

Transformational Leadership of School Principals in Strengthening Students' Disciplinary Character

¹Nur Baity Wahidatun, ²Widya Kusumaningsih, ³Harjito

Universitas Persatuan Guru Republik Indonesia Semarang, Indonesia

e-mail: wahidatunnurbait@gmail.com

Abstract: *This study examines the transformational leadership of the principal in strengthening students' disciplinary character at SD Juara Kota Semarang, including the strategies and factors affecting its implementation. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed, with data collected through in-depth interviews, passive participatory observation, and document analysis involving the principal, vice principal, teachers, students, and parents. Data were analyzed through reduction, display, and conclusion drawing, with credibility established through source and method triangulation. The findings indicate that transformational leadership was manifested through idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. These dimensions were implemented through six strategies: role modeling, habituation, reinforcement of school regulations, motivation and rewards, supervision and guidance, and parental collaboration. Implementation was supported by leadership capacity, teacher commitment, and school culture, while differences in family and community engagement, student conditions, and the learning environment posed challenges. The study concludes that disciplinary character develops through exemplary leadership, habituation, value internalization, and the formation of a shared school culture.*

Keywords: *disciplinary character; elementary school; school culture; school principal; transformational leadership.*

Abstrak: *Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis kepemimpinan transformasional kepala sekolah dalam memperkuat karakter disiplin siswa di SD Juara Kota Semarang, termasuk strategi serta faktor yang memengaruhi pelaksanaannya. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif pasif, dan analisis dokumentasi dengan melibatkan kepala sekolah, wakil kepala sekolah bidang kurikulum, guru, siswa, dan orang tua sebagai informan. Data dianalisis melalui reduksi data, penyajian data, serta penarikan dan verifikasi kesimpulan, dengan keabsahan data melalui triangulasi sumber dan metode. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan transformasional diwujudkan melalui empat dimensi, yaitu idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, dan individualized consideration. Dimensi tersebut diterapkan melalui enam strategi, yaitu keteladanan, pembiasaan, penguatan tata tertib sekolah, motivasi dan penghargaan, pengawasan dan bimbingan, serta kolaborasi dengan orang tua. Pelaksanaan didukung oleh kapasitas kepemimpinan, komitmen guru, dan budaya sekolah, sedangkan keterlibatan keluarga dan masyarakat serta kondisi siswa dan lingkungan belajar menjadi faktor penghambat. Temuan menegaskan bahwa karakter disiplin terbentuk melalui keteladanan, pembiasaan, internalisasi nilai, dan budaya sekolah bersama.*

Kata kunci: *karakter disiplin; kepemimpinan transformasional; kepala sekolah; sekolah dasar; budaya sekolah.*

Introduction

Education plays a strategic role in developing human resources with academic competence and strong character. At the elementary level, character education is particularly important because students' values, habits, and behaviors are formed during this stage. Character education should therefore be systematically internalized through habituation, value integration, exemplary behavior, contextual learning, and collaboration among educational environments (Hidayat et al., 2021; Hafina et al., 2022; Hidayat et al., 2022; Lestari & Tirtoni, 2021). Discipline is a fundamental character trait that involves not only compliance with school rules but also self-regulation, responsibility, respect for time, and consistency in fulfilling obligations. School policies, routine activities, environmental conditioning, and exemplary behavior can support disciplinary character development (Sudaryono & Aryani, 2021; Marthasari & Kurniawan, 2022). Teachers also play an important role in habituating discipline, while consistent habituation strengthens students' disciplinary behavior (Antika & Supriyadi, 2022; Wulandari et al., 2023).

Disciplinary character cannot be strengthened through classroom instruction alone but requires a supportive school culture. Previous studies show that character education contributes to school culture through activities involving school community members, while integrating character education into educational processes and school culture can improve educational quality (Aunurrahman, 2021; Retnasari et al., 2021; Surmana et al., 2022; Juliana et al., 2023). School culture also provides a medium for habituating character values, and character assessment needs to consider the cultural context of schools (Monica et al., 2023; Astuti et al., 2023). Ultimately, internalized disciplinary values can contribute to a positive school culture (Rijal et al., 2023). The development of such a culture is closely associated with school leadership. The principal is not merely an administrator but a strategic actor who establishes direction, develops shared vision, mobilizes teachers, and translates educational values into practice. Principal leadership is important for sustaining character education (Matiala et al., 2023). Transformational leadership is particularly relevant through four dimensions: *idealized influence*, *inspirational motivation*, *intellectual stimulation*, and *individualized consideration*. These dimensions provide a pathway through which principals can model disciplined behavior, build shared commitment, encourage understanding of disciplinary values, and provide guidance according to students' needs. Thus, transformational leadership can translate character values into collective practices and repeated habits.

Previous studies have shown that transformational leadership influences teacher performance, organizational culture, learning organization capacity, teacher commitment, organizational change, and instructional quality (Raharja et al., 2022; Musriadi et al., 2022; Masbirorotni et al., 2022; Windasari et al., 2023; Utami et al., 2024; Alzoraiki et al., 2024). These findings suggest that transformational principals influence educational outcomes by mobilizing school members and creating conditions for sustained organizational change. However, most studies emphasize teacher- or organization-oriented outcomes rather than students' disciplinary character. This raises an important question: how does transformational leadership translate into students' everyday disciplinary behavior?

In character education, leadership must align policies, teacher practices, school culture, and student activities. Character education requires planned strategies, value integration, exemplary behavior, and consistency, while disciplinary character development requires sustained support from the educational environment (Handoko et al., 2023; Albet et al., 2024). Thus, transformational leadership may function as an upstream mechanism that establishes a shared vision, mobilizes teachers, and institutionalizes disciplinary values through rules,

habituation, reinforcement, and individualized guidance. Studies of disciplinary character emphasize policies, teacher modeling, habituation, and school culture (Sudaryono & Aryani, 2021; Marthasari & Kurniawan, 2022; Antika & Supriyadi, 2022; Wulandari et al., 2023), whereas transformational leadership studies emphasize organizational and teacher-related outcomes (Raharja et al., 2022; Masbirorotni et al., 2022; Musriadi et al., 2022; Windasari et al., 2023; Utami et al., 2024; Alzoraiki et al., 2024). The limited integration of these perspectives leaves insufficient explanation of how principal leadership shapes school culture and disciplinary practices that contribute to students' character development.

This gap is particularly relevant to SD Juara Kota Semarang. Preliminary observations indicated that the principal demonstrates transformational leadership through shared vision, exemplary behavior, teacher motivation, professional development, and deliberative problem-solving. The school implements the *Kurikulum Langit*, which integrates spiritual, moral, intellectual, and character dimensions, supported by *7 Habits Juara* and *12 Adab Juara*. These programs provide an institutional structure through which leadership vision can be translated into daily character-building practices involving teachers, students, routines, and families. This approach is consistent with Yulia et al. (2025), who found that school-culture-based character education can be developed through habituation, programmed activities, talent and interest development, and exemplary behavior.

The novelty of this study lies in integrating transformational leadership and disciplinary character by examining how principal leadership connects vision and exemplary behavior with teacher involvement, school routines, disciplinary practices, and students' internalization of values. This study views transformational leadership not merely as a managerial process but as a mechanism of cultural transformation through which discipline develops from rule compliance to habituation, internalization, and school culture. Accordingly, this study analyzes the principal's transformational leadership in strengthening students' disciplinary character at SD Juara Kota Semarang, including the strategies and supporting and inhibiting factors. The study contributes to educational management by explaining how leadership practices can transform disciplinary values into sustainable school practices.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive design to obtain an in-depth and contextual understanding of the principal's transformational leadership in strengthening students' disciplinary character at SD Juara Kota Semarang. Qualitative research enables researchers to understand phenomena through participants' experiences, perspectives, and actual practices within their social context (Creswell & Poth, 2021). The study was conducted from September 2025 to May 2026 and covered preliminary study, research design, field data collection, analysis, verification, and preparation of findings. The site was purposively selected because it implements the *Kurikulum Langit*, a character-based curriculum, and various habituation programs. Informants were selected through purposive sampling based on their involvement, experience, and knowledge of the phenomenon (Sugiyono, 2022). The study involved 15 informants: one principal, one vice principal for curriculum, five teachers, five students, and three parents.

The researcher served as the primary instrument or human instrument, directly conducting interviews, observations, data organization, interpretation, and theme development. The researcher had no managerial, teaching, or evaluative position at the school and maintained reflexive field notes. Supporting instruments included semi-structured interview guidelines, observation guidelines, documentation protocols, and field notes based on the four transformational leadership dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual

stimulation, and individualized consideration. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, passive participant observation, and document analysis. Interviews with all informant groups lasted approximately 30–60 minutes and explored leadership practices, disciplinary character programs, and students' experiences. Observations focused on punctuality, rule compliance, responsibility, classroom routines, teacher-student interactions, and the principal's modeling of disciplinary behavior. Documents included work programs, habituation schedules, regulations, evaluation reports, and attendance records.

Data were analyzed interactively through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were repeatedly reviewed, coded, grouped into categories, and compared across informants and data sources to identify patterns and broader themes. The four transformational leadership dimensions served as theoretical lenses, while themes were developed from patterns emerging from the empirical data. The final themes addressed transformational leadership practices, strategies for strengthening disciplinary character, and supporting and inhibiting factors. Data credibility was established through source and method triangulation by comparing information from the principal, vice principal, teachers, students, and parents, as well as interviews, observations, and documents. Selected interpretations were clarified through member checking, while field notes and analytical records of coding and theme development were maintained to strengthen credibility, dependability, and minimize interpretive bias.

Result and Discussion

The findings indicate that the principal's transformational leadership at SD Juara Kota Semarang contributed to strengthening students' disciplinary character through exemplary behavior, motivation, the development of programs and school community capacity, and continuous guidance. The findings were obtained through interviews with the principal, vice principal for curriculum, teachers, students, and parents, and were further supported by observations and document analysis. Based on data triangulation, the findings were organized into three main themes: the implementation of the four dimensions of transformational leadership, the principal's strategies for strengthening students' disciplinary character, and the supporting and inhibiting factors affecting implementation. Across these themes, a central pattern emerged: students' discipline developed progressively from compliance with explicit rules toward habituation, internalization of disciplinary values, and ultimately the formation of a shared school culture.

Transformational Leadership of the Principal in Strengthening Students' Disciplinary Character

The first finding indicates that transformational leadership was implemented through four dimensions: *idealized influence*, *inspirational motivation*, *intellectual stimulation*, and *individualized consideration*. These four dimensions did not operate independently but formed an integrated leadership pattern that directed discipline beyond mere compliance with rules toward habituation and students' personal awareness. This integration is important because disciplinary character is unlikely to develop sustainably when leadership relies on only one mechanism, such as rules or punishment. Instead, the four dimensions created a sequence in which the principal modeled expected behavior, motivated members of the school community, encouraged adaptive solutions to disciplinary problems, and provided individualized support. This finding reinforces the view that transformational leadership can foster positive school culture by mobilizing school community members around shared values and goals (Alzoraiki et al., 2024; Masbirorotni et al., 2022).

In the dimension of *idealized influence*, the principal demonstrated exemplary behavior as a primary instrument for developing discipline. This was reflected in the principal's habit of arriving before school activities began, welcoming students at the school gate, interacting positively with teachers and educational staff, complying with school regulations, and consistently participating in school activities. Observational data and attendance records indicated that the principal consistently arrived early and served as one of the school figures demonstrating punctuality. The principal emphasized that behavioral change is more effectively developed through example than through commands alone: "It is difficult to ask others to demonstrate good behavior, but I can apply it to myself first. Once people see it, hopefully they can imitate the positive behavior they observe in me." (WKS). The effectiveness of this strategy lies in making discipline visible and observable. Students do not merely receive verbal instructions about punctuality and responsibility but encounter these values directly through the behavior of the principal and teachers. This finding supports Matiala et al. (2023), who emphasize the strategic role of school leadership in sustaining character education.

This exemplary behavior was reinforced through the implementation of the school's distinctive character education curriculum, which incorporates the *JUARA* core values *Jujur* (honest), *Ulet* (persistent), *Amanah* (trustworthy), *Religius* (religious), and *Aktif* (active) as well as *7 Habits Juara*, *12 Adab Juara*, *Lukman Berilmu*, and *Pembinaan Karakter*. These programs served as vehicles for internalizing disciplinary values through students' daily activities. The principal also involved teachers in program development and implementation, allowing exemplary leadership to develop into a collective commitment among school community members. Thus, the principal's personal example did not remain an individual leadership behavior but was institutionalized through school programs and reproduced by teachers. This indicates a movement from individual modeling to collective modeling, which helps explain why disciplinary behavior could be maintained across different school activities.

The dimension of inspirational motivation was demonstrated through direction, guidance, delegation of responsibility, monitoring, and recognition of student achievement. Teachers were assigned responsibilities according to their competencies and were given opportunities to establish their own performance targets, while the principal monitored program implementation and achievement. For students, motivational reinforcement was provided through recognition of those who demonstrated disciplined behavior, as well as encouragement for students who had not yet met the expected standards. Attendance records indicated a tendency toward reduced student tardiness. Motivational reinforcement was also integrated through the *Buku Komunikasi dan Prestasi Anak* (KOMPAK) and the *7 Habits Juara* Book. These instruments were used to monitor students' habituation while simultaneously connecting school-based supervision with family involvement. The implementation of *12 Adab Juara* also required coordination with parents so that the habits developed at school could be continued at home.

The effectiveness of inspirational motivation was therefore not limited to providing praise or rewards. Rather, motivation connected individual behavior with shared school expectations and created a sense of ownership among teachers and students. This finding is consistent with Musriadi et al. (2022), who emphasize the role of transformational leadership in strengthening teacher performance through motivation and commitment. It also corresponds with Utami et al. (2024), who highlight the importance of empowering leadership and a positive organizational environment. In the present study, motivation functioned as a bridge between the principal's vision and the daily practice of discipline.

The dimension of intellectual stimulation was reflected in the principal's efforts to encourage school community members to develop approaches that did not rely solely on rules and punishment. The principal employed motivation, advice during assemblies and morning

gatherings, direct approaches to students, and the use of rewards and consequences in responding to student behavior. Character-strengthening programs were subsequently institutionalized into routine activities, including morning prayers, congregational prayer, queuing practices, classroom duties, and attendance monitoring. The findings indicate that although the principal remained firm in decision-making, the leadership approach was not authoritarian. This approach was effective because disciplinary problems were treated as opportunities for learning and behavioral reflection rather than simply as violations requiring punishment. The finding is consistent with Hafina et al. (2022), who emphasize that character education should provide contextual experiences that facilitate students' understanding and internalization of values.

Meanwhile, individualized consideration was demonstrated through attention to students' individual needs. Guidance for students experiencing disciplinary problems was provided gradually through personal approaches, basic counseling, collaboration with homeroom teachers and parents, and positive reinforcement. Teachers did not immediately prioritize punishment but instead encouraged students to discuss their behavior and understand the consequences of their actions. From the students' perspective, this approach was perceived as supportive because teachers provided opportunities for them to correct their mistakes. This individualized approach helps explain how discipline can move beyond external compliance. When students understand the reasons and consequences underlying expected behavior, discipline becomes more meaningful and potentially more internalized. This finding is consistent with Albet et al. (2024), who emphasize the importance of considering students' individual characteristics and developmental conditions in disciplinary character education.

Thus, the four dimensions formed a complementary leadership pattern. *Idealized influence* established exemplary behavior, *inspirational motivation* strengthened motivation and commitment, *intellectual stimulation* encouraged the development of approaches to character strengthening, and *individualized consideration* ensured that guidance took students' individual needs into account. The interaction among these dimensions is a significant finding: role modeling provides the behavioral example, motivation creates commitment, intellectual stimulation makes disciplinary interventions adaptive, and individualized consideration facilitates personal understanding. Therefore, the effectiveness of transformational leadership lies not in any single dimension but in their interconnected operation.

The Principal's Strategies for Strengthening Students' Disciplinary Character

The second finding identified six major strategies: role modeling, habituation, reinforcement of school regulations, motivation and rewards, supervision and guidance, and collaboration with parents. These six strategies were implemented in an integrated manner through daily school activities and involved the principal, teachers, educational staff, students, and parents. The findings suggest that these strategies form a mutually reinforcing system rather than six separate interventions. Role modeling provides the initial behavioral reference, habituation creates repeated practice, regulations provide behavioral boundaries, rewards reinforce desired behavior, supervision maintains consistency, and parental collaboration extends the process beyond school.

First, role modeling. The principal positioned himself as a model of disciplined behavior through punctuality, compliance with regulations, active participation in school activities, and consistency in carrying out responsibilities. This exemplary behavior was further reinforced by teachers through disciplined conduct in the learning process. Students directly observed that the principal arrived early and teachers conducted lessons according to schedule, making the behavior of adults at school a concrete example for students. The findings indicate that role modeling developed from the individual behavior of the leader into a shared practice among

members of the school community. This explains why role modeling became an important starting point for the subsequent habituation process.

Second, habituation. Disciplinary values were developed through consistently implemented routine activities, including welcoming students, morning prayers, personal neatness checks, scheduled learning activities, queuing practices, classroom duties, and congregational worship. These habituation practices were also integrated into classroom learning through punctuality, preparedness of learning materials, compliance with classroom rules, and timely completion of assignments. From the students' perspective, repeated participation in these activities gradually led them to demonstrate disciplined behavior without always requiring reminders. The effectiveness of habituation therefore derives not merely from repetition but from repetition within a consistent behavioral environment. This finding supports Wulandari et al. (2023), who identify consistent habituation as an important mechanism in developing students' disciplinary character, and Marthasari and Kurniawan (2022), who emphasize routines, environmental conditioning, and exemplary behavior.

Third, reinforcement of school regulations. School regulations were positioned not merely as instruments for imposing sanctions but as guidelines for shaping students' behavior. Students' compliance with regulations also formed part of the character assessment indicators, including punctuality, adherence to classroom rules, responsibility for completing assignments, neatness, and orderly participation in learning activities. When violations occurred, the school prioritized dialogue, clarification, and guidance rather than immediate punishment. This finding indicates that regulations provided the structural foundation for discipline, while dialogue and habituation provided the educational process through which students learned the meaning of those regulations. This supports Sudaryono and Aryani (2021), who emphasize the importance of consistent school policies in strengthening students' disciplinary character.

Fourth, motivation and rewards. The principal provided positive reinforcement to both teachers and students. For teachers, appreciation was expressed through recognition of their commitment to implementing programs and, in some cases, through entrusting them with leadership responsibilities in school activities. For students, rewards included praise, character stars, certificates, and public recognition during school activities. Students reported that these forms of recognition made them feel proud and encouraged them to maintain disciplined habits. However, rewards appeared to function primarily as transitional reinforcement rather than the ultimate basis of discipline. Their role was to strengthen emerging habits while other mechanisms especially role modeling, habituation, and guidance helped students gradually become less dependent on external reinforcement.

Fifth, supervision and guidance. The principal's supervision was directed not only toward instructional quality but also toward the implementation of character education. The principal observed classroom instruction, reviewed teaching and learning materials, and conducted reflective discussions with teachers. The results of the evaluation were subsequently followed up through guidance, program improvement, coordination with parents, and more intensive support for students requiring special attention. Supervision therefore functioned as a feedback mechanism rather than merely an instrument of control. It enabled the school to identify weaknesses, adjust interventions, and maintain consistency in disciplinary practices.

Sixth, collaboration with parents. Collaboration was established through regular meetings, parenting programs, class communication groups, communication books, consultations regarding student development, and direct communication. Parents continued disciplinary habituation at home by managing study schedules, encouraging early rising, preparing school materials, ensuring assignment completion, and supervising students' use of digital devices. The findings indicate that continuity between school- and family-based guidance is an important

component in maintaining students' disciplinary behavior beyond the school environment. This finding supports Hidayat et al. (2022), who emphasize the importance of involving multiple educational environments in character development. More importantly, parental collaboration in this study functioned as a mechanism for maintaining behavioral consistency between school and home.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

The third finding indicates that the implementation of transformational leadership was influenced by both internal and external factors. Data triangulation identified three supporting factors, namely leadership capacity, teacher capacity and commitment, and school culture and organizational conditions, as well as two inhibiting factors, namely family and community engagement and student conditions and learning environment. Leadership capacity emerged as the primary supporting factor, reflected in the principal's ability to establish a shared vision, serve as a role model, provide motivation, conduct supervision, build collective commitment, and involve teachers in discussions and program development. The shared perceptions of the principal, teachers, parents, and students indicate that leadership capacity served as a driving force for consistent character education. The importance of leadership capacity is therefore not simply that the principal initiates programs, but that the principal connects vision, people, supervision, and organizational culture into a coherent system. The second supporting factor was teacher capacity and commitment. Teachers were responsible for modeling appropriate behavior, implementing habituation practices, integrating character values into learning, and providing student guidance. Their capacity was strengthened through academic supervision, training, coordination, and professional development, while consistency in applying rules helped students recognize discipline as an enduring habit across school activities. Teachers consequently functioned as the principal's proximal agents in translating transformational leadership into students' daily experiences. This finding is consistent with Windasari et al. (2023), who indicate that school transformation is a collective process rather than a process dependent solely on the principal.

The third supporting factor was school culture and organizational conditions, as disciplinary values were integrated into morning prayers, scheduled learning, classroom duties, congregational prayer, queuing practices, and compliance with school regulations. Coordination among the principal, vice principal, teachers, and educational staff contributed to consistency in program implementation, while repeated participation helped students become accustomed to orderly behavior. This finding is consistent with Aunurrahman (2021) and Retnasari et al. (2021), who emphasize the role of school culture in character development, and with Juliana et al. (2023), who identify school culture as a strategic environment for integrating character education into educational processes. Meanwhile, family and community engagement constituted an inhibiting factor due to variations in parenting practices, differences in parental involvement, limited time for parents to accompany their children, and influences from the social environment outside school. This condition indicates that school leadership has limited control over the environments in which students spend time outside school, making consistency across educational environments essential for sustained internalization. The second inhibiting factor was student conditions and learning environment. Differences in student characteristics resulted in variations in their ability to manage time, regulate behavior, and maintain disciplined conduct, while some students' self regulation skills were still developing and therefore required repeated guidance and reinforcement. The use of digital devices and influences from students' play environments also presented challenges to maintaining consistent disciplinary behavior outside school. These findings support Hidayat et al. (2021), who emphasize that character internalization is influenced by the different environments in which students interact.

Conceptual Synthesis: From Rule Compliance to Disciplinary School Culture

The findings demonstrate that the strengthening of students' disciplinary character at SD Juara Kota Semarang is shaped by the interconnected roles of principal leadership, teacher capacity, school culture, student habituation, and family engagement. Transformational leadership was manifested not merely through direction and rule enforcement but through the transformation of disciplinary values into everyday school practices. The development of discipline followed a progressive process from rule compliance to habituation, internalization, and ultimately school culture. Initially, students responded to explicit regulations and external expectations. Through repeated routines and consistent role modeling, these behaviors developed into habits. Motivation, dialogue, individualized guidance, and reflection then encouraged students to understand and internalize the values underlying disciplinary behavior. When these practices were consistently demonstrated by principals, teachers, students, and parents, discipline became embedded within the broader school culture.

This conceptual synthesis extends previous studies that often examine role modeling, regulations, habituation, rewards, supervision, or school culture as separate character development strategies. The present study indicates that their effectiveness emerges from their sequential and mutually reinforcing relationship. Role modeling provides behavioral examples, regulations establish boundaries, habituation creates repeated practice, rewards reinforce emerging behavior, supervision maintains consistency, individualized guidance facilitates understanding, and parental collaboration extends disciplinary development beyond the school environment. Consequently, discipline is not simply reflected in students' obedience to school rules but represents a transformation from externally regulated behavior toward internally guided conduct and eventually toward a shared organizational norm. The central contribution of this study lies in identifying a leadership mediated process through which disciplinary values are transferred from the principal's example to teacher practices, from teacher practices to student habits, and from individual habits to collective school culture. Thus, transformational leadership in character education becomes most effective when leadership practices, habituation, supervision, teacher commitment, school culture, and family engagement operate as an integrated system rather than as isolated interventions.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the principal's transformational leadership plays a strategic role in strengthening students' disciplinary character through four dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. These dimensions operated as an integrated mechanism through role modeling, habituation, reinforcement of regulations, motivation and rewards, supervision and guidance, and collaboration with parents. The findings indicate a progressive pathway from rule compliance to habituation, internalization, and ultimately school culture, showing that disciplinary character is strengthened not through strict enforcement alone but through consistent modeling, dialogue, guidance, and shared practices among principals, teachers, students, and families.

The implementation of transformational leadership was supported by leadership capacity, teacher commitment, and conducive school conditions, while variations in family engagement, social influences, and students' self-regulation presented challenges. Theoretically, the study highlights that transformational leadership can transform individual disciplinary values into shared organizational norms, while practically, principals and teachers should strengthen role modeling, positive reinforcement, supervision, individualized guidance, classroom routines, and school-family communication. However, because this qualitative study was conducted in a

single elementary school with distinctive characteristics, its findings are context-specific. Future research should examine the proposed pathway across diverse school contexts using quantitative or mixed-methods approaches to further test the relationships among transformational leadership, habituation, internalization, school culture, and students' disciplinary character.

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