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Positive School Culture Management In Strengthening Elementary Student's Character

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Abstract

Positive school culture plays an important role in strengthening students' character through habituation and daily school activities, but its implementation requires systematic management so that character development is planned, organised, implemented, and monitored consistently. This study aims to analyse the management of positive school culture in strengthening elementary students' character through the functions of planning, organising, actuating, and controlling. The study employed a qualitative approach with a multi-site case study design at SDN 3 Picungremuk, Tasikmalaya City, and SDN 3 Cimerah, Tasikmalaya Regency. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with principals, teachers, and school committee members, non-participant observations, and documentation, and were checked through source and technique triangulation. The findings show that planning directs character development through habituation activities and the integration of 7 KAIH, although success indicators and measurement mechanisms have not been written down. Organising relies on role distribution within the existing school structure without a specific team, while actuating takes place through role modelling, habituation, guidance, mentoring, and positive discipline. Controlling is carried out through direct observation, communication, and follow-up, but specific monitoring instruments and records remain limited. SDN 3 Picungremuk relies more on activity schedules and task distribution, whereas SDN 3 Cimerah relies more on direct coordination and teacher mentoring. Students' cooperation and independence begin to appear, while discipline and responsibility remain uneven. The study concludes that POAC-based management supports the

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strengthening of students' character, but it still needs measurable indicators, clearer responsibilities, and systematic monitoring and evaluation.

Keywords: positive school culture; character strengthening; school management; 7 KAIH; POAC

INTRODUCTION

Strengthening students' character takes place not only through classroom learning but also through the habits, role modelling, interactions, rules, and activities of everyday school life. At the elementary school level, consistent habituation is an important part of shaping students' behaviour, such as discipline, responsibility, independence, religiosity, cooperation, courtesy, and care for the environment. This direction has a policy basis in *Permendikbud Nomor 23 Tahun 2015 tentang Penumbuhan Budi Pekerti* (Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 23 of 2015 on the Cultivation of Character), which positions the habituation of positive attitudes and behaviour as part of the learning process and the culture of every school (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2015). This policy was later reinforced by the *Gerakan Tujuh Kebiasaan Anak Indonesia Hebat* (7 KAIH), or the Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children Movement, initiated by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, whose guidebook was launched on 11 April 2025 and which develops seven habits, namely waking up early, worshipping, exercising, eating healthy and nutritious food, enjoying learning, engaging with the community, and going to bed early (Kementerian Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah, 2025).

However, the presence of various habituation activities does not necessarily produce consistent behaviour if these activities are not managed purposefully. Preliminary observations at SDN 3 Picungremuk, Tasikmalaya City, showed that some students still needed teachers' direction to carry out classroom duty, maintain order, and complete tasks independently. At SDN 3 Cimerah, Tasikmalaya Regency, habituation activities had become part of school life, but in group and cleanliness activities some students did not yet show responsibility and cooperation consistently. This condition indicates that the problem of character strengthening in elementary schools lies not only in the availability of activities but also in how these activities are planned, organised, implemented, and supervised. Therefore, positive culture needs to be managed systematically so that character goals, activities, resources, implementation, and supervision are interrelated.

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In this study, positive school culture is understood as the patterns of habits, role modelling, rules, and interactions that are consciously developed in the school environment to foster students' positive behaviour. Gea et al. (2026) showed that school culture can work as a mechanism of social control over students' behaviour, while Ansar et al. (2020) found that school culture had a significant effect on the character formation of senior high school students. To examine how this culture is managed, this study uses the POAC management functions. Planning is understood as the process of determining goals and strategic steps (Sutrisno, 2019), organising as the arrangement of task distribution and coordination so that resources can be used to achieve goals (Handoko, 2020), actuating as the effort to mobilise organisational members through leadership, motivation, and communication (Rivai & Mulyadi, 2019), and controlling as supervision and evaluation to keep activities in line with the established goals (Siagian, 2017). The character values developed through positive school culture are read through Sanusi's (2015) six value systems, namely theological, ethical, aesthetic, logical, physical-physiological, and teleological values.

Studies on character education in Indonesian elementary schools have largely converged on habituation and role modelling as the main channels of character formation. Lestari and Ain (2022) found that school culture, through habituation and teachers' role modelling, can support the formation of positive character among elementary school students, and Hanifa et al. (2024) showed that school culture can be used to strengthen students' disciplinary character. Aningsih et al. (2022), in an ethnographic study involving principals, teachers, extracurricular coaches, parents, and students, identified a wide range of values cultivated in elementary schools, including religiosity, discipline, responsibility, cooperation, cleanliness, courtesy, and independence. More recent studies place habituation within positive discipline and the 7 KAIH movement. Faisal (2025) showed that teachers who built positive relationships, formulated shared rules, and used reflection and restitution helped students develop self-awareness and responsibility, while Istiqomah and Siswadi (2026) found that the success of positive discipline depended heavily on the consistency of the principal's leadership. Hastuti and Rohmadi (2025) reported that 7 KAIH could be integrated into intracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities, although its implementation was constrained by inconsistent habits at home and limited supervision outside school. At the vocational level, Dimmaja et al. (2024) showed that the habituation of positive culture can form part of efforts to strengthen character education. This

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group of studies affirms what habituation and role modelling can contribute, but it highlights culture mainly as a means of character formation rather than as something that is managed.

Other studies have positioned school culture and character education as objects of management. Rahayu et al. (2022) showed that school culture management through planning, organising, implementation in the form of habituation and role modelling, and supervision can form religious, disciplined, independent, and cooperative character among elementary school students, while Janah et al. (2024) showed that school culture management through planning, organising, implementation, and supervision can support the character formation of junior high school students. Arisman et al. (2026) argued that character education in elementary schools often remains fragmented and ceremonial because of weak managerial coordination and insufficient continuous supervision, and found that its effectiveness depended on the integration of planning, implementation, and supervision supported by school leadership. At the international level, Berkowitz and Bier (2007) reviewed empirical research on character education to identify the implementation strategies shared by effective programmes, an approach that directs attention to how character education is carried out rather than only whether it is present.

These two groups of studies leave several gaps. First, the studies that examine management functions, namely Rahayu et al. (2022), Janah et al. (2024), and Arisman et al. (2026), focus on school culture or character education in general, whereas positive culture and positive discipline have mostly been examined from the perspective of teachers' and principals' strategies (Faisal, 2025; Istiqomah & Siswadi, 2026) or their impact on character (Dimmaja et al., 2024). Second, the management studies by Rahayu et al. (2022) and Janah et al. (2024) were published before Gerakan 7 KAIH was launched on 27 December 2024 (Kementerian Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah, 2025), while early studies of 7 KAIH, such as Hastuti and Rohmadi (2025), describe the implementation of the programme in a single school rather than its integration into the management of positive culture. Third, these studies mostly describe the forms of management or implementation that schools already practise, so the mapping of functions that are already running and functions that still need strengthening, as well as the comparison of management patterns across schools in different administrative contexts, has received little attention.

Based on these gaps, the novelty of this study lies in its analysis of positive school culture management through the four POAC functions combined with character strengthening and the

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implementation of Gerakan 7 KAIH at the public elementary school level. Unlike studies that position habituation as a form of school culture, this study examines the links among the setting of character goals, the distribution of roles among school community members, the process of mobilisation through role modelling and mentoring, and supervision through monitoring, evaluation, and follow-up. This study was also conducted at two elementary schools in different administrative contexts, namely SDN 3 Picungremuk, Tasikmalaya City, and SDN 3 Cimerah, Tasikmalaya Regency, so that their management patterns can be compared to identify the parts that are already running and the parts that still need strengthening.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyse the management of positive school culture in strengthening elementary school students' character through the functions of planning, organising, actuating, and controlling. The research problems of this study cover how schools plan a character-oriented positive culture and integrate it with 7 KAIH, how resources and the roles of school community members are organised, how positive culture is implemented through habituation and role modelling, how its implementation is supervised through monitoring, evaluation, and follow-up, and how these management patterns are similar and different across the two schools. The results are expected to enrich educational management studies on the management of positive culture and, at the same time, provide a practical picture of the importance of systematic, measurable, consistent, and sustainable management in supporting the strengthening of students' character.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative approach with a multi-site case study design. This design was chosen because the study aimed to obtain an in-depth understanding of how positive school culture is managed through the management functions of planning, organising, actuating, and controlling, and how this management relates to the strengthening of students' character in two different school contexts. This approach enabled the researchers to examine the process of managing positive culture based on the conditions occurring naturally in the field.

The research subjects were determined purposively based on the informants' involvement in and knowledge of the implementation of positive culture at school. The research was conducted at SDN 3 Picungremuk, Tasikmalaya City, and SDN 3 Cimerah, Tasikmalaya Regency. The research subjects comprised principals involved in decision-making, teachers who carried out habituation activities and monitored students' behaviour, and school committee

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members familiar with parents' involvement in school programmes. Students served as supporting data sources through observation to obtain a picture of how habituation was applied and how students behaved in daily activities, while parents' involvement was described based on information from teachers and the school committee. These subjects were selected based on their roles and involvement in the planning, organising, implementation, and supervision of positive school culture. In presenting the results, informants are coded by role and site, namely KS for principals, GR for teachers, and KM for school committee members, with the suffix P for SDN 3 Picungremuk and C for SDN 3 Cimerah, while observation notes are coded OBS-P and OBS-C.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation, and documentation study. Interviews were used to obtain information on the management of positive culture in each management function. Observation was conducted to see directly the implementation of habituation, the application of 7 KAIH, interactions among school community members, role modelling, mentoring, monitoring, and follow-up. Documentation study was used to complement and check the consistency of information through school programme or planning documents and habituation schedules, as well as to trace the availability of records for monitoring and evaluating students' character development. The research instruments were interview guidelines and observation guidelines developed according to the four POAC functions. The interview guidelines covered character goals, programme preparation, the integration of 7 KAIH, and success indicators for the planning function; task distribution, the involvement of teachers, the committee, and parents, and coordination patterns for the organising function; role modelling, habituation, motivation, positive discipline, and obstacles for the actuating function; and monitoring, evaluation, the handling of behaviour, and follow-up for the controlling function. The observation guidelines focused on habituation schedules and planning documents, teachers' performance of tasks and coordination of activities, teacher and student interactions together with students' responses, and teachers' direction and follow-up.

The research procedure included determining the research focus, selecting the research sites and subjects, preparing the instruments, collecting data, organising and comparing data from the two sites, analysing the data, and verifying the findings. Data analysis followed the model of Miles et al. (2014), which comprises data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data from interviews, observations, and documentation were filtered and grouped according to the research focus, namely planning, organising, actuating, and

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controlling, compared across sources and between the two schools to identify similarities and differences, and then connected and integrated to find patterns of positive culture management and the strengthening of students' character. Data credibility was strengthened through source triangulation, by comparing information from principals, teachers, and school committee members, and technique triangulation, by checking the consistency of interview, observation, and documentation data. The behaviour of certain students was also observed more than once at different times to identify tendencies of change.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings for each POAC function, namely planning, organising, actuating, and controlling, and discusses them in relation to management theory, the concept of school culture, character education policy, and previous studies. The findings are drawn from interviews, observations, and documentation and are presented through selected interview excerpts and observation notes. The discussion of each function moves from what the two schools did, to how this compares with previous studies, to what the comparison reveals about the management of positive culture. Sanusi's (2015) value systems are used in a synthesis at the end of the section rather than repeated for each function.

Both schools showed similarities in using habituation and role modelling as strategies for strengthening students' character. The differences tended to lie in their operational management patterns: SDN 3 Picungremuk placed more emphasis on activity schedules and task distribution, whereas SDN 3 Cimerah relied more on direct coordination and teacher mentoring. Nevertheless, both schools faced similar challenges in formulating success indicators, documenting evaluation, and maintaining the consistency of students' behaviour.

Overall, the results show that positive culture has become part of school life through habituation, role modelling, religious activities, cleanliness, sports, literacy, cooperation, and social interaction. The four POAC functions were running in practice, but their regularity and documentation were not the same across functions. Planning provided direction for character formation, organising took place through the distribution of roles among school community members, actuating was visible in habituation and role modelling, and controlling was carried out through observation, communication, evaluation, and follow-up. These findings are discussed below according to each management function.

1. Planning of Positive School Culture

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The results show that the planning of positive culture was directed towards forming students' character through the values of religiosity, discipline, responsibility, independence, cooperation, courtesy, honesty, sportsmanship, and care for the environment. These goals were aligned with the school's development direction and translated into habituation activities that had become part of school life. Several elements of 7 KAIH had also been integrated into ongoing activities, such as religious activities, sports, learning and literacy, cleanliness, and social activities.

This finding is evident in the principals' accounts at both sites. KS-P stated, "When we put together the school programme, we always include habituation activities to shape the students' character. For example, religious activities, cleanliness, sports, and literacy. After the seven habits of great Indonesian children movement came out, we adjusted the activities that were already running. But the success indicators for each character, we haven't made those specifically." A similar account was given by KS-C, "We adjust the planning of positive culture to the students' needs and the habits that are already done at school. We talk it over with the teachers, especially when we put together school activities. For character assessment, so far it's still based on teachers' observation. There's no common written measure for all activities yet." The observations corroborated these accounts. At SDN 3 Picungremuk, the schedule of habituation activities, including religious and cleanliness activities, was displayed on the school notice board, but the documents shown did not yet contain detailed indicators for measuring students' character development (OBS-P01). At SDN 3 Cimerah, teachers gave directions for habituation activities before lessons began, while the planning documents examined did not yet show a written link between each activity and students' behavioural indicators (OBS-C01). A comparison of the two sites shows that habituation at SDN 3 Picungremuk referred more to the school activity schedule, whereas at SDN 3 Cimerah it was integrated more into classroom routines and teachers' agreements.

This pattern shows that planning at both schools fulfils the basic function of planning as the determination of goals and the steps needed to reach them (Sutrisno, 2019), because the schools have set a character direction and selected activities to support it. What is missing is the operational layer of planning. The links among activities, targeted values, expected behaviours, and achievement indicators have not been put in writing, so planning has been carried out substantively but is not yet measurable. Deal and Peterson (2016) describe routines and shared values as elements through which school culture is expressed, and the planned routines at both

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schools, such as prayer, cleanliness, literacy, sports, and group work, function in this way because they allow students to experience and practise values repeatedly rather than receive them only as knowledge.

The planning direction is also anchored in policy. Permendikbud Nomor 23 Tahun 2015 positions the habituation of positive attitudes and behaviour as part of school culture (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2015), and Gerakan 7 KAIH translates habituation into seven concrete daily habits (Kementerian Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah, 2025). At the two schools, 7 KAIH was integrated by adjusting activities that were already running, as KS-P explained. Hastuti and Rohmadi (2025) reported a systematic integration of 7 KAIH into intracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities. Compared with that study, 7 KAIH at the two schools in this study was absorbed into existing routines rather than planned as a distinct layer with its own indicators.

Compared with previous management studies, planning at the two schools is also less formalised. Rahayu et al. (2022) described the planning of school culture in an elementary school through the formulation of the vision, mission, goals, curriculum, and educational programmes, and Arisman et al. (2026) found planning that emphasised character-based programme preparation with stakeholder involvement. At the two schools in this study, the principals discussed planning with teachers, but the planning documents examined did not yet link activities to behavioural indicators (OBS-P01; OBS-C01). The two sites differ in the anchor of planning: SDN 3 Picungremuk anchored habituation in the school activity schedule, whereas SDN 3 Cimerah anchored it in classroom routines and teachers' agreements. In both cases, the main strength of planning is the integration of character goals into ongoing activities, while its main weakness is the absence of indicators that would allow students' character development to be measured.

2. Organising of Positive School Culture

The results show that the organising of positive culture took place through the distribution of roles among the principal, teachers, students, the school committee, and parents. The principal gave direction and carried out coordination, teachers were the main implementers of habituation and student mentoring, while the committee and parents provided support as needed. This distribution of roles was visible in cleanliness activities, sports, *Pramuka* (scouting), literacy, religious activities, learning, and student mentoring.

This pattern is reflected in the accounts of teachers and the school committee. GR-P1 explained, "Task distribution usually follows each teacher's responsibilities. Class teachers

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supervise habituation in the classroom, while joint activities are coordinated by the principal and the teachers who are assigned. If there are extra activities, we discuss them together. There's no special team yet that only deals with positive culture." From the committee's side, KM-C stated, "The committee is usually involved when the school needs support for activities or communication with parents. For daily habituation activities, the teachers run them. We support the school programme, but there's no specific division of tasks yet for monitoring the students' character development." Observation at SDN 3 Picungremuk showed cleanliness activities involving duty teachers, homeroom teachers, and students, with cleaning areas allocated according to the daily division of work (OBS-P02). At SDN 3 Cimerah, class teachers coordinated students in habituation activities, several teachers assisted with joint activities, and coordination took place through direct communication among teachers (OBS-C02). Thus, coordination at SDN 3 Picungremuk relied more on teachers' task distribution and school activities, whereas at SDN 3 Cimerah it took place more through direct communication.

This finding is consistent with the organising function as the arrangement of task distribution and coordination so that organisational resources can be used to achieve goals (Handoko, 2020). At both schools, however, this arrangement took place within the existing school structure and in daily work rather than through a structure designed for positive culture. Teachers acted as the main implementers, the principal coordinated, and students were involved in activities that built responsibility and cooperation, so that positive culture functioned as a shared responsibility of the school community.

This pattern differs from the picture in previous management studies. Rahayu et al. (2022) positioned the formation of an organisational structure, task distribution, coordination meetings, and socialisation as forms of organising school culture, whereas at the two schools in this study GR-P1 stated that there was no special team dealing with positive culture, and KM-C noted that the committee had no specific tasks for monitoring students' character development. Istiqomah and Siswadi (2026) found that the principal acted as educator, manager, and supervisor in implementing positive discipline and strengthened teachers' capacity through reflective coaching. At the two schools in this study, the principal's role appeared mainly as direction and coordination, while the capacity-building role was less visible in the data. The involvement of the committee and parents reflects the direction of character education policy as a joint movement involving the community and parents (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2015), but at both schools this involvement was mainly supportive and provided as needed.

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The two schools differ in their mechanism of coordination. SDN 3 Picungremuk relied more on teachers' task distribution and school activities, whereas SDN 3 Cimerah relied more on direct communication among teachers. Both mechanisms allowed activities to run, but both depend heavily on informal communication and work habits. Arisman et al. (2026) linked fragmented character education to weak managerial coordination, and the findings of this study point to a similar risk: without a clearer distribution of authority, responsibility, and coordination for positive culture, its continuity may come to depend on the initiative of individual teachers.

3. Actuating of Positive School Culture

The results show that positive culture was implemented through the role modelling of the principal and teachers, habituation, motivation, guidance, mentoring, communication, collaboration, and positive discipline. Various religious, cleanliness, sports, literacy, learning, and group work activities, as well as social interaction, gave students opportunities to practise character values directly.

This finding is evident in the teachers' accounts at both schools. GR-P2 said, "The kids are used to praying before lessons, doing their duty, and joining school activities. But not all of them do it on their own initiative yet. Some get on with their tasks straight away, some have to be reminded. Usually we show them first so they follow." GR-C1 explained, "We mostly guide them through daily activities. For example, the kids are asked to keep things clean, respect their friends, and finish group tasks. If someone doesn't want to join in yet, we usually approach them and help them understand. You can see the change in some kids, although some still need mentoring." Observations showed the same pattern. At SDN 3 Picungremuk, students joined a group prayer before lessons; during classroom duty, some students cleaned the classroom straight away, while several waited for the teacher's direction, and the teacher gave an example and reminded them of their cleaning responsibilities (OBS-P03). At SDN 3 Cimerah, some students shared tasks and helped their peers in group work, while several students were not actively involved until the teacher gave direction and mentored the group (OBS-C03). The means of habituation at SDN 3 Picungremuk consisted mainly of religious, cleanliness, sports, and literacy activities, whereas at SDN 3 Cimerah they consisted mainly of teacher mentoring and cooperative activities.

Observations of students' behaviour showed uneven achievement. Cooperation was visible when students helped one another clean the classroom and complete group tasks, while independence began to appear among some students who prepared their learning materials without the teacher's help. In contrast, discipline and responsibility still needed strengthening

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because some students still had to be reminded to enter the classroom on time and only carried out classroom duty after being directed. Courtesy was evident in the habit of greeting and speaking politely, although disruption among peers still occurred. Repeated observations of certain students showed a gradual tendency of change. At SDN 3 Picungremuk, a student who initially did not carry out classroom duty despite knowing the schedule began, in the next observation, to take the cleaning equipment without a direct instruction, but still needed a reminder to finish the task (OBS-P05). At SDN 3 Cimerah, a student who initially left group tasks to peers began to participate after the teacher assigned tasks more clearly, although this involvement still needed to be observed in subsequent activities (OBS-C05).

This finding is consistent with the actuating function as the mobilisation of organisational members through leadership, motivation, and communication (Rivai & Mulyadi, 2019). At both schools, mobilisation took place less through instructions and more through role modelling and mentoring: teachers gave examples first, reminded students, and approached those who were reluctant to take part. This pattern supports Lestari and Ain (2022) and Hanifa et al. (2024), who placed habituation and teachers' role modelling at the centre of character formation in elementary schools, and it is also in line with Rahayu et al. (2022), who linked habituation and role modelling to religious, disciplined, and independent character.

The data, however, add a qualification to these studies. Students' behaviour was uneven: cooperation and independence began to appear, while discipline and responsibility still required reminders, and repeated observations showed only gradual change in particular students (OBS-P05; OBS-C05). GR-P2 expressed this directly by noting that not all students acted on their own initiative yet. This suggests that habituation and role modelling at the two schools still operated largely through external prompting. Faisal (2025) showed that positive discipline involving shared rules, logical consequences, and reflection and restitution helped students develop self-awareness and responsibility, and Istiqomah and Siswadi (2026) emphasised the shift from external control to intrinsic motivation. Compared with these studies, positive discipline at the two schools appeared mainly as reminders, guidance, and mentoring, while reflective practices such as restitution were not visible in the data.

The two schools also differ in the means of actuating. SDN 3 Picungremuk relied mainly on religious, cleanliness, sports, and literacy activities, whereas SDN 3 Cimerah relied more on teacher mentoring and cooperative activities. Hastuti and Rohmadi (2025) identified teacher role models and cooperation with parents as supporting factors for 7 KAIH and inconsistent habits at

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home as an inhibiting factor. Although home habits were not examined in this study, the reminders and mentoring that teachers still had to provide indicate that consistency remains the main challenge of actuating, so that habituation needs to develop from routine into behaviour that students perform consciously.

4. Controlling of Positive School Culture

The results show that controlling was carried out through activity monitoring, observation of students' behaviour, supervision, evaluation, communication between the principal and teachers, and follow-up. The schools viewed the implementation of activities and changes in students' behaviour as the basis for understanding the development of positive culture. When behaviour that was not yet appropriate was found, teachers gave reminders, reprimands, direction, guidance, and mentoring, and coordinated with the principal and parents when necessary.

The informants' accounts show that controlling still relied on direct observation. KS-P stated, "To see how the students' character is developing, I usually ask the class teachers and observe directly. If there are students who are often late or not yet disciplined, we discuss the follow-up. But a specific report on character development, we haven't put that together routinely." At SDN 3 Cimerah, GR-C2 said, "We monitor the kids' behaviour every day. If someone doesn't do their duty or bothers their friends, they usually get direction right away. For kids who keep doing the same thing, we talk to their parents. So far the monitoring is mostly through observation and teachers' notes." Observation at SDN 3 Picungremuk showed the teacher reminding several students who had not yet carried out their cleaning tasks, after which the students continued their tasks, with follow-up carried out directly and without recording on a specific monitoring instrument (OBS-P04). At SDN 3 Cimerah, the teacher reprimanded and guided students who disrupted learning activities and then reported the situation to the homeroom teacher (OBS-C04). Controlling at SDN 3 Picungremuk was carried out mainly through class teachers, duty teachers, and the principal, whereas at SDN 3 Cimerah it was carried out mainly through teachers' observation and communication with parents.

This finding is consistent with the controlling function as supervision and evaluation to keep activities in line with established goals (Siagian, 2017). From the perspective of school culture, controlling at both schools also worked as social control over students' behaviour. Gea et al. (2026) showed that school culture can work as a mechanism of social control, and Ansar et al. (2020) found that school culture had a significant effect on the character formation of senior

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high school students. At the two schools in this study, teachers' reminders, reprimands, and guidance when students were undisciplined, had not completed their tasks, or had not kept their surroundings clean show that this control has become part of everyday school culture.

The weakness lies in what happens after the control. The schools observed and followed up on behaviour, but beyond teachers' notes, monitoring journals, evaluation minutes, and follow-up records of positive culture were not yet systematically available (OBS-P04; OBS-C04). This contrasts with Rahayu et al. (2022), who reported supervision accompanied by rewards, punishments, and report card descriptions, and with Arisman et al. (2026), who described continuous supervision to ensure consistency in students' character formation. At the two schools, controlling functions as a response to emerging behaviour rather than as a basis for tracking students' character development over time. This may also explain why planning lacks indicators, because without records there is little evidence on which indicators could be built and revised.

The two schools differ in the actors of controlling. At SDN 3 Picungremuk, controlling was carried out mainly through class teachers, duty teachers, and the principal, whereas at SDN 3 Cimerah it relied more on teachers' observation and communication with parents. Hastuti and Rohmadi (2025) identified limited teacher supervision outside school as an obstacle to 7 KAIH, and the communication with parents at SDN 3 Cimerah shows one way of extending controlling beyond the school.

Across the four functions, the character values developed at both schools can also be read through Sanusi's (2015) six value systems. Theological values appear in religious activities and worship; ethical values in discipline, responsibility, courtesy, and cooperation; aesthetic values in cleanliness and orderliness; logical values in learning and literacy; physical-physiological values in sports and healthy habits; and teleological values in independence and an orientation towards being of benefit to others. This reading shows that the activities at both schools touch on all six values, but because these values have not been mapped in planning documents or tracked through controlling, the schools cannot yet show which values are developing and which still need strengthening.

Table 1. Synthesis of Findings and Discussion on Positive School Culture Management

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No.	Management Function	Key Findings	Discussion
1	Planning	Positive culture was planned based on character formation goals and integrated with school activities and 7 KAIH.	Consistent with the planning function, the concept of school culture, Sanusi's six value systems, and character education policy. However, success indicators and measurement mechanisms have not been fully documented.
2	Organising	Role distribution involved the principal, teachers, students, the committee, and parents according to their respective involvement.	Consistent with the organising function through task distribution and coordination. However, there is no dedicated structure or team for positive culture, so responsibility and coordination still largely run through the existing school structure.
3	Actuating	Positive culture was implemented through role modelling,	Consistent with the actuating function, school culture, Sanusi's six value

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No.	Management Function	Key Findings	Discussion
		habituation, motivation, guidance, mentoring, communication, positive discipline, and 7 KAIH.	systems, character policy, and previous studies. The main challenge lies in the behavioural consistency of some students.
4	Controlling	Controlling was carried out through monitoring, behavioural observation, supervision, evaluation, communication, and follow-up.	Consistent with the controlling function and with school culture as social control. However, monitoring journals, evaluation minutes, and follow-up documentation have not been compiled systematically.

Data source: Synthesis of the study's interview, observation, and documentation data.

Based on the overall discussion, the four POAC functions show complementary relationships in the management of positive school culture. Planning provides direction for the values and character to be formed, organising arranges the involvement of school community members, actuating brings values to life through habituation and role modelling, and controlling ensures that implementation continues to be monitored and followed up. The findings show that positive culture has been running as part of school life and supports the strengthening of students' character, although its achievement is not yet even (Table 1). However, for its management to develop into a stronger and more sustainable system, strengthening is still needed in success indicators, the structure of responsibility, the consistency of habituation, and monitoring and evaluation instruments. The comparison of the two schools also shows that the same function can be performed through different patterns, namely through schedules and task

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distribution at SDN 3 Picungremuk and through direct coordination and teacher mentoring at SDN 3 Cimerah, while weaknesses in indicators, documentation, and behavioural consistency were experienced by both. This finding also clarifies that strengthening character through positive culture requires not merely the provision of activities but purposeful management from planning through to controlling.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the management of positive school culture through the functions of planning, organising, actuating, and controlling supports the strengthening of students' character, although this support is not yet even. Planning provides direction for character formation through habituation and the integration of 7 KAIH into school activities, but its success indicators have not been put in writing. Organising relies on the distribution of roles within the existing school structure, actuating brings character values to life through role modelling, habituation, guidance, mentoring, and positive discipline, while controlling is carried out through observation, communication, and follow-up whose results have not been recorded systematically. The two schools differ in their operational patterns: SDN 3 Picungremuk relies more on activity schedules and task distribution, whereas SDN 3 Cimerah relies more on direct coordination and teacher mentoring. Students' cooperation, independence, and courtesy have begun to appear, while discipline and responsibility remain uneven. Therefore, the management still requires strengthening in the formulation of success indicators, the specific distribution of responsibilities, the consistency of students' behaviour, and the documentation of monitoring and evaluation.

This study is limited to two public elementary schools examined through a qualitative case study, so its findings are not intended to be generalised, and the development of students' behaviour was observed only in certain activities and among certain students. Further development should be directed at strengthening the management system of positive culture so that it does not depend solely on habituation and everyday communication. Schools can develop more measurable character indicators, clarify the distribution of responsibilities, and provide instruments for monitoring, evaluation, and the recording of follow-up on a regular basis. These efforts are expected to help schools track students' character development more continuously and to serve as a basis for improving positive culture programmes in the future. Further research

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could examine the implementation of positive culture management in greater depth in different school contexts or trace students' character development over a longer period.

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