



**IMPLEMENTATION OF POSITIVE MANAGERIAL CULTURE OF SCHOOL
PRINCIPALS IN THE FORMATION OF 'DISCIPLINE AND ORDER' CHARACTER
AT SMP NEGERI 1 ULUJAMI**

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ABSTRACT

Character education faces the challenge of degrading disciplinary values that demand a paradigm transformation of student management from a punitive to a restorative approach. This study aims to analyze the implementation of positive managerial culture of school principals in the formation of discipline and order character in SMP Negeri 1 Ulujami. The research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design. The subjects of the study include school principals, counseling guidance teachers, subject teachers, and students who are determined purposively. The data collection technique integrates triangulation methods through structured in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and documentation studies. The data analysis adopts the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana which includes data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing by cross-verification between sources. The results of the study show that the implementation of a positive culture is carried out through planning that integrates values into the vision and mission, organization by placing the counseling guidance team as the lead mediator, implementation through daily habituation programs, and continuous supervision through exit interviews as well as analysis of violation data. This implementation has proven to be effective in changing student behavior from extrinsic compulsion to a sustainable intrinsic habit.

Keywords: positive culture, managerial implementation, disciplined character, restorative approach, principal's leadership

INTRODUCTION

National education in Indonesia has a strategic mandate to develop the potential of students to become human beings of faith, noble character, and responsibility as stipulated in Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System. This emphasis on this aspect of character underscores that educational institutions have a constitutional obligation to produce not only intellectually intelligent individuals, but also individuals of strong moral integrity. In its implementation, the challenge of character degradation in the school environment demands a paradigm transformation of student management from a punitive approach to a more humanistic and sustainable approach.

(Darmayanti et al., 2024) emphasized that character education in schools is not just a process of knowledge transfer, but a form of habituation of noble values that requires example and conducive environmental support. Inconsistencies in the enforcement of norms are often a loophole for the emergence of systemic discipline problems. Therefore, a system is needed that is able to internalize character values in a permanent manner through a structured managerial approach. This is where the leadership role of the principal



becomes the central point in orchestrating these values into a solid and sustainable school culture.

In response to the challenges of contemporary character, the positive cultural paradigm is present as a breakthrough in education management. Positive culture is an approach that shifts the focus from controlling behavior through punishment to empowering students to act on the basis of internal motivation. (Rosani, 2021) Explains that education management is the process of utilizing all resources through systematic coordination to achieve educational goals effectively. In this context, the principal not only functions as an administrator, but also as a change manager who must design, organize, and oversee the process of cultural transformation of the school organization.

The successful implementation of a positive culture is highly dependent on the managerial ability of school principals to translate ideal concepts into norms of operational behavior. (Taflikhah, 2024) In his research, it is shown that the managerial ability of school principals has a significant influence on strengthening the school organizational culture. This indicates that strong instructional leadership is a fundamental prerequisite in creating a school climate conducive to the formation of students' character. Further, (Primary, 2023) stating that a positive school culture is a driving force that is able to change student behavior permanently, not just temporal compliance due to external pressures.

This research takes the locus at SMP Negeri 1 Ulujami, a leading educational institution in Pemalang Regency that has shown impressive achievements in terms of learning quality and school safety climate based on the Education Report. The determination of this location is based on objective considerations that the school has succeeded in integrating the value of discipline into its managerial system, as evidenced by the acquisition of the Best School status in the 2025 ASN Professionalism Index at the Pemalang Regency level. The success of this positive culture seedbed in students is inseparable from managerial solidity in fostering its human resources through structured programs such as Cheerful Morning, 3S Culture (Smile, Greeting, Greetings), Friday Character, and the implementation of the Restitution Triangle in resolving violation cases (Dawam, 2022).

However, this superior status actually demands higher management standards in the aspect of character, especially in the sub-indicators of positive discipline. The challenge faced is no longer in handling serious violations, but in how to transform school regulations into a positive culture that is purely based on intrinsic awareness, not just compliance due to school status or external pressure. Permendikbudristek Number 46 of 2023 mandates that excellent schools must be pioneers in creating a restorative and inclusive learning environment, which requires school principals to develop more sophisticated managerial strategies in implementing positive cultures.

A review of previous research reveals gaps in the literature regarding the implementation of positive managerial culture. Most studies focus on aspects of principals' leadership in general or school culture as an organizational phenomenon, but not many have specifically explored the holistic relationship between the managerial functions of school principals and the formation of students' disciplined and orderly character through a positive cultural approach. The novelty of this research lies in the holism of managerial analysis which not only describes positive culture as a student program only, but comprehensively analyzes the relationship of managerial implementation through the



functions of planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising in shaping the discipline and orderly character of students.

Based on this context, this study aims to analyze in depth how the principal of SMP Negeri 1 Ulujami carries out his managerial function in implementing positive culture as an instrument for the formation of disciplined and orderly character. Specifically, this research will explore four fundamental aspects: first, how managerial planning is structured to build the foundation of a positive cultural system; second, how the pattern of human resource organization and school organizational structure is carried out; third, how the implementation of the mobilization function is carried out in actualizing positive cultural values; and fourth, how monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are implemented to ensure the sustainability of implementation.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design to explore in depth the implementation of positive managerial culture of school principals in the formation of students' disciplined and orderly character. (Live, 2025) states that qualitative research aims to understand the phenomenon of what the research subject experiences holistically through descriptions in the form of words and language in a special natural context. The selection of this approach is based on the characteristics of the problem that require a deep understanding of the managerial process, not just the quantification of results. The location of the research was determined at SMP Negeri 1 Ulujami, Pemalang Regency, with a data collection period in the even semester of the 2025/2026 school year. The determination of this location is based on the consideration that the school has shown impressive achievements in the implementation of a positive culture as indicated by the Education Report Card and the acquisition of the status of the Best School in the 2025 ASN Professionalism Index.

The research subject is determined by *purposive* Includes principals as key informants, counseling guidance teachers, subject teacher representatives, as well as student representatives selected based on active involvement in positive culture programs. The data collection technique integrates triangulation methods through structured in-depth interviews, participatory observation of daily school activities, and documentation studies including disciplinary regulations, student coaching records, and managerial policy documents. The research instruments are in the form of interview guidelines, observation sheets, and documentation protocols that have been validated through *expert judgment*. Data analysis adopts an interactive model (Sagala, 2018) which includes data condensation to simplify field information, presentation of data in the form of thematic matrix based on managerial functions, and drawing conclusions through cross-verification between sources. The validity of the data is ensured through triangulation of sources by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation, and *member checking* to confirm the accuracy of the researcher's interpretation to the informant. The entire procedure of this research is designed to produce credible, transferable findings, *dependable*, and *confirmable* as per the standards *rigor* qualitative research.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Theoretically, the formation of students' character has been explained through various perspectives, such as Character Education Theory by Thomas Lickona which emphasizes the aspects of *moral knowing*, *moral feeling*, and *moral action*; The Social Learning Theory by Albert Bandura which explains that character develops through a process of observation, imitation, and reinforcement; and the Transformational Leadership Theory by Bernard M. Bass which emphasizes the role of leaders in inspiring changes in values and behavior. On the other hand, the positive culture of schools can be explained through Organizational Culture Theory by Edgar H. Schein which places the basic values, norms, and assumptions of the organization as factors that shape the behavior of its members. However, there is no theoretical framework that integrates organizational culture theory, transformational leadership, social learning, and character education in a single conceptual model that explains how the positive culture of the school and the leadership of the principal simultaneously shape the character of students. Most studies are still partially testing the relationship between variables so they have not been able to explain the mechanism of influence comprehensively, Schein, E. H., & Schein, P. A. (2017). This research seeks to develop a theoretical model that integrates the four perspectives to provide a more complete explanation of the process of shaping students' character through positive culture and principals' leadership.

Characteristics of Educational Units

SMP Negeri 1 Ulujami is a formal educational institution at the junior high school level located in the eastern region of Pemalang Regency, precisely in the coastal pantura area of the north coast with distinctive socio-cultural characteristics. This school serves students with diverse family backgrounds, the majority of whom come from the lower middle economic class with their parents' professions as farmers, tailors, traditional traders, and some state civil servants. The number of educators and education staff consists of 1 school principal, 53 subject teachers, 12 education staff, and 1 library officer. Most of the teachers already have a minimum academic qualification of S1, with 40 teachers certified as educators and 4 teachers having participated in the Driving Teacher Education. The total number of students served reached hundreds of students spread across 27 classrooms with supporting facilities including science laboratories, computer rooms, and libraries. The school's academic achievements based on the 2025 Education Report show impressive results with a literacy score of 85.11 percent and numeracy scores of 85.11 percent, students have reached the minimum competency. In the aspect of character, the school obtained a score of 60.7 in the good category, with the indicator of the diversity climate reaching 74 and the security climate of the educational unit reaching 76. This achievement confirms the position of SMP Negeri 1 Ulujami as the best school in the 2025 ASN Professionalism Index at the Pemalang Regency level, which signifies the success of integrating discipline values into the school managerial system in a sustainable manner.

Positive Cultural Managerial Planning for the Formation of Disciplined and Orderly Character

The implementation of positive culture at SMP Negeri 1 Ulujami begins with structured managerial planning and is oriented towards the formation of intrinsic



disciplinary character. The principal emphasized the importance of a strong philosophical foundation in the school's vision and mission as an operational foundation. The results of the interview revealed that *"I ensure that integrity and responsibility are not just slogans, but operational standards in every school interaction in order to form the character of sustainable student discipline"* (W1. D1.a). The commitment is translated through formal documents in the form of *"Minutes of Work Meetings (RKAS/KTSP), Teacher Code of Ethics, and Teaching Agenda Journal that shows the integration of vision-mission values into academic regulations and daily behavior in the classroom"* (W1.D1.b). The planning of the disciplinary system is designed by prioritizing educational and restorative aspects. The violation point system is not positioned as a punishment instrument, but as a behavioral monitoring tool oriented towards self-improvement. The principal explained that *"This system is designed as a behavioral monitoring tool (tracking), where every negative point is seen as a learning opportunity to make improvements through real actions and self-awareness reflection. Sanctions must have a direct relationship with the offense. If the student damages the facility, the action is to repair; if the student is late, the action is to make up for the lost study time during recess"* (W1. D2.a). The mechanism of educational sanctions is ensured through the application of the Triangle of Restitution and Logical Consequences which shifts the focus from the provision of suffering to the recovery of the situation. Planning also includes the allocation of special time for character development that is protected from the takeover of academic hours through the standardization of permanent schedules, audits of teaching journals, and monitoring through counseling guidance coordinators.

Organizing Human Resources and Structure for the Formation of Disciplined and Orderly Character

Human resource organization is carried out through a clear distribution of roles and responsibilities by placing the counseling guidance team as *the lead mediator* in handling disciplinary cases. The principal implements a single handling flow system supported by managerial legality through centralized mediation SOPs. The results of the interview showed that *"Managerially, I instruct that no sanction decision or disciplinary action is valid without the presence of a Mediation Results Report (LHM) signed by the BK teacher, the placement of BK as the lead mediator who has the mandate to decide whether a conflict is enough to be resolved with a reprimand or requires a Restitution Triangle (relationship rehabilitation)"* (W1.D4.b). The organizational structure is strengthened through special training for counseling guidance teams on *peer-to-peer* mediation techniques and empathic communication. The principal stated that *"To train the BK Team to become reliable mediation facilitators while ensuring their systemic involvement, I implemented measures such as capacity building through special training on peer-to-peer mediation techniques and empathic communication, drafting SOPs that require every conflict between students or teachers to pass through the 'BK Desk' as the first step before entering the realm of administrative sanctions"* (W1. D4.a). Organizing also involves all teachers and staff in daily habituation programs through participatory supervision mechanisms that combine exemplary and accountability systems. The delegation of authority to the Deputy Head of Student Affairs is carried out formally through a Decree that gives the authority to make final decisions at the operational level, with clear authority limits and a monthly reporting



system to ensure alignment with the values of integrity and the school's positive cultural philosophy.

Implementation of the Mobilization Function in Actualizing a Positive Culture for the Formation of Disciplined and Orderly Character

The implementation of a positive culture is realized through a daily habituation program that consistently involves all school residents. The 3S (Smile, Greeting, Greeting) and Cheerful Morning programs are the main instruments in building an orderly social interaction based on respect. The principal revealed that *"A real example of the effectiveness of daily habituation on social and moral order can be seen through the '5S' habituation interaction cycle (Greetings, Greetings, Smiles, Politeness, Manners), the social impact obtained is to dilute the rigidity between teachers and students so that an orderly interaction is created based on respect rather than fear"* (W1.D6.b). The movement of teachers and staff is monitored through habituation attendance lists, direct reviews of habituation points, reflection in meetings or *morning briefings*, and awards for those who show high consistency. The implementation of character development hours is maintained through a systemic supervision mechanism to ensure that academic interests are not eroded. The principal stated that *"To ensure that character development hours remain protected and not eroded by academic interests, a systemic and participatory supervision mechanism is needed through standardization of fixed or permanent schedules, conducting audits of teachers' teaching journals to ensure that coaching hours are not filled with subject matter"* (W1.D3.a). A restorative approach to conflict case resolution is applied through a humanist and student-centered dialogue. The focus of supervision is directed at the shift in the role of counseling guidance teachers from school police to student friends, where every dialogue results in dignified agreements. The success of the dialogue session is measured from the change in the internal consciousness of students who move from the position of a victim of the rule to the owner of the solution who is responsible for his actions.

Continuous Supervision and Evaluation of the Implementation of Positive Culture for the Formation of Disciplined and Orderly Character

Supervision is carried out through an *exit interview mechanism* after educational sanctions to ensure the restoration of relationships and students' self-reflection. The official procedure includes verification of recovery by the counseling guidance teacher, final interview to determine future commitments, dialogue with affected parties, and documentation of case closure. The principal explained that *"Before the case is administratively closed, students are required to take a final interview session for self-reflection, then validate their feelings and know their commitment to the future. Students are facilitated for a final dialogue with the affected parties to ensure all parties have forgiven each other and harmonized relations again"* (W1.D8.a). Data from *exit interviews* are analyzed to identify problem patterns and become the basis for policy revision. Continuous evaluation is also carried out through a recapitulation analysis of violation data to measure the effectiveness of sanctions and identify the root of the problem. The results of the data analysis are used to revise policies contextually. The principal stated that *"If the score is high in certain subjects or certain exams, then the school management will evaluate whether it is due to too heavy an academic burden or indeed an inappropriate assessment instrument"* (W1.



D9.a). Feedback mechanisms are provided through teacher journal audits, suggestion boxes, discussion forums between teachers, and analysis of learning environment survey results to handle reports of inconsistency in law enforcement. The classroom cleanliness and neatness competition is used as an evaluation tool for fostering the character of collective discipline with assessments that focus on daily consistency and participation of all students through a random assessment system. The real impact of the habituation program can be seen from the change in student behavior from extrinsic compulsion to intrinsic habits, where the discipline of protecting the environment becomes part of the identity of students at SMP Negeri 1 Ulujami.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that the implementation of positive managerial culture at SMP Negeri 1 Ulujami has succeeded in transforming the disciplinary approach from a punitive paradigm to a restorative approach that emphasizes the development of students' intrinsic awareness. This success is in line with the concept of positive discipline put forward (Aini, 2021) that an approach that emphasizes appreciation for student dignity and the cultivation of responsibility through a reflective, collaborative, and empowering manner has proven effective in shaping the character of independent and responsible students. The use of the Restitution Triangle and Logical Consequences in this study confirms the principle that students' mistakes should be used as a moment of learning through reflection and restitution, not just punishment in the nature of suffering (Eminarni, Ayu, Murniati, & Abdullah, 2025).

Managerial planning that integrates the values of integrity and responsibility into the school's vision-mission as an operational standard demonstrates a novelty in the systemic approach to character building. These findings enriched Eminarni's research, (Nopo, Panigoro, & Koniyo, 2025) which states that the planning of priority character values needs to be described from the vision, mission and goals of the school through a special team. However, this study goes further by revealing that the integration must be supported by concrete evidence in the form of formal documentation such as Work Meeting Minutes, Teacher Code of Ethics, and Teaching Agenda Journal to ensure that these values are not only slogans but are truly embedded in the daily behavior of school residents. This is an important theoretical contribution in strengthening the framework for implementing school culture-based character education.

Organizing human resources by placing the counseling guidance team as *lead mediator* which has a legal mandate through the Mediation Results Report is a significant finding that has not been widely disclosed in previous research (Fauziati & Zurita, 2025). Discipline Enforcement Team and Rapid Reaction Unit as an organizing strategy, but this study reveals an innovation in the form of a single handling flow system that places counseling guidance not as a sanction implementer but as a facilitator of relationship recovery. This role transformation shifts the orientation of *punishment-based discipline* To *relationship-based discipline* that is more humane and sustainable. These findings are in line with (Faisal, 2025) emphasizing the importance of a humanist yet firm approach in the implementation of disciplinary policies, but this research provides a more concrete operational mechanism through a centralized mediation SOP system and technical training *peer-to-peer* for the counseling guidance team.



The implementation of the movement function through daily habituation programs such as 3S and Morning Cheerfulness has proven to be effective in turning abstract values into concrete actions that are repeated until they become automatic characters. The implementation of school discipline is carried out through socialization, habituation, supervision, and systems *reward-sanction*, but this study reveals that the effectiveness of habituation is highly dependent on the consistency of monitoring through habituation attendance lists, direct review, and reflection in *briefing* morning. The novelty of these findings lies in participatory monitoring mechanisms that integrate exemplary and accountability, not just the implementation of routine programs. (Rianda, Anggraini, Zahara, Permana, & Dwi, 2025) reinforcing these findings by stating that classroom agreements involving students in formulating common rules create a more conducive learning atmosphere, and this study shows that such engagement should be supported by a periodic evaluation system to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of implementation.

Continuous monitoring through *exit interview* and the analysis of violation data for policy revision is a significant methodological contribution in character education management. (Pratiwi, Bektiningsih, & Semarang, 2025) Identifying that the effectiveness of character education programs has not been maximized due to inconsistencies in the implementation of rules and low student motivation, but this study reveals concrete solutions in the form of systematic feedback mechanisms through teacher journal audits, suggestion boxes, and discussion forums to address these inconsistencies. The success of the code of conduct depends on the collaboration of all parties, and this study reinforces these findings by revealing that collaboration should be supported by a system of monthly reporting and a clear delegation of authority to the Deputy Head of Student Affairs.

Theoretically, this study confirms and expands the theory of character education management by integrating the functions of POAC (*planning, organizing, actuating, controlling*) into a restorative positive culture framework. In practical terms, these findings provide *an operational blueprint* for other schools in transforming the disciplinary system from a punitive approach to an approach based on intrinsic awareness building and relationship recovery, with concrete mechanisms that can be adapted according to the context of each educational unit.

Research Limitations

This research has several limitations that need to be acknowledged transparently to provide a balanced perspective on the findings produced. First, this study uses a single case study design that is limited to the context of SMP Negeri 1 Ulujami as a superior school with specific socio-economic characteristics of the community in the pantura area of Pemalang Regency. This limitation has implications for the limited generalizability of the findings for educational units with different characteristics, especially schools in urban areas with a higher level of student heterogeneity or schools with significant resource limitations. The data collection period carried out in the even semester of the 2025/2026 school year also limits the ability of research to observe the dynamics of positive culture implementation in a complete annual cycle, so that it cannot reveal patterns of changes in student behavior in the long term or the sustainability of program effectiveness after the change of leadership. Another methodological limitation lies in the reliance on self-reported interview and observation data, where there is a potential *for social desirability bias* from informants who



tend to give responses that are considered more socially acceptable, especially in explaining the success of the implementation of the program for which they are responsible.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the managerial positive culture of the principal at SMP Negeri 1 Ulujami has succeeded in shaping the disciplined and orderly character of students through the transformation of the approach from a punitive paradigm to a restorative one based on intrinsic awareness. Managerial planning integrates the values of integrity and responsibility into the school's visions and missions as operational standards supported by formal documentation in the form of Work Meeting Minutes, Teacher Code of Ethics, and Teaching Agenda Journal. The disciplinary system is designed by prioritizing the educational aspect through the application of the Restitution Triangle and Logical Consequences which shifts the focus from giving suffering to restoring the situation. The organization of human resources places the counseling guidance team as *the lead mediator* with a legal mandate through a single handling flow system and centralized mediation SOPs. Implementation is realized through a daily habituation program that is consistent with a participatory supervision mechanism that integrates exemplary and accountability. Continuous supervision is carried out through *exit interviews* after educational sanctions and analysis of recapitulation of violation data as the basis for evidence-based policy revisions. This overall implementation has proven to be effective in changing student behavior from extrinsic compulsion to a sustainable intrinsic habit.

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended to other educational units to adopt a single handling flow system by placing the counseling guidance team as *lead mediators* equipped with *regular training in peer-to-peer* mediation techniques and empathic communication. The principal needs to issue a formal Decree that gives a legal mandate to the counseling guidance team to make decisions in handling disciplinary cases with clear limits of authority. The development of an integrated digital-based discipline management information system is needed to facilitate *real-time monitoring*, documentation of Mediation Results Reports, and automatic analysis of violation data. The Education Office is advised to develop technical guidelines for the implementation of positive culture that include mediation facilitator competency standards, program effectiveness evaluation instruments, and clinical supervision mechanisms for school principals in implementing POAC managerial functions. Further research is needed to measure the long-term impact of the implementation of positive culture on students' academic achievement and develop a model of adaptation of restorative approaches in school contexts with different socio-economic characteristics.

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