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Shaping Teachers' Character and Workplace Well-Being: A Multi-Site Study on Principal Leadership for SDG 4 and SDG 8

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To analyze principal management in shaping teacher character through planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision at SMP Negeri 1 Sidoarjo and SMP Negeri 3 Krian, Sidoarjo. **Method:** Employing a qualitative approach using a multi-site case study design. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews with principals, teachers, and students, as well as document analysis. The data were analyzed using cross-case analysis to identify similarities, differences, and management patterns applied by principals in shaping teacher character. **Results:** The findings show that the principal of SMP Negeri 1 Sidoarjo applied systematic, structured, and data-based management to strengthen accountability in planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision. In contrast, the principal of SMP Negeri 3 Krian emphasized flexible, contextual, collaborative, and humanistic management through intensive interpersonal communication and a family-oriented school culture. These different approaches indicate that teacher character development can be strengthened through both formal data-based management and humanistic interpersonal leadership. **Novelty:** Proposing a conceptual model of principal management in shaping teacher character consisting of five key components: leadership through real exemplary behavior, integration of data-based management and humanistic approaches, strengthening of distinctive school culture, improvement of teacher professionalism and performance, and optimization of effective organizational performance. This model offers a practical and theoretical framework for schools seeking to improve teacher character, school culture, graduate quality, student character formation, and public trust in educational institutions for SDG 4 and SDG 8.

INTRODUCTION

School leadership has become one of the most influential factors in determining educational quality and organizational sustainability. Beyond managing administrative functions, school principals are expected to cultivate professional, ethical, and character-driven school communities that support both teacher development and student success. Contemporary educational leadership increasingly emphasizes that effective principals are responsible not only for improving instructional quality but also for fostering teachers' integrity, professionalism, discipline, and commitment as fundamental elements of school culture (Hallinger, 2020; Leithwood et al., 2021). Within this perspective, teacher character is recognized as an essential component of educational quality because teachers function simultaneously as instructors, mentors, and moral role models whose behavior directly shapes students' attitudes, values, and learning experiences for SDG 4 and SDG 8.

The importance of teacher character has received growing attention due to the increasing number of ethical violations involving teachers in various educational settings. Reports of teacher misconduct, including violence against students, sexual harassment, bullying, absenteeism, and other forms of unprofessional behavior, have raised public concern regarding teacher professionalism and accountability. Such

incidents have shifted attention toward the responsibility of school principals as educational leaders who are expected to establish effective management systems capable of preventing misconduct while promoting positive teacher behavior. These conditions suggest that teacher character cannot be viewed solely as an individual responsibility but should be managed systematically through school leadership, organizational culture, and continuous professional supervision.

Previous studies consistently demonstrate that teachers' character substantially influences students' academic achievement, learning motivation, and socio-emotional development. Teachers who demonstrate integrity, discipline, empathy, responsibility, and respectful communication create positive classroom climates that encourage student engagement and improve learning outcomes (Muhammad Thoriqul, 2024; Marlina Ellyyanti, 2021). Similarly, research emphasizes that teacher personality serves as a powerful form of social modeling because students continuously observe and imitate teachers' attitudes and behaviors both inside and outside the classroom. Consequently, strengthening teacher character has become an essential component of educational quality assurance rather than merely an ethical expectation. However, teacher character development requires consistent managerial support through planning, organization, implementation, and supervision led by school principals.

The management role of school principals has therefore expanded beyond administrative coordination toward strategic human resource development. Educational management literature identifies planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision as the four primary managerial functions that enable principals to develop teacher competence and professional behavior systematically (Terry, 1977; Murniati, 2008). Principals are expected to provide continuous coaching, performance evaluation, mentoring, and organizational support while simultaneously establishing school cultures that reinforce ethical values and professional responsibility. Effective leadership also requires balancing formal managerial systems with interpersonal relationships that encourage teachers' motivation, commitment, and collaborative engagement within the school community.

These issues are particularly relevant within the context of junior secondary education in Sidoarjo Regency, East Java, Indonesia. As one of the most rapidly developing educational regions surrounding Surabaya Metropolitan Area, Sidoarjo has experienced substantial growth in the number of public and private junior secondary schools, creating increasingly diverse organizational contexts. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics of Sidoarjo Regency (2024/2025), the region comprises 193 junior secondary schools (48 public and 145 private schools) employing approximately 4,270 teachers, illustrating the complexity of educational management across different institutional settings. This diversity provides an appropriate context for investigating how principals manage teacher character development under varying organizational conditions.

This study specifically focuses on SMP Negeri 1 Sidoarjo and SMP Negeri 3 Krian because the two schools represent contrasting organizational environments. SMP Negeri 1 Sidoarjo is located in the urban administrative center and operates within a highly competitive academic environment demanding structured management and professional accountability. In contrast, SMP Negeri 3 Krian serves a more socially heterogeneous suburban community where interpersonal relationships and contextual leadership play a stronger role in school management. Preliminary data also reveal differences in teachers' educational qualifications, with SMP Negeri 1 Sidoarjo

employing substantially more teachers holding master's degrees than SMP Negeri 3 Krian. These organizational differences suggest that strategies for shaping teacher character may vary according to institutional culture, teacher capacity, and leadership approaches, making a multi-site comparison particularly valuable.

Despite extensive literature on instructional leadership, educational management, and teacher performance, several important research gaps remain. First, previous studies primarily examine principal leadership in relation to teacher performance, instructional effectiveness, or organizational commitment, whereas teacher character itself is rarely positioned as the central focus of educational management. Second, studies investigating teacher character development generally emphasize individual teacher competence or professional ethics without examining how managerial functions systematically contribute to character formation. Third, comparative multi-site qualitative studies exploring principal management across schools with different organizational cultures remain limited, particularly within Indonesian junior secondary schools. Consequently, there is insufficient understanding of how different managerial approaches influence teacher character development under varying educational contexts.

To address these gaps, this study investigates principal management in shaping teacher character through a multi-site qualitative case study conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Sidoarjo and SMP Negeri 3 Krian. The study examines how principals perform the four managerial functions planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision to develop teachers' professional character while accommodating different organizational cultures and contextual characteristics. Based on cross-case analysis, this research further develops a conceptual model of principal management that integrates systematic management practices with humanistic leadership approaches to strengthen teacher character, school culture, and organizational effectiveness.

Accordingly, this study addresses the following research questions: (1) How do school principals plan teacher character development in SMP Negeri 1 Sidoarjo and SMP Negeri 3 Krian? (2) How do school principals organize teacher character development in both schools? (3) How do school principals implement teacher character development strategies? (4) How do school principals supervise teacher character development? By answering these questions, this study contributes to educational management literature by proposing a conceptual framework for principal management that supports sustainable teacher character development while offering practical guidance for school leaders seeking to strengthen organizational culture and educational quality.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research design

This study employed a qualitative research approach using a multi-site case study design to explore how school principals manage teacher character development in different educational contexts. A multi-site case study was selected because it enables researchers to examine similarities and differences across multiple settings while generating a more comprehensive understanding of leadership practices than a single-case investigation (Yin, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The study was conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Sidoarjo and SMP Negeri 3 Krian, two public junior secondary schools representing distinct organizational cultures and leadership contexts in Sidoarjo Regency, East Java, Indonesia.

The research focused on four principal management functions: planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision in shaping teacher character. These managerial functions served as the analytical framework for investigating how principals developed teachers' professional values, ethical behavior, discipline, integrity, and responsibility within their respective school environments. The research design employed in this study is presented in Figure 1.

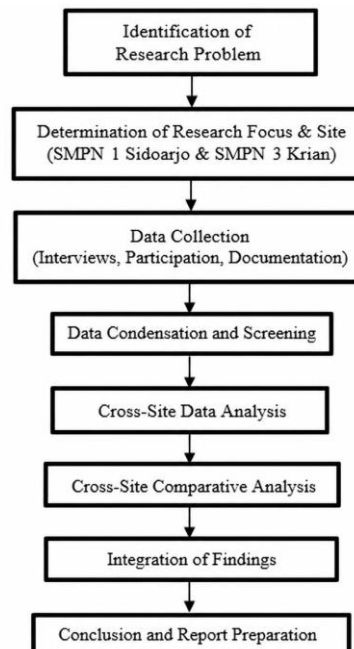


Figure 1. Research procedures of the multi-site case study

The research design followed several systematic stages. First, the researcher identified the research problem related to principal management in shaping teacher character. Second, the research focus and sites were determined, namely SMP Negeri 1 Sidoarjo and SMP Negeri 3 Krian, as two schools with different organizational contexts. Third, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation to obtain comprehensive information from the research sites.

After the data were collected, the researcher conducted data condensation and filtering to select, simplify, and organize relevant findings according to the research focus. The next stage was within-site data analysis, in which each school was analyzed separately to identify the principal's management practices in planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising teacher character development. Furthermore, a cross-site comparative analysis was conducted to identify similarities, differences, and distinctive patterns between the two schools.

The findings from both sites were then integrated to formulate a comprehensive understanding of principal management in shaping teacher character. Finally, the researcher prepared the conclusions and research report based on the integrated findings, resulting in a conceptual explanation of principal management practices across the two research sites.

Research sites

This study was conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Sidoarjo and SMP Negeri 3 Krian, Sidoarjo Regency, East Java, Indonesia. These two public junior secondary schools were purposively selected because they represent different organizational contexts and

principal leadership characteristics while sharing a commitment to improving teacher professionalism and school quality. SMP Negeri 1 Sidoarjo is located in the urban center of Sidoarjo and is characterized by a highly structured organizational system, strong administrative management, and high expectations for academic excellence. In contrast, SMP Negeri 3 Krian is situated in a suburban area with more diverse social and educational characteristics, where school management emphasizes interpersonal communication, collaboration, and a family-oriented organizational culture.

The selection of these research sites was based on the assumption that differences in organizational context, teacher qualifications, and leadership practices would provide rich comparative data for examining how principals manage teacher character development. Preliminary observations also indicated that both schools had implemented various teacher development programs, including supervision, coaching, performance evaluation, and school culture initiatives. However, each principal employed different managerial approaches in planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising teacher character development. These differences made the two schools appropriate settings for a multi-site case study aimed at identifying both common and context-specific principal management practices in shaping teacher character.

Participants

The participants in this study were selected using purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in school management and teacher character development. The participants consisted of the principals, vice principals, teachers, administrative staff, and students from SMP Negeri 1 Sidoarjo and SMP Negeri 3 Krian. These participants were chosen because they possessed first-hand knowledge and experience regarding the planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision of teacher character development within their respective schools.

The principals served as the primary key informants because they were responsible for designing and implementing school management policies. Vice principals were included to provide information regarding the implementation of academic and administrative programs, while teachers shared their experiences of participating in character development programs and professional supervision. Administrative staff contributed information related to school management documents and institutional support systems. In addition, several students were involved to provide complementary perspectives on teachers' character and its manifestation in daily school activities.

Participant recruitment continued until data saturation was achieved, meaning that no substantial new information emerged from subsequent interviews. This approach ensured that the collected data adequately represented the principal management practices across the two research sites and provided sufficient depth for cross-case analysis.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using three complementary techniques: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. The integration of these methods enabled the researcher to obtain comprehensive, credible, and triangulated evidence regarding principal management in shaping teacher character across the two research sites.

In depth interviews were conducted with the principals, vice principals, teachers, administrative staff, and students who were directly involved in school management

and teacher character development. Semi-structured interview guidelines were used to ensure consistency while allowing participants to freely express their experiences, perceptions, and opinions. The interviews were conducted in both unstructured and focused formats. Unstructured interviews provided opportunities for participants to elaborate on their experiences in greater depth, whereas focused interviews explored specific issues related to the principals' planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision of teacher character development.

Participant observation was employed to obtain direct evidence of principals' managerial practices and their interactions within the school environment. The researcher conducted observations during school activities, teacher meetings, supervision sessions, and other daily routines related to teacher development. The observation process consisted of three stages: descriptive observation, which aimed to obtain a general understanding of the school context; focused observation, which concentrated on activities relevant to the research objectives; and selective observation, which identified similarities and differences between the two research sites. Field notes, photographs, and video recordings, obtained with participants' consent, were used to support and validate the observational findings.

Document analysis complemented the interview and observation data by providing documentary evidence of principal management practices. The analyzed documents included school strategic plans, annual work programs, supervision records, teacher performance evaluation reports, meeting minutes, school regulations, teacher development programs, official correspondence, and photographs of school activities. These documents were accessed through formal permission from each school and were used to verify the consistency of information obtained from interviews and observations.

To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, the researcher employed method triangulation by integrating interviews, observations, and document analysis, as well as source triangulation by comparing information obtained from different participants across the two research sites. Data collection continued until data saturation was achieved, ensuring that no substantial new information emerged and that the findings comprehensively represented principal management practices in shaping teacher character.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), which consists of three stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data obtained from interviews, observations, and document analysis were coded, categorized, and organized according to the research focus, namely planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision of principal management in shaping teacher character.

Since this study employed a multi-site case study, the analysis was conducted through within-site analysis and cross-site analysis (Yin, 2018). Each research site was first analyzed independently to identify its unique management practices. The findings from both schools were then compared to identify similarities, differences, and recurring patterns. The final stage involved synthesizing the findings into a conceptual model of principal management in shaping teacher character.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Planning of principal management in shaping teacher character

1. Findings at SMP Negeri 1 Sidoarjo

The findings revealed that planning constituted the foundation of principal management in shaping teacher character at SMP Negeri 1 Sidoarjo. The principal developed teacher character systematically by integrating character values into the school's strategic planning documents, including the school vision and mission, annual work plans, academic supervision programs, standard operating procedures (SOPs), teacher codes of conduct, and performance evaluation instruments. These planning documents served not only as administrative requirements but also as managerial instruments for guiding teachers' professional attitudes and ethical behavior.

Planning activities began with an annual needs assessment conducted through coordination meetings involving vice principals, department heads, and teachers. During these meetings, the principal identified problems related to teacher discipline, classroom management, professional competence, and work commitment. The results of these evaluations became the basis for establishing annual priorities for teacher development. Consequently, teacher character development was positioned as one of the school's strategic priorities alongside academic achievement and student development.

Another important finding was the systematic delegation of responsibilities according to teachers' competencies and professional backgrounds. The principal assigned teachers to academic, administrative, and extracurricular responsibilities through formal appointment letters. Participants explained that clearly defined responsibilities enhanced teachers' confidence because every teacher understood his or her specific duties and performance expectations.

The planning process also emphasized discipline as an essential element of teacher character. Attendance regulations, teaching schedules, lesson planning deadlines, supervision schedules, and professional development activities were established before each academic year. Teachers acknowledged that these structured plans helped them develop greater responsibility, punctuality, and commitment toward their professional duties.

Furthermore, teacher professional development was embedded within school planning. The principal scheduled regular academic supervision, teacher workshops, internal professional learning communities, and reflective meetings. Rather than functioning solely as administrative activities, these programs were designed to strengthen teachers' integrity, professionalism, collaboration, and continuous learning. Observation findings further indicated that character values were consistently integrated into daily school management. School meetings regularly emphasized integrity, discipline, accountability, teamwork, and exemplary behavior. As a result, teachers gradually internalized these values as part of the school's organizational culture rather than merely complying with administrative regulations.

Document analysis supported these findings. The school's annual work program, supervision schedules, teacher performance evaluation forms, and school regulations consistently demonstrated that teacher character development had been explicitly incorporated into school management planning. These documents confirmed that planning was implemented systematically and aligned with the school's long-term educational objectives.

2. Findings at SMP Negeri 3 Krian

The findings at SMP Negeri 3 Krian demonstrated a different planning approach. Although teacher character development remained a strategic priority, planning relied more heavily on participatory communication and contextual decision-making than on highly structured administrative procedures. The principal involved teachers actively during school planning meetings, encouraging them to contribute ideas and identify challenges encountered in daily teaching practices. Participants described these discussions as open, informal, and collaborative, allowing teachers to express concerns and propose solutions before school programs were finalized.

Instead of emphasizing formal documentation, the principal focused on building shared commitment through interpersonal communication. Teachers explained that this participatory planning process strengthened their sense of ownership toward school programs because they were directly involved in determining priorities and implementation strategies. Teacher character development was integrated into school vision statements, ethical guidelines, staff meetings, and collaborative activities. The principal consistently emphasized honesty, discipline, mutual respect, professionalism, and teamwork during planning discussions. Consequently, character formation emerged naturally through organizational culture rather than through formal regulations alone.

Another significant finding concerned professional development planning. Teachers were encouraged to participate in workshops, teacher learning communities, classroom innovation programs, and peer discussions. These activities were designed not only to improve pedagogical competence but also to strengthen teachers' confidence, motivation, and professional commitment.

Unlike SMP Negeri 1 Sidoarjo, where planning was primarily supported by documented management systems, SMP Negeri 3 Krian adopted a more flexible approach that accommodated contextual needs and interpersonal relationships. Participants emphasized that this flexibility increased teacher engagement and strengthened collaboration among school members. Document analysis confirmed that although fewer formal planning documents were produced, school meeting minutes, annual activity plans, teacher development programs, and supervision records consistently reflected the principal's commitment to developing teacher character.

3. Cross-site findings

Cross-site analysis revealed both similarities and differences between the two schools. Both principals recognized planning as the initial managerial process for shaping teacher character and integrated character values into school management. Both schools prioritized discipline, responsibility, professionalism, integrity, and continuous professional development as central objectives of teacher management.

However, differences emerged in planning strategies. SMP Negeri 1 Sidoarjo relied primarily on structured planning supported by formal documents, performance indicators, supervision instruments, and standardized procedures. This approach strengthened organizational accountability and consistency. Conversely, SMP Negeri 3 Krian emphasized participatory planning through interpersonal communication, teacher involvement, and contextual flexibility. Rather than depending on formal administrative systems, planning focused on building commitment, trust, and collaborative relationships among school members.

Despite these differences, both approaches successfully supported teacher character development. The findings suggest that effective planning is not determined solely by

formal managerial systems or interpersonal leadership individually but by the principal's ability to align planning processes with organizational culture and school context.

Organizing of principal management in shaping teacher character

The findings revealed that both principals organized teacher character development by assigning duties according to teachers' competencies, establishing coordination mechanisms, and fostering collaborative professional relationships. However, different organizational approaches were identified between the two schools. At SMP Negeri 1 Sidoarjo, the organizing process was characterized by a structured management system in which responsibilities were formally assigned through an organizational structure, official appointment letters, and clearly defined job descriptions. Regular coordination meetings and systematic work distribution enabled teachers to understand their respective roles and responsibilities, thereby strengthening discipline, accountability, and professionalism in carrying out their duties.

In contrast, SMP Negeri 3 Krian implemented a more flexible and humanistic organizing approach. Although formal organizational structures were maintained, the principal emphasized interpersonal communication, collaborative decision-making, and consideration of teachers' interests and professional potential when assigning responsibilities. Teachers were actively involved in school programs and encouraged to collaborate through informal discussions, internal teacher learning communities, and teamwork. This participatory approach fostered a stronger sense of ownership, mutual trust, and collective responsibility among teachers.

Despite these differences, both schools demonstrated that effective organizing contributed significantly to teacher character development. While SMP Negeri 1 Sidoarjo relied on structured organizational management to reinforce professionalism and work discipline, SMP Negeri 3 Krian emphasized collaboration and interpersonal relationships to strengthen teachers' commitment, responsibility, and teamwork. These findings indicate that different organizational strategies can effectively support the development of positive teacher character when aligned with each school's organizational culture and leadership practices.

Implementation of principal management in shaping teacher character

The findings indicated that both school principals implemented teacher character development through continuous guidance, exemplary leadership, professional development activities, and the consistent enforcement of school regulations. However, differences were identified in the implementation strategies adopted by each school. At SMP Negeri 1 Sidoarjo, implementation was carried out systematically through scheduled programs, structured academic supervision, regular teacher meetings, professional development workshops, and performance evaluations. The principal consistently monitored teachers' discipline, punctuality, classroom management, and instructional quality while providing constructive feedback to improve professional competence. Teachers were also encouraged to participate in training programs and school development activities to strengthen their responsibility, commitment, and professionalism.

Conversely, SMP Negeri 3 Krian implemented teacher character development through a more humanistic and persuasive approach. The principal emphasized informal communication, personal mentoring, and collaborative problem-solving as the

primary strategies for guiding teachers. Rather than relying solely on formal supervision, the principal frequently interacted with teachers during daily school activities, providing motivation, encouragement, and individual support whenever challenges arose. Teachers perceived this approach as creating a positive working atmosphere that strengthened trust, confidence, and professional commitment. Both schools also demonstrated the importance of exemplary leadership in shaping teacher character. The principals consistently modeled discipline, integrity, responsibility, and ethical behavior, encouraging teachers to internalize these values through daily interactions. Although SMP Negeri 1 Sidoarjo emphasized structured implementation supported by formal management systems, SMP Negeri 3 Krian relied more on interpersonal relationships and a supportive school culture. Despite these different approaches, both schools successfully promoted teacher discipline, integrity, motivation, collaboration, and commitment to continuous professional improvement.

Supervision of principal management in shaping teacher character

The findings showed that supervision served as a continuous process for monitoring teacher performance while simultaneously supporting teacher character development in both schools. At SMP Negeri 1 Sidoarjo, supervision was conducted through a systematic and data-based approach using academic supervision instruments, classroom observations, performance evaluations, attendance monitoring, and regular feedback sessions. The principal maintained clear supervision schedules and documented evaluation results to ensure accountability and continuous improvement. Teachers reported that this structured supervision increased their awareness of professional responsibilities, discipline, and commitment to maintaining high teaching standards.

In contrast, SMP Negeri 3 Krian adopted a more interpersonal and developmental approach to supervision. Although formal supervision activities were implemented, the principal prioritized open dialogue, reflective discussions, and personal coaching. Supervision was viewed not merely as an evaluation process but as an opportunity to provide professional support, identify teachers' challenges, and collaboratively develop appropriate solutions. This approach encouraged teachers to express their concerns openly while strengthening mutual trust between the principal and teachers.

Despite these differences, supervision in both schools emphasized continuous improvement rather than administrative control alone. Both principals provided constructive feedback, motivation, and guidance to strengthen teachers' professional character. While SMP Negeri 1 Sidoarjo emphasized systematic monitoring supported by formal evaluation instruments, SMP Negeri 3 Krian focused on supportive communication and individualized coaching. These complementary approaches contributed to improving teachers' discipline, responsibility, integrity, and professional commitment.

Cross-site findings and conceptual model

The cross-site analysis revealed that both schools shared the same objective of strengthening teacher character through the four principal management functions: planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision. However, the two schools adopted different managerial approaches. SMP Negeri 1 Sidoarjo predominantly employed a structured, systematic, and data-driven management approach characterized by formal planning, clearly defined organizational structures, scheduled

implementation, and instrument-based supervision. In contrast, SMP Negeri 3 Krian emphasized a contextual, collaborative, and humanistic approach that relied on interpersonal communication, participatory decision-making, and supportive professional relationships.

Despite these contextual differences, both approaches produced similar outcomes in developing teacher character. Teachers in both schools demonstrated stronger discipline, responsibility, integrity, professionalism, collaboration, and commitment to continuous improvement. The findings suggest that successful teacher character development is determined not by a single leadership style but by the principal's ability to integrate effective managerial practices with positive interpersonal relationships that are responsive to the school's organizational culture.

Based on the synthesis of findings from both research sites, this study proposes a conceptual model of principal management in shaping teacher character. The model integrates four managerial functions planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision with two complementary leadership orientations: systematic management and humanistic leadership. Through this integration, principals function not only as managers responsible for organizational effectiveness but also as role models who cultivate professional values, ethical behavior, collaboration, and continuous character development among teachers. This conceptual model provides a comprehensive framework for strengthening teacher character while supporting sustainable school improvement.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that principal management plays a fundamental role in shaping teacher character through the integration of four managerial functions: planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision. Although the two schools adopted different management approaches, both successfully fostered teachers' professionalism, discipline, integrity, responsibility, collaboration, and commitment. These findings indicate that teacher character development is not merely the result of individual initiatives but is strongly influenced by systematic school management and effective educational leadership.

The comparison between the two research sites revealed complementary leadership characteristics. SMP Negeri 1 Sidoarjo emphasized a structured and data-driven management approach through formal planning, clear organizational systems, scheduled implementation, and systematic supervision. Conversely, SMP Negeri 3 Krian adopted a more contextual and humanistic approach by strengthening interpersonal communication, participatory decision-making, and continuous coaching. These findings suggest that effective principal management should balance administrative accountability with supportive leadership to create sustainable teacher character development.

The study also highlights the importance of exemplary leadership in shaping teacher character. Principals who consistently demonstrated discipline, integrity, professionalism, and responsibility encouraged teachers to internalize similar values through daily interaction and organizational culture. This finding indicates that teacher character is strengthened not only through formal regulations and supervision but also through the principal's role as a moral and professional role model.

Based on the cross-site analysis, this study proposes a conceptual model of principal management that integrates systematic managerial practices with humanistic

leadership. The model emphasizes that planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision should operate as interconnected processes supported by exemplary leadership, professional development, collaborative school culture, and continuous supervision. Such integration enables schools to develop teacher character while simultaneously improving organizational effectiveness and educational quality.

The findings also demonstrate that effective principal management contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). By strengthening teachers' professionalism, integrity, responsibility, collaboration, and commitment through systematic managerial practices and humanistic leadership, principals create a high-quality teaching workforce capable of delivering inclusive and effective learning experiences, which is central to SDG 4. Furthermore, continuous professional development, ethical leadership, and supportive school management enhance teachers' competencies and professional capacity, contributing to the development of a productive, resilient, and sustainable educational workforce in line with the objectives of SDG 8. These findings suggest that character-based principal management serves as a strategic approach for improving educational quality while fostering sustainable human resource development within the education sector.

Overall, this study contributes to educational management literature by positioning teacher character as a central outcome of principal management rather than merely a supporting aspect of teacher performance. Practically, the proposed model provides guidance for school principals in designing sustainable management strategies that strengthen teacher professionalism, positive school culture, and continuous school improvement.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding: This study demonstrates that principal management plays a pivotal role in shaping teachers' character through the integrated implementation of planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision. Although SMP Negeri 1 Sidoarjo and SMP Negeri 3 Krian adopted different leadership approaches, both schools successfully developed teachers' professionalism, discipline, integrity, responsibility, collaboration, and commitment. The findings further indicate that effective teacher character development depends not only on systematic managerial practices but also on principals' ability to adapt leadership strategies to the organizational culture, school context, and teachers' professional needs. **Implication:** The study contributes theoretically by proposing a conceptual model of principal management that integrates systematic managerial functions with humanistic leadership practices to strengthen teacher character development. Practically, the findings provide school leaders with a comprehensive framework for fostering professionalism, ethical behavior, collaboration, and continuous professional growth through exemplary leadership, supportive supervision, and collaborative school culture. Furthermore, the study supports the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) by strengthening educational quality through improved teacher professionalism and character development. It also contributes to Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG 8) by promoting professional integrity, responsibility, and continuous capacity development, which are essential for building a productive, competent, and sustainable educational workforce. **Limitation:** This study was conducted in only two public junior secondary schools in Sidoarjo Regency using a qualitative multi-site case study design. Therefore,

the findings may not fully represent principal management practices in other educational contexts, school levels, or regions. In addition, the study focused primarily on principals' managerial practices and teachers' character development without examining their long-term effects on student outcomes. **Future Research:** Future studies are recommended to examine the proposed principal management model across different educational settings, school types, and cultural contexts using larger samples and mixed-methods approaches. Longitudinal research is also needed to investigate the sustainability of teacher character development and its influence on instructional quality, student character formation, and overall school performance. Additionally, future research may explore how digital leadership, data-driven management, and professional learning communities can further strengthen teacher character development in support of sustainable educational improvement.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Al Hadi contributed to the conceptualization of the study, literature review, research design, methodology development, data collection, field investigation, formal analysis, data interpretation, visualization, preparation of the original manuscript draft, project administration, and final approval of the manuscript. **Prof. Dr. Dewie Tri Wijayati Wardoyo, M.Si.** contributed to the literature review, manuscript review and editing, critical revision of the manuscript, academic supervision, research guidance, validation of the research findings, and final manuscript approval. **Dr. Amrozi Khamidi, M.Pd.** contributed to the literature review, manuscript review and editing, critical revision of the manuscript, academic supervision, research guidance, validation of the research findings, and final manuscript approval.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The author declares that there are no financial, professional, or personal conflicts of interest that could have influenced the research process, interpretation of the findings, or the preparation of this manuscript.

STATEMENT ON THE USE OF AI OR DIGITAL TOOLS IN WRITING

The author acknowledges the use of AI-assisted writing tools, including ChatGPT (OpenAI), during the preparation of this manuscript. These tools were used solely to assist with language refinement, grammar correction, manuscript organization, and improvement of academic writing clarity. All research design, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of findings, and final conclusions were conducted independently by the author. All AI-assisted outputs were critically reviewed, verified, and revised to ensure the accuracy, originality, and academic integrity of the manuscript. The author takes full responsibility for the content and conclusions presented in this article.

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