



## Effective strategies for developing school organizational culture by junior high school principals

Nurul Aflah\*<sup>1</sup>, Nasir Usman<sup>2</sup>, Bahrun<sup>3</sup>, Murniati AR<sup>4</sup>, Raudhatul Hayati<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Syiah Kuala, Banda Aceh, Indonesia; [nuru124@mhs.usk.ac.id](mailto:nuru124@mhs.usk.ac.id)

<sup>2</sup>Universitas Syiah Kuala, Banda Aceh, Indonesia; [nasir@usk.ac.id](mailto:nasir@usk.ac.id)

<sup>3</sup>Universitas Syiah Kuala, Banda Aceh, Indonesia; [bahrun@usk.ac.id](mailto:bahrun@usk.ac.id)

<sup>4</sup>Universitas Syiah Kuala, Banda Aceh, Indonesia; [murniati@usk.ac.id](mailto:murniati@usk.ac.id)

<sup>5</sup>Universitas Syiah Kuala, Banda Aceh, Indonesia; [r\\_hayati@mhs.usk.ac.id](mailto:r_hayati@mhs.usk.ac.id)

\*Corresponding author: Nurul Aflah; E-mail addresses: [nuru124@mhs.usk.ac.id](mailto:nuru124@mhs.usk.ac.id)

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**Abstract.** School organizational culture has a strategic role in character development, work ethic, and the quality of education. However, many junior high schools still face challenges, including low discipline, limited teacher participation, and a weak culture of leadership and collaboration. This study aims to analyze and describe the strategies school principals use to develop an effective school organizational culture at the junior high school level. This study uses a descriptive qualitative design with a case study method at SMP Negeri 1 Teunom. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation of the principal, teachers, and educational staff, then analyzed through a process of reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. The results of the study show three main strategies: (1) strengthening religious and academic literacy culture to shape the religious and intellectual character of the school community; (2) exemplary behavior, communication, and responsibility; and (3) the application of collaborative, transformational, and managerial

leadership styles that encourage participation, innovation, and professionalism among teachers. These three strategies create an adaptive, disciplined, and quality-oriented organizational culture. This study contributes to strengthening educational leadership theory and provides practical recommendations for principals on creating a collaborative, character-building work environment.

## Introduction

School organizational culture is a fundamental factor that determines the direction, character, and quality of education. Schools play a role not only as a means of transmitting knowledge but also as a place for shaping moral values, character, and work ethic for all their members (Tiara Ramadhani et al., 2024). In the context of junior high school education, a strong organizational culture is the foundation for schools that develop character, adaptability, and a focus on quality. A healthy culture fosters a sense of belonging, increases educators' commitment, and creates harmony in the workplace. Conversely, a weak culture can lead to structural dysfunction and decreased motivation (Nurfajrina, 2025). Therefore, the development of organizational culture must be a leadership strategy based on vision, integrity, and innovation in the management of educational human resources. Principals hold a strategic position as agents of change, shaping an effective organizational culture. According to Hallinger et al. (2025), the effectiveness of school culture

depends on a leadership style that can balance instructional, managerial, and transformational dimensions. Principals are not only administrative managers but also mentors of values and role models for organizational behavior. Learning-based leadership and exemplary behavior are the driving forces behind a participatory and productive school culture. [Sherazi \(2025\)](#) adds that Continuous Professional Development (CPD) supports leadership effectiveness and strengthens teachers' work culture. Thus, innovative and reflective principals are key drivers of a progressive and competitive organizational culture ([Yasa et al., 2023](#)).

The development of 21st-century educational digitalization requires principals to adapt organizational cultural values to social, economic, and technological changes. [Zeng et al. \(2025\)](#) state that digital leadership plays an important role in building a collaborative and innovative organizational culture. Principals serve as facilitators who connect technology with learning practices. However, [Sabariah et al. \(2024\)](#) report that in Indonesia, challenges remain, including resistance to change, a lack of open communication, and a weak teacher reward system. This condition means that efforts to build a collaborative and adaptive work culture have not been fully effective. This is a fact on the ground and an obstacle to improving the quality of education. Therefore, inspirational leadership is needed to foster a spirit of innovation and positive values, enabling a quality-oriented work culture to grow sustainably. Leadership has also been proven to have a significant influence on organizational performance and effectiveness ([Djasda & Faeni, 2025](#)). Leaders act as guides, motivators, and moral drivers, helping organizational members work with discipline and a high sense of responsibility. Their research shows that leadership, motivation, and work discipline directly contribute to improving employee performance, especially in educational institutions under the Ministry of Education and Culture. With effective leadership, educational organizations can achieve harmony between individual goals and institutional vision, thereby improving institutional performance systematically and sustainably.

The development of organizational culture also needs to be rooted in religious, social, and local wisdom values as the moral basis of education. A culture of religious and academic literacy has been proven to shape the work ethic and character of school members ([Cita Suci Soleha et al., 2025](#); [Zarkasi et al., 2025](#); [Salsabila et al., 2025](#)). The integration of spiritual and academic values strengthens the school's identity and creates an inclusive learning environment. The principal serves as a role model and communicator, instilling values and directing organizational behavior toward a sustainable vision. With this approach, organizational culture is not only symbolic but also becomes a strategic instrument in shaping character and professionalism in education. This research is important for analyzing the principal's strategy in building an effective organizational culture at the junior high school level. This study highlights three key aspects of religious literacy culture, policy management, and exemplary behavior, which are the foundations for shaping a character-based organizational culture, which is a novelty in this study. These three aspects were examined separately in previous studies, so the integrated approach used in this study provides a new conceptual contribution to the study of educational organizational culture.

The principal strategy in modern educational leadership positions the principal as an agent of change who can integrate managerial, instructional, and emotional values into school management. The role of the principal is not only to serve as an administrator but also to lead learning and drive innovation, ensuring the creation of a dynamic, adaptive learning environment. According to [Yang et al. \(2025\)](#), technology-oriented principal leadership contributes significantly to building teacher capacity through continuous training, familiarization with the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and the formation of a digital-based collaborative culture. The literature highlights the need for systematic ICT training, the development of school-based digital transformation policies, and the creation of workplaces that support sustainable online collaboration ([Purnadewi & Widana, 2023](#)). This strategy emphasizes the importance of capacity

building and vision alignment, with each teacher development program directed to align the school's vision with the demands of 21st-century education. On the other hand, [Hallinger et al. \(2025\)](#) show that instructional leadership strategies have a major influence on teachers' attitudes and motivation, such as increased self-confidence, professional commitment, and job satisfaction. Through this approach, principals play an active role in carrying out academic supervision, professional coaching, and open communication with teachers to create a productive, innovative, and quality-oriented school organizational culture. The literature review also offers solutions, including structured supervision mechanisms, constructive feedback, and strengthened performance-based reward systems, to increase teacher motivation and exemplary behavior.

School leadership plays a central role in determining the direction, culture, and effectiveness of school organizations. Principals serve not only as administrators but also as instructional leaders, innovators, motivators, and facilitators in developing teacher competencies and creating adaptive, sustainable learning environments. In this context, school leadership is a determining factor in shaping a professional culture that supports educational quality. Research by [Hallinger et al. \(2025\)](#) shows that school principals' instructional leadership is significantly correlated with teachers' attitudes and behaviors, including trust, commitment, and job satisfaction. Principals who actively provide constructive feedback, open healthy communication channels, and conduct ongoing academic supervision have been shown to increase teacher motivation and the effectiveness of classroom learning. In line with these findings, [Sherazi \(2025\)](#) emphasizes that Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is an important strategy for strengthening school principals' leadership competencies, enabling them to manage organizational change, improve management quality, and foster a culture of lifelong learning in the school environment. Thus, the role of professional, reflective school principals is the foundation for creating a robust education system oriented to improving the quality of human resources.

Organizational culture is a system of values, beliefs, and norms shared by members of an organization to shape behavior, identity, and the strategic direction of the institution. In the context of education, organizational culture serves not only as a moral guide but also as an operational framework that influences how principals, teachers, and staff work and interact in achieving the school's vision and mission. A strong organizational culture is a key factor in creating consistency in behavior, team solidarity, and work effectiveness in an educational environment. [Torres \(2022\)](#) explains that school organizational culture has three main dimensions, namely structural, symbolic, and human, which are closely related to leadership practices and learning processes. Principals who can balance these three dimensions will succeed in building an adaptive, participatory, and performance-oriented work climate. In line with this, a study by [Tadesse Bogale & Debela \(2024\)](#) confirms that a strong organizational culture can improve institutional effectiveness through clarity of values, openness of communication, and strengthening of a sense of belonging among all members of the organization. Thus, organizational culture is not only a binding belief system, but also a social mechanism that unites individuals towards common goals and strengthens commitment to quality education.

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In addition, the success of developing a school's organizational culture is also greatly influenced by the active participation of the entire school community. According to the participatory management perspective, collaboration among teachers, educational staff, students, and parents can strengthen the implementation of organizational values and increase a shared sense of responsibility for the institution's success ([Harianto, 2024](#); [Khofifah et al., 2025](#)). Through open communication, clear role division, and recognition of each individual's contributions, a democratic, mutually respectful work climate is created. This collective participation not only accelerates adaptation to change but also deepens the internalization of sustainable organizational cultural values.

Therefore, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the principal's strategy in building an effective, adaptive, and sustainable organizational culture and answer the following research questions: (1) How do principal programs improve organizational culture in several junior high schools in Teunom District? (2) How are principal programs implemented to improve organizational culture in schools? (3) What factors support and hinder principals' efforts to improve organizational culture? The study focuses on three main aspects of religious literacy: culture, policy management, and exemplary behavior, as the basis for shaping the direction and character of a healthy organizational culture. By integrating these three aspects, this study is expected to strengthen a school culture that is not only effective but also responsive to change, thereby fostering a collaborative and conducive learning ecosystem for the entire school community. Through the synergy between leadership, organizational culture, and innovation, educational institutions can realize a superior, humanistic, and highly competitive learning system in the era of digital transformation.

## Method

### *Research Method and Approach*

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach because it aims to deeply understand the meanings, behaviors, and strategies used by school principals in developing an effective school organizational culture. This approach is considered most relevant because it allows researchers to explore social phenomena comprehensively through direct interaction with research subjects in the school environment. With this approach, researchers not only observe visible behaviors but also interpret the values, norms, and leadership practices that shape organizational culture. Through in-depth interpretation of the social context, researchers can understand how principals create a collaborative work environment oriented toward educational quality. Therefore, the descriptive qualitative approach was chosen to examine the relationship between leadership strategies and the holistic strengthening of school organizational culture, grounded in the real experiences of education practitioners.

### *Research Setting and Timeline*

This research was conducted over three months, starting with the initial observation stage, followed by data collection through in-depth interviews, and culminating in field analysis of the findings. The research location was set at SMP Negeri 1 Teunom, Aceh Jaya Regency, which was chosen because its characteristics aligned with the research's focus. This school is known for its dynamic

organizational culture, participatory principal leadership, and high involvement of the entire school community in creating a positive work atmosphere. In addition, SMP Negeri 1 Teunom has also shown consistency in applying the values of religious literacy, discipline, and togetherness. These conditions make this school a suitable research site that can provide a real picture of the implementation of leadership strategies in building an adaptive and characterful school organizational culture.

### ***Participants and Sampling Technique***

The research informants consisted of the principal and five teachers, selected through purposive sampling. The selection of informants was based on their ability to provide information relevant to the research needs.

### ***Data Collection and Analysis Techniques***

Data collection techniques used three main methods: direct observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, to obtain a complete understanding of the dynamics of organizational culture in schools. The data validity technique in this study applied source triangulation and method triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from the principal and teachers, while method triangulation was conducted by confirming findings through observation, interviews, and documents. In addition, member checking was conducted by reconfirming the interview results with informants to ensure the accuracy of meaning and interpretation. All collected data were then analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis model, which includes three important stages: data reduction, data display, and verification. The analysis was conducted continuously throughout the research process to identify patterns of interaction, meaning, and the principal's leadership strategies in strengthening an effective and sustainable organizational culture.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **The Implementation of Religious Literacy and Academic Literacy as the Foundation of School Organizational Culture**

The implementation of religious literacy and academic literacy culture is the main foundation for building a strong, characterful school organizational culture. This culture not only serves to improve the knowledge and intellectual skills of the school community, but also to shape moral, spiritual, and work ethic values in the educational environment. At SMPN 1 Teunom, the implementation of religious literacy culture is realized through routine activities such as reading the Qur'an and strengthening religious values integrated into daily school activities, thereby creating a learning atmosphere based on faith and noble character. Meanwhile, academic literacy practices, such as reading textbooks and writing, are important for fostering a spirit of learning, critical thinking, and creativity among students and teachers. These two forms of literacy work synergistically and continuously, shaping the mindset and behavior of the school community to reflect a productive, disciplined, and quality-oriented organizational culture.



**Image 1.** One Day One Ayat Activity in the Context of Religious Literacy



**Image 2.** English Literacy Activities in the Context of Academic Literacy  
Source: Researchers

**Table 1.** Interviews Data Finding

Informant	Statement	Description
Principal	"We encourage all school members to read the Qur'an every morning before learning begins. This activity has become a routine and part of building religious character at school."	Religious literacy culture is applied routinely to instill religious values and discipline.
Principal	"In addition to religious activities, we also implement a literacy culture of reading books and writing summaries every week."	Academic literacy is developed to increase interest in reading and writing.
Teacher 1	"Every morning, the students and I read the Qur'an together. The children become more orderly, and the school atmosphere is calmer."	Religious literacy strengthens spiritual well-being and a positive school atmosphere.
Teacher 2	"Morning literacy culture has become a habit. Children prefer going to the library and are accustomed to reading before lessons."	Academic literacy increases students' and teachers' enthusiasm for learning.
Teacher 3	"We teachers become role models in reading. Every week, we make book summaries and share them with students."	Teacher exemplarity strengthens academic literacy culture at school.
Teacher 4	"Besides reading, we have group discussions about reading content to train understanding and communication."	Literacy is expanded into a dialogic culture that trains students' critical thinking.

Based on interviews with the principal and teachers, it can be explained that the implementation of religious literacy and academic literacy has become the main foundation in building a character-based school culture at SMPN 1 Teunom. The principal emphasized that reading the Qur'an every morning before classes begin has become a mandatory routine for the entire school community. This habit is not merely a spiritual activity but also a means of shaping religious character, fostering discipline, and creating a calm learning atmosphere at school. Through these activities, religious values are increasingly instilled in students and teachers, strengthening relationships among school members and creating a harmonious, peaceful, and meaningful learning environment. This culture not only reinforces religious values but also shapes moral responsibility, which underpins positive behavior in daily life at school.

In addition to religious aspects, the principal also explained that academic literacy culture is developed through reading books and writing summaries every week. This program is designed to foster an interest in reading, broaden horizons, and instill critical and reflective thinking habits among teachers and students. Teachers reinforced these findings by stating that literacy activities have become a positive habit at school; students are now more enthusiastic about visiting the library and are accustomed to reading before class begins. This habit not only improves academic performance but also fosters curiosity and a strong motivation to learn. Thus, the synergistic application of religious literacy and academic literacy cultures shapes school members who are religious, intelligent, and have strong character, while also strengthening the foundation of a school organizational culture that is disciplined and oriented towards educational quality.

The implementation of religious literacy and academic literacy in secondary schools, such as SMP Negeri 1 Teunom, has proven to be an effective strategy in strengthening character, discipline, and school organizational culture. Religious literacy plays an important role in shaping students' spiritual and moral values, especially through routine activities such as reading the Qur'an, attending morning sermons, and instilling religious values in school life. These activities not only serve as worship but also as a means of character building and social control, strengthening cohesion among school members. These findings are in line with the results of research by [Cita Suci Soleha et al. \(2025\)](#), which confirms that technology-based learning in Islamic Religious Education can improve religious literacy while strengthening religious moral values among students. Furthermore, [Kholidin et al. \(2025\)](#) noted that consistent religious practices at school can foster a harmonious, disciplined, and community-oriented learning environment. Thus, religious literacy is not only a form of spiritual practice but also an effective instrument in building ethical behavior, social solidarity, and a religious and humanistic organizational culture ([Satiri et al., 2024](#)).

Apart from the religious aspect, strengthening academic literacy culture is also an important pillar for improving students' critical thinking, reflective abilities, and communication skills in schools. The implementation of regular reading and writing activities has been proven to encourage students to develop analytical thinking and broaden their academic horizons. A study by [Zarkasi et al. \(2025\)](#) shows that integrating academic literacy into the learning process can bridge the relationship between students' cognitive and affective aspects through reading, numeracy, and social interactions that support contextual learning. Meanwhile, research by [Mopangga et al. \(2025\)](#) confirms that teachers' active involvement in creating a supportive literacy environment, such as providing reading corners, establishing morning literacy habits, and offering creative writing training, significantly increases students' interest in reading and discipline. In line with this, [Monggun Maulidiya Siregar et al. \(2025\)](#) explain that an academic literacy culture in secondary schools positively influences students' learning achievements, self-confidence, and independence. Thus, the systematic and continuous integration of religious literacy and academic literacy serves as the main foundation for shaping a religious, intellectual, and character-building school organizational culture.

### **Building Morals, Character, And Organizational Values Through The Role Model of the Principal**

The formation of morals, character, and organizational values through the principal's exemplary behavior is a crucial aspect of creating an effective and sustainable school organizational culture. The principal acts as a central figure who not only performs managerial functions but also serves as a moral role model for the entire school community. The second finding highlights the principal's role modeling as a key strategy for instilling effective organizational cultural values. At SMPN 1 Teunom, the principal's role modeling is reflected in daily behaviors that emphasize discipline, responsibility, honesty, and openness to all parties. Through this example, the principal has succeeded in instilling organizational values such as cooperation, mutual respect, and

commitment to duty. This role modeling not only builds individual character but also strengthens the collective identity of the school community, creating a harmonious, productive, and dignified work environment. Thus, the formation of morals and character through the principal's role modeling provides an important basis for internalizing positive values that support the creation of an excellent school organizational culture.



**Image 3.** Greetings, When First Arriving at School in the Context of Character Building for Students

**Table 2.** Interview Data Finding

Informant	Statement	Findings
Principal	"As a principal, I try to set an example first. I arrive on time, am honest, open, and always invite teachers to work with heart."	The principal's exemplarity becomes the main instrument in instilling organizational culture values.
Principal	"I always try to build a family atmosphere so that teachers and staff are comfortable. If there are problems, we resolve them through deliberation."	Values of togetherness, mutual respect, and open communication grow through exemplarity.
Teacher 1	"The Principal is disciplined and firm but still warm. He sets an example, not just orders."	The principal's exemplarity fosters respect and work discipline.
Teacher 2	"He often gives appreciation when we successfully carry out activities well. That makes us feel valued and enthusiastic."	The principal's appreciation strengthens teachers' motivation and work spirit.
Teacher 3	"The principal always listens to our opinions before making decisions. That makes us feel involved."	The principal's open attitude cultivates trust and shared responsibility.
Teacher 4	"He also doesn't hesitate to help us during school activities. That makes us feel we have a leader who truly sets an example."	The principal's participatory leadership strengthens the solidarity and loyalty of school members.

Based on interviews with the principal and teachers, it can be explained that the development of morals, character, and organizational values at SMPN 1 Teunom is achieved through the principal's

direct example. The principal emphasizes that he always strives to be a role model for the entire school community by demonstrating discipline, honesty, openness, and responsibility in every activity. This exemplary behavior is not only a symbol of leadership but also a key instrument in instilling organizational cultural values rooted in integrity and professionalism. Through concrete actions such as arriving on time, working wholeheartedly, and demonstrating consistency, the principal can foster a positive work atmosphere and build trust among school members. These efforts have fostered values such as discipline, honesty, and responsibility among teachers and staff, thereby strengthening the moral character of the entire school community.

In addition, the principal also plays an important role in fostering values of togetherness and collective spirit through a familial approach and open communication. In every problem that arises, the principal prefers a deliberative approach to reach consensus, creating a sense of mutual respect and openness within the organization. This attitude not only fosters harmony but also strengthens the spirit of cooperation among teachers and staff. The teachers acknowledge that the principal's disciplined yet warm example makes them both respectful and motivated to work better. The principal's appreciation for the teachers' performance also strengthens their motivation and sense of belonging to the school. Thus, the principal's example serves as a moral and spiritual force that shapes the organization's values and character, forming the foundation of an excellent, ethical school culture.

The formation of morals, character, and organizational values through the principal's exemplary behavior is at the core of effective leadership in building a strong, characterful school organizational culture. Role modeling is not merely a moral strategy, but also a managerial tool that can internalize the values of discipline, responsibility, integrity, and professionalism in every aspect of school life. Principals who are able to set an example demonstrate consistency between words and actions, thereby creating moral legitimacy in the eyes of teachers and students. [Kholidin et al. \(2025\)](#) explain that character building in secondary schools will be more effective when principals practice moral values through concrete behaviors, such as discipline, honesty, and cooperation. In line with this, [Sumarsono et al. \(2025\)](#) emphasize that the principal's leadership significantly influences strengthening organizational culture and the effectiveness of school-based management. By demonstrating attitudes such as arriving on time, openness to criticism, and responsibility in decision-making, the principal not only becomes a symbol of a good work ethic but also a driving force in fostering a productive, participatory, and highly moral organizational culture.

Furthermore, the exemplary behavior of the principal contributes significantly to building togetherness, mutual respect, and harmonious communication among all school members. Principals who prioritize kinship and deliberation in problem-solving can create an inclusive work climate and strengthen a sense of belonging to the school organization. [Brata et al. \(2025\)](#) highlight that spiritual leadership rooted in Islamic values can foster polite, honest, and responsible character in students through habitual activities such as 3S (greetings, smiles, and greetings) and regular religious activities. Meanwhile, [Nikmah et al. \(2025\)](#) add that a transformational leadership model that emphasizes open communication, recognition of achievements, and moral support can increase loyalty, motivation, and positive organizational behavior among teachers. Therefore, the principal's exemplary behavior is not only a manifestation of personal ethics but also a strategic foundation that strengthens the educational institution's character ([Widana et al., 2023](#)). By creating synergy between spiritual values and professional work ethics, school principals can foster an organizational culture that is dignified, sustainable, and oriented toward holistic development of educational quality.

## Implementation of Collegial, Transformational, and Managerial Leadership Styles as Strategies for Strengthening Organizational Culture

The implementation of collegial, transformational, and managerial leadership styles is a key strategy in strengthening organizational culture in schools, particularly at SMPN 1 Teunom. The principal plays an important role as the main driver, integrating these three leadership styles in a balanced, context-specific manner to meet the organization's needs. Through collegiality, the principal fosters a sense of togetherness, participation, and active involvement of teachers and staff in every decision-making process, thereby creating a democratic and inclusive work atmosphere. Meanwhile, the transformational style is demonstrated through the principal's ability to inspire, motivate, and foster a spirit of innovation within the school community, enabling it to continue to develop. On the other hand, the managerial style is applied through resource management, strategic planning, and effective supervision to maintain organizational stability and performance. The synergy of these three leadership styles is an important foundation for an adaptive, professional, and quality-oriented organizational culture.



**Image 4.** Regular Meetings in the Context of School Leadership

**Table 3.** Interview Data Finding

Informant	Statement	Main Findings
Principal	"I always involve teachers in meetings and decision-making. Everyone has the right to speak, because this school belongs to all of us."	Collegial leadership is implemented through teachers' active participation in school decision-making.
Principal	"I encourage teachers to be creative. We often hold training, workshops, and share experiences so that teachers can develop."	The transformational leadership style is applied to motivate teachers to innovate and develop themselves.
Teacher 1	"Every school program is always discussed together. We are given the opportunity to provide input and ideas, so we feel we own this school."	Participatory leadership strengthens teachers' sense of ownership and responsibility toward the school.
Teacher 2	"The principal often provides guidance and feedback after supervision. We feel directed but also supported to advance."	Managerial leadership helps improve teacher professionalism and the effectiveness of organizational culture.
Teacher 3	"We are encouraged to dare to try new things in learning. The principal always supports innovations that benefit students."	Transformational leadership fosters creativity and innovation in teaching practices.

Informant	Statement	Main Findings
Teacher 4	"The principal is open to receiving criticism and suggestions from teachers. That makes us feel valued and brave to express opinions."	Democratic leadership fosters an open, collaborative work environment.

Based on interviews with the principal and teachers, the implementation of collegial, transformational, and managerial leadership styles has been an effective strategy for strengthening the organizational culture at SMPN 1 Teunom. The principal demonstrated collegial leadership by actively involving all teachers in every meeting and in important decision-making processes. This principle of openness and participation creates a democratic work atmosphere and fosters a sense of belonging to the school among teachers and staff. This collegial approach also strengthens collaboration among school members, where each individual feels a shared responsibility for the school's progress. The principal not only acts as a leader but also as a colleague who provides space for every opinion, idea, and innovation. Thus, this participatory leadership pattern has succeeded in building harmonious relationships and increasing solidarity, both of which are main characteristics of a healthy and dynamic organizational culture.

In addition, the principal applies both transformational and managerial leadership styles simultaneously to encourage improvements in teacher professionalism and the effectiveness of the school's work system. Through a transformational style, the principal provides motivation, inspiration, and encouragement for teachers to continue innovating, including through training, workshops, and educator-exchange activities. This fosters a spirit of creativity among teachers and encourages them to develop their competencies in line with the times. Meanwhile, through a managerial style, the principal demonstrates the ability to direct, control, and provide constructive feedback after supervisory activities. Teachers feel that they are not only being supervised but also guided to grow and improve the quality of learning. The combination of these three leadership styles strengthens an organizational culture that is professional, adaptive, and oriented towards continuous improvement in the quality of education.

The implementation of collegial, transformational, and managerial leadership styles by the principal at SMP Negeri 1 Teunom reflects an adaptive, participatory leadership style oriented towards strengthening a progressive school organizational culture. Through a collegial approach, the principal seeks to foster active participation, openness, and collaboration among teachers and educational staff in every decision-making process. This approach fosters a sense of shared ownership of the school's vision and mission, as every member of the school community feels directly involved in shaping the institution's policies. Research by [Sumarsono et al. \(2025\)](#) shows that the principal's leadership plays an important role in strengthening organizational culture through collaboration and teacher involvement in school-based management. This aligns with the findings of [Sutapa et al. \(2025\)](#), which confirm that leadership that prioritizes participation and open communication has a significant impact on performance, loyalty, and mutual trust among employees. Thus, a collegial leadership style not only serves as a participatory mechanism but also strengthens solidarity, collective responsibility, and work efficiency. The consistent application of this leadership style is the main pillar for the formation of an inclusive, democratic, and productive school organizational culture in achieving sustainable educational goals.

In addition to the collegial approach, the principal of SMP Negeri 1 Teunom also applies transformational and managerial leadership styles as strategies to strengthen professionalism, innovation, and the effectiveness of the school's work system. Transformational leadership is manifested through the principal's ability to inspire, motivate, and set an example for teachers to adapt to change and develop creativity in the learning process. [Ramli et al. \(2025\)](#) found that

transformational leadership significantly influences sustainable organizational behavior by fostering a spirit of innovation, responsibility, and a positive orientation towards change. On the other hand, the application of managerial style is evident in the principal's ability to systematically plan, organize, direct, and evaluate school programs, including through academic supervision and strategic planning. [Sutapa et al. \(2025\)](#) explain that leadership that integrates managerial aspects and effective learning can build a technology-based, innovative culture in the educational environment. In addition, [Nurhamdi et al. \(2025\)](#) emphasize that the combination of transformational leadership and a positive organizational culture directly improves the quality of public services and organizational work effectiveness. Therefore, the combination of collegial, transformational, and managerial leadership styles becomes a strong foundation for creating a professional, adaptive, and quality-oriented school organization. This combination not only increases teacher motivation but also creates a learning environment that supports collaboration and innovation, both of which are essential to improving educational quality ([Yuni et al., 2024](#)). Thus, it is important for schools to implement diverse leadership approaches to achieve more effective and relevant educational goals

## Conclusion

This study presents three mutually reinforcing findings regarding the formation of a superior, competitive school organizational culture. *First*, integrating religious literacy culture with academic literacy has been proven to lay the foundation for the development of religious character, intellectual capacity, and collective discipline in the school environment. This integration is realized through the habit of reading the Qur'an, morning literacy, and academic reflection, all systematically designed so that spiritual values are intertwined with critical thinking skills. *Second*, morals, character, and organizational values are effectively built through the principal's exemplary role as a moral and professional role model, strengthening ethical collaboration. *Third*, the integrated application of collegial, transformational, and managerial leadership styles improves teacher professionalism, spurs innovation, and strengthens the effectiveness of organizational culture. This research provides both theoretical and practical contributions to the development of educational management and school leadership in Indonesia. *Theoretically*, the findings enrich the literature on the relationship between literacy, role models, and leadership style in building an effective and sustainable educational organizational culture. The integrative approach of religious and academic literacy, exemplary leadership, and participatory management demonstrates that cultural success depends not only on structure but also on the internalization of moral, spiritual, and collaborative values that leaders transform into work practices. *In practice*, these results serve as a reference for principals to develop leadership models that balance spiritual, transformational, and managerial dimensions to create a learning ecosystem characterized by character, adaptability, and a sustainable quality orientation. Implementation can include teacher mentoring programs, professional learning communities, and transparent and reflective performance evaluation mechanisms. The limitations of this research lie in its focus on a single school context, namely SMP Negeri 1 Teunom, thus limiting generalization to all secondary schools with diverse characteristics. Furthermore, the dominance of qualitative-descriptive approaches prevents quantitative testing of relationships among variables such as leadership effectiveness, organizational culture, and school performance. Therefore, further studies need to expand the scope across levels and social backgrounds, using mixed methods to yield more comprehensive and valid findings. Future development directions should also examine the roles of educational technology and digital leadership as mediating variables in strengthening organizational culture in the era of digital transformation. A focus on data literacy, change management, information security, and the ethical use of AI will enrich the design of school policy interventions.

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