau, 2024), which states that character building is carried out through ongoing coaching, monitoring, and evaluation, strengthening school culture, and recognizing good practices. This is evident in academic supervision, performance monitoring, collaborative forums such as internal MGMPs, and the formation of work teams that encourage collaboration among teachers. Thus, the four main dimensions exemplary behavior, coaching, strengthening culture, and ongoing evaluation have been implemented in an integrated manner.

The ongoing efforts to improve teacher discipline and responsibility at SMP Negeri 3 Krian also reinforce the concept of educational supervision as a form of systematic professional support. Supervision, conducted through attendance monitoring, performance evaluation, and regular feedback, has been shown to increase teachers' awareness of how to manage time and carry out their responsibilities. This aligns with (Rogers, 2022), "the effectiveness of supervision lies in its ability to encourage behavioral change, not simply assess performance." Therefore, the supervision implemented by the principal of SMP Negeri 3 Krian fosters discipline and responsibility as part of teacher professionalism. The principal of SMP Negeri 3 Krian, through ongoing supervision and coaching, has been shown to increase teacher motivation and commitment to work. Consistent and communicative supervision not only helps teachers understand their strengths and weaknesses but also encourages continuous improvement in the quality of learning. In enforcing regulations, SMP Negeri 3 Krian demonstrates fair, transparent, and objective supervision through the integration of control and coaching functions. Teachers become more honest, responsible, and consistent in carrying out their professional duties.

The findings also demonstrate that effective principal leadership contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). By fostering teachers' character through exemplary leadership, continuous supervision, professional development, and collaborative school culture, principals strengthen the quality of teaching and create a more inclusive, effective, and supportive learning environment, which is central to SDG 4. At the same time, cultivating discipline, integrity, responsibility, and professionalism among teachers enhances human capital and workforce quality within the education sector, thereby supporting the long-term objectives of SDG 8 related to productive employment, decent work, and sustainable institutional development. These findings suggest that character-based educational leadership serves as an important strategy for advancing both educational quality and sustainable human resource development.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding : The fundamental finding of this study is that successful teacher character formation relies on a humanistic, interpersonal, and culturally-driven management paradigm rather than rigid bureaucratic control. **Implication :** The results of this study enrich the treasury of educational management by demonstrating that the principal's managerial function (POAC) contributes directly to the formation of teacher character for SDG 4 and SDG 8, not merely to administrative tasks. **Limitation :** The

scope is limited to the principal's key leadership and managerial functions, which encompass the stages of planning (planning), organizing (organizing), implementing (actuating), and supervising (controlling) the professional and ethical behavior of teachers. Consequently, teacher character in this context is defined by and restricted to indicators of discipline, pedagogical innovation, professional integrity, and digital ethics, matching their role as educational role models in the digital era. The investigation specifically examines these dynamics within the distinct socio-geographical framework of SMP Negeri 3 Krian as a suburban public school with a heterogenous student body and specific teacher qualification profiles, meaning the results may not be generalizable to schools with different cultural, economic, or geographical contexts. **Future Research:** future studies should incorporate direct measurements of student academic performance and behavioral outcomes to quantitatively validate whether the principal's professional development and character-molding initiatives among teachers directly translate into improved student success.

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