Multifaceted Instructional Leadership of School Principals to Improve Student Character in The Digital Era

*Mohamad Mustari*, Sri Nurhayati

1Universitas Mataram, Jalan Majapahit No. 62, Mataram City, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia
2Institut Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Siliwangi, Jl. Terusan Jend. Sudirman No.3, Cimahi City, West Java, Indonesia

*mustari@unram.ac.id

ABSTRACT: This research explores the multifaceted role of principals' instructional leadership in fostering student character development. This research was conducted at the Junior High School (SMP) Muhammadiyah Boarding School in Masbagik, East Lombok, using a qualitative and case study approach. The researcher collects data through interviews, observation, and document analysis. Data analysis using the Miles and Huberman data reduction model, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification distils the main dimensions of leadership and their influence on character education. The informants for this research were the school principal, teachers and school committee. These findings reveal eight distinct leadership roles: strategic visionary, educational innovator, adaptive problem solver, evaluator, community builder, cultural architect, responsive adapter, and long-term strategist. Each role makes a unique contribution to student character development. These roles collectively contribute to the character-centred ethos of education and are corroborated by current instructional leadership research. This study offers valuable insights and implications for improving character education through adaptive and nuanced leadership practices, making significant contributions to the broader discourse on instructional leadership and character development in education.

arsitek budaya, adaptor responsif, dan ahli strategi jangka panjang. Setiap peran memberikan kontribusi unik terhadap pengembangan karakter siswa. Peran-peran ini secara kolektif berkontribusi pada etos pendidikan yang berpusat pada karakter dan dikuatkan oleh penelitian kepemimpinan instruksional saat ini. Studi ini menawarkan wawasan dan implikasi berharga untuk meningkatkan pendidikan karakter melalui praktik kepemimpinan yang adaptif dan bernuansa, memberikan kontribusi yang signifikan terhadap wacana yang lebih luas tentang kepemimpinan instruksional dan pengembangan karakter dalam pendidikan.

**Keywords:** Instructional Leadership, School Principal, Digital Era, Students’ Character Development.

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I. **INTRODUCTION**

In contemporary society, characterized by the prevalence of digital technology, the significance of the principal's role in enhancing students' character has witnessed a notable escalation (Lim & Bishen Singh, 2020; Ma & Marion, 2019). Various obstacles and opportunities confront educational institutions in the context of technological advancements (Marsegi et al., 2023; Musa et al., 2022; Suharyat et al., 2023; Winarti et al., 2022). Consequently, principals are required to assume the responsibility of instructional leaders, aiming to guarantee the cultivation of favourable character attributes among students, which will prove beneficial in the digital realm. Contemporary students engage in online networks and actively contribute to content creation alongside their consumption activities (Skoyles et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2023). Character education is a crucial component of the educational experience for individuals due to the access provided by digital platforms to a diverse array of opinions, cultures, and ideas (Badawi et al., 2020; Jarkasih & Nurhayati, 2023). The principal, as the leader of the school, plays a vital role in setting the tone for character-building initiatives and fostering an environment that promotes moral conduct, empathy, resilience, and responsible online activity (Badrun et al., 2022; Putu Windu Mertha Sujana et al., 2021; Triyanto, 2020).

The principal assumes a pivotal role within the hierarchical framework of a school's leadership, wielding a significant impact on the overall educational milieu. In the domain of instructional leadership, principals are bestowed with the duty of moulding the school's vision, culture, and pedagogical practices (Khilmiyah et al., 2020; Munna, 2023; Usman, 2015). In the contemporary era of technology, instructional leadership has expanded beyond traditional pedagogical approaches to include cultivating character education in both offline and online environments (Shaked, 2022). Principals possess a distinct vantage point from which they may effectively lead and motivate instructors, students, and parents, cultivating a setting that places equal importance on cultivating character and attaining academic success (Badrun et al., 2022; Usman, 2015).

According to Hallinger and Wang, instructional leadership is one of several leadership models explored by scholars over the past five decades in their quest to understand the nature of school leadership that positively affects student learning. Recent
comprehensive reviews of worldwide research on educational leadership have led to the finding that, of the various models considered, instructional leadership stands out for having the most robust empirical evidence supporting its positive effect on student learning outcomes (Hallinger & Wang, 2015). Instructional leadership is about the principal’s actions, practices, or behaviours, manifesting across various facets of instructional leadership (Gatama et al., 2023). This type of leadership is uniquely characterized by the principal's dedication to the fundamental aspects of teaching and learning within a school, along with efforts to enhance these processes. Hallinger and Wang introduced the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS), a widely respected model that delineates five crucial areas of instructional leadership. These areas serve as the foundation for the current study's exploration of the concept. 

Firstly, establishing the school's mission involves the principal setting clear educational objectives and effectively communicating these goals to all stakeholders to garner widespread support within the school. Secondly, overseeing the instructional program pertains to actions such as supervising and assessing teaching and learning, tracking student progress, and efficiently allocating time. Thirdly, providing strategic resources refers to the allocation of resources in a manner that supports the school's objectives. Fourthly, enhancing and motivating teacher quality entails fostering professional development for teachers and offering both financial and non-financial rewards. Lastly, leadership outside the school boundaries includes the principal's efforts to involve parents in educational matters and collaborate with other schools and entities to achieve the defined educational aims (Hallinger & Wang, 2015).

Several studies also have highlighted the significance of instructional leadership in educational settings (Gawlik, 2018; Shaked, 2020; Vogel, 2018). Instructional leadership involves providing guidance and support to teachers to enhance teaching quality and student learning outcomes. It encompasses tasks such as curriculum development, instructional supervision, and professional development. Effective instructional leadership positively impacts student achievement and learning (Berkovich & Hassan, 2022; Khilmiyah et al., 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic has further emphasized the need for principals to adapt their instructional leadership practices to the digital realm (Shaked, 2022). As schools shifted to online learning, principals had to support teachers in delivering effective instruction in virtual environments. They played a crucial role in providing technological support, academic support, and psychosocial support to both teachers and students (Shaked, 2022). The research suggests that principals' digital instructional leadership can have a positive impact on teachers' intrinsic motivation and students' perceived learning (Berkovich & Hassan, 2022).

Scholarly investigations have underscored the substantial influence of instructional leadership on student academic performance (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Hou et al., 2019). According to Hitt and Tucker (Hitt & Tucker, 2016), empirical evidence suggests that instructional leadership exerts a more significant influence on student learning outcomes when compared to other forms of leadership. In a meta-analysis conducted by Robinson et al., they determined that instructional leadership had a much more significant average effect on student learning outcomes compared to transformational leadership, with a magnitude that was around three to four times larger (Hitt & Tucker, 2016). This highlights the importance of instructional leadership in fostering student achievement.

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The significance of instructional leaders in facilitating the incorporation of technology has grown substantially in the digital age. According to AlAjmi, there is evidence suggesting that the digital leadership exhibited by principals has a significant impact on the incorporation of technology inside educational institutions. The ISTE standards outline five essential components of digital leadership, which include visionary leadership, digital learning culture, excellence in professional practice, systemic improvement, and digital citizenship. These aspects have been recognized as crucial elements in facilitating teachers' integration of technology into their instructional practices (AlAjmi, 2022). Hence, instructional leaders must acquire digital leadership abilities to adequately promote and advocate for the incorporation of technology in the contemporary digital age. The advent of digital transformation in educational institutions has necessitated the acquisition of distinct skills and competencies by instructional leaders. Schiuma et al have undertaken thorough research aimed at identifying the requisite abilities that leaders must possess to navigate the digital era effectively. Nevertheless, a state of uncertainty and absence of agreement persists concerning the precise competencies essential for digital leadership (Schiuma et al., 2021). This underscores the significance of conducting additional research and investigation in this domain to guarantee that instructional leaders possess the requisite competencies to facilitate digital transformation in educational environments.

Character education is an integral facet of students' development, and principals wield significant influence in shaping it (Byrne et al., 2018). Previous research explores various dimensions of character education efforts led by principals and the strategies they employ to nurture students' character. Principal leadership is a recurrently emphasized factor (Zakso et al., 2021). Their research underscores the substantial impact of leadership on character education, reinforcing the idea that effective principal leadership is vital. Additionally, a global perspective on principal leadership roles in character education reveals diverse approaches worldwide, enriching the understanding of how principals can drive character education initiatives (Sutino et al., 2021). Kesi promotes a holistic approach, stressing the significance of nurturing multiple intelligences, such as spiritual and emotional intelligence, in addition to intellectual intelligence (Thoyib Kesi, 2023). Principals are pivotal in promoting this comprehensive approach, contributing to students' well-rounded character. This extensive literature review highlights the diverse efforts led by principals to foster character education. Principals serve as catalysts for character development through leadership, pedagogy, and collaboration with various stakeholders. Their multifaceted approach shapes students' character, contributing to their holistic growth.

In the context of the complex convergence of education and technology, it is imperative to acknowledge the pivotal significance of school leaders, namely principals, in moulding the ethical foundation of forthcoming cohorts. It is essential to cultivate a generation of students who possess not only digital literacy but also moral responsibility and empathy, enabling them to become conscientious global citizens (Nurmalia et al., 2022; Triyanto, 2020). The distinctiveness of this study lies in its comprehensive examination of the multifaceted roles, strategies, and practices employed by principals to nurture essential character traits in students, especially within the context of digital engagement. Unlike prior research that predominantly centres on academic achievement or technological proficiency, this study delves into the intersection of character education and digital literacy. It investigates how instructional leadership at SMP Muhammadiyah Boarding School Masbagik, East Lombok, tailors explicitly its
approach to character development in response to the challenges and opportunities presented by the digital age.

Moreover, this study stands out by providing an in-depth analysis of the practical implementation of these strategies in a specific educational setting, offering insights into the nuanced ways in which a principal can influence character development amidst the complexities of the digital era. Through this focused lens, the research aims to contribute significantly to the ongoing discourse on effectively preparing students for success in a dynamic global environment where ethical and empathetic engagement in the digital realm is as important as academic prowess. This study investigates the many roles, strategies, initiatives, and best practices implemented by principals in SMP Muhammadiyah Boarding School Masbagik, East Lombok, to cultivate fundamental character qualities among students, thereby equipping them with the necessary skills for responsible engagement in the digital realm.

II. METHOD

This qualitative study was conducted at Junior High School (SMP) Muhammadiyah Boarding School in Masbagik, East Lombok, to delve into the principal's instructional leadership role in shaping student character in the digital era. We chose the qualitative methodology for its effectiveness in exploring complex educational dynamics and obtaining in-depth insights (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The research subjects included the principal, teachers, and students of the school. The subjects were selected individuals who were most knowledgeable and pivotal in understanding the principal's instructional leadership. This method facilitated the gathering of rich, relevant data directly related to the study's objectives. The data collection process employed a comprehensive three-pronged approach. Firstly, unstructured, in-depth interviews were conducted with principals, teachers, and students, guided by an interview guide. These interviews served as the primary data source, providing valuable insights into perceptions and experiences regarding the principal's role in character education. Secondly, observational methods, including both formal and informal observations, were utilized to gather information on the direct implementation of instructional leadership practices. Lastly, documentation analysis involved scrutinizing school profiles, character education notes, and visual materials such as photos and recordings documenting various school activities. Triangulation was utilized to maintain the credibility and validity of the data. This process entailed cross-referencing information obtained from interviews, observations, and document analysis (Sugiyono, 2018).

Furthermore, we conducted member checking by sharing findings with participants to confirm and clarify them. Guided by the Miles and Huberman model, we conducted three main activities interactively: data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions or verification. This approach facilitated continuous and interactive analysis, ensuring data saturation and a comprehensive understanding (Miles et al., 2014).

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III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

**Principal's Instructional Leadership Roles in Fostering Students' Character Development**

In the context of SMP Muhammadiyah Boarding School Masbagik, instructional leadership emerges as a pivotal element. The principal elucidates that this form of leadership plays a cardinal role in augmenting the educational process and nurturing character development among students. The multifaceted nature of instructional leadership is underscored, emphasizing its encompassment of leading and managing changes and inspiring and administrating human resources. The empirical data suggest that the efficacy of instructional leadership is intrinsically linked to the holistic development of students, laying the foundation for a conducive educational environment. According to interview results with the principal and study on the school's vision and mission documents, the principal's strategy entails collaborating with parents, teachers, and students to achieve meaningful educational objectives. It can be inferred from the empirical findings that character development, leading and managing change, and inspiring and managing human resources are all viewed as critical components of instructional leadership.

The empirical data reveal a tapestry of strategies meticulously implemented to cultivate students' character development. These strategies, as delineated by the principal, include the exemplification of commendable behaviour by both teachers and the principal, the creation of an amicable school environment, the facilitation of self-development, and vigilant oversight of school activities. The proactive involvement of the principal in orchestrating and supervising character-centric learning implementations is indicative of the school’s commitment to ingraining character values in the educational setting. The strategy put into practice includes modelling excellent behaviour by the principal and instructors, encouraging engagement and conversation with teachers, creating a welcoming school climate, enabling teacher and student self-development, and efficiently managing school activities.

The empirical data underscore a prominent theme: the effective integration of character education within the academic environment. Educators are motivated and encouraged to infuse character values into their instructional framework, facilitated by academic oversight and comprehensive classroom assessments. The implementation of periodic inspections and collaborative gatherings exemplifies the school's steadfast dedication to fostering a harmonious integration of character education and academic pursuits.

The empirical evidence also sheds light on the numerous issues stemming from the diverse educational environment and the continual shifts in social and cultural frameworks. The principal's perspectives illustrate the implementation of adaptation strategies, including broadening teacher responsibilities, instituting specialized training programs, and emphasizing the crucial role of character education. The school's adaptive educational approach is evident in its nuanced handling of individual student needs and the identification of areas requiring heightened attention. Its rigorous evaluation and measurement procedures underscore the school's commitment to character education. The principal's active engagement in closely monitoring students’ daily activities and behaviours serves as a barometer for assessing the extent to which character principles are being internalized and applied in their everyday lives. The meticulous observation and evaluation method employed by the school underscores its dedication to fostering an environment where character traits are not merely taught but

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actively practised. The empirical evidence reinforces the school's deliberate engagement with the community and parents as a cornerstone of character development. The establishment of partnerships and the cultivation of agreements with parents exemplify the mutually beneficial relationship between the educational institution and the local community in fostering character values. The adoption of this collaborative approach by the school signifies its recognition of the significant contribution made by external stakeholders in advancing character development beyond the confines of the educational setting.

The principal's observations unveil the tangible impacts of instructional leadership on school culture and students. The discernible enhancements in educators' work ethic, students' heightened sense of responsibility, and the improvement in environmental sanitation are indicative of the positive effects of character education initiatives. The empirical evidence substantiates the integration of character principles into the school's ethos, permeating across academic disciplines and shaping the educational experience.

The empirical data emphasizes the school's proactive adaptation and responsiveness to the continuously evolving sociocultural contexts. Interviews with the principal and teachers also elucidate a comprehensive explanation of the school's sophisticated strategy for managing the intricate challenges posed by social expectations and workforce requirements about character development. The empirical evidence underscores the school's dedication to implementing and adjusting character education programs to the changing social landscape.

The empirical data depicts the multifaceted role of the principal's instructional leadership at SMP Muhammadiyah Boarding School Masbagik, comprising several dimensions. Firstly, the principal demonstrates visionary leadership as a strategic visionary by formulating strategies for character development, integrating character education into the curriculum, and fostering a conducive learning environment. Secondly, the principal acts as an educational innovator by seamlessly incorporating character education into all aspects of the learning experience, adapting teaching strategies, and nurturing academic and character development. Thirdly, the principal addresses challenges as an adaptive problem solver by enhancing teacher responsibility, providing training, and tailoring character education initiatives to meet diverse learning requirements. Fourthly, the principal functions as an evaluator and assessor, implementing a robust evaluation system to measure students' internalization of character values and ensure accountability.

Additionally, the principal fosters community partnerships as a community builder, forging alliances with parents and the local community to promote character values and create a supportive environment for student development. Furthermore, the principal shapes the school's culture as a cultural architect, fostering a character-centric environment and cultivating values among students and educators. Moreover, the principal demonstrates responsiveness and adaptability as a responsive adapter, aligning character education strategies with evolving societal norms and expectations. Lastly, the principal is a long-term strategist, aligning character development with broader educational goals and future student trajectories and emphasizing holistic and long-term student development in Indonesia.

The principal at SMP Muhammadiyah Boarding School Masbagik assumes a multifaceted role, serving as a strategic visionary, educational innovator, adaptive problem solver, evaluator, community builder, cultural architect, responsive adapter,
and long-term strategist. Each aspect of this leadership actively contributes to the comprehensive character development of students, demonstrating the intricate and varied nature of instructional leadership in moulding character education. Table 1 presents a summary of these roles.

Table 1. Principal's Roles and Impacts on Student Character Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Principal's Role</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Strategies Implemented</th>
<th>Impact on Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Strategic Visionary</td>
<td>Formulates strategies for character development.</td>
<td>Leading by example, fostering learning environment.</td>
<td>Integration of character education, holistic development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Adaptive Problem Solver</td>
<td>Addresses diverse challenges and needs.</td>
<td>Enhancing teacher responsibilities, specialized training.</td>
<td>Customized education addressing individual student needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Evaluator and Assessor</td>
<td>Implements robust evaluation for character programs.</td>
<td>Regular observations, assessments of character values.</td>
<td>Accountability in character education, refinement of initiatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Community Builder</td>
<td>Forges partnerships for character development.</td>
<td>Collaborating with parents and community.</td>
<td>Strengthened role of external stakeholders in character development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Responsive Adapter</td>
<td>Adapts to societal and cultural shifts.</td>
<td>Adjusting character education strategies as needed.</td>
<td>Relevance and effectiveness in dynamic societal context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Long-term Strategist</td>
<td>Aligns character development with broader goals.</td>
<td>Strategic planning for future student trajectories.</td>
<td>Alignment of character development with educational objectives.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Principal's Instructional Leadership is Crucial in Shaping Students' Character Development

The instructional leadership at SMP Muhammadiyah Boarding School Masbagik demonstrates a comprehensive approach to education closely aligned with Hallinger and Wang's five critical aspects of instructional leadership, highlighting the principal's pivotal role in enhancing the educational process and fostering character development.
among students (Hallinger & Wang, 2015). Central to this approach is the principal's effective articulation of the school's vision. By collaborating with parents, teachers, and students, the principal ensures that the entire school community clearly embraces the educational objectives. This collaborative strategy, aimed at nurturing character development, mirrors Hallinger's emphasis on the importance of a principal's role in setting and communicating a vision that garners support and drives the school towards its goals.

In overseeing instructional practices, the principal's focus on the holistic development of students implies a comprehensive monitoring of teaching and learning activities. Although specific details on the evaluation methods still need to be provided, the emphasis on creating a conducive educational environment likely entails meticulous tracking of student progress and efficient time management. This oversight ensures the effectiveness of the educational process, aligning with Hallinger's view that principals must actively supervise and evaluate instructional practices to optimize learning outcomes.

At SMP Muhammadiyah Boarding School Masbagik, the alignment of resources with educational objectives, though not explicitly outlined in the findings, is implied by successfully implementing a vision focused on holistic and character development. The principal likely employs a strategy involving the careful allocation of financial, material, and human resources to support the school's aims, embodying Hallinger's perspective on the necessity of aligning resources to achieve educational goals. Moreover, the principal's efforts to inspire and manage human resources emphasize enhancing teacher performance and motivation. By leading changes and promoting professional development, the principal fosters an environment where teachers are motivated to grow and contribute effectively to their students' education and character development. This approach improves educational quality and aligns with Hallinger's emphasis on the significance of professional development and motivation in enhancing teaching and learning conditions. Lastly, expanding leadership beyond the school's boundaries through engaging parents and fostering partnerships with other schools and organizations underscores the principal's commitment to a broader educational ecosystem. This endeavour to integrate external resources and support enriches the learning environment, reflecting Hallinger's notion that instructional leadership involves extending influence beyond the school to enhance the educational process.

![Mindmap](image.png)

**Figure 1. Instructional Leadership at SMP Muhammadiyah Boarding School Masbagik Mindmap**

Through the in-depth analysis of the leadership strategy employed, it became evident that the school adopted a comprehensive and multifaceted approach. The school
principal and teachers exemplified good conduct, setting a positive example for the children. Encouraging interaction and communication among teachers promoted the exchange of ideas and insights, contributing to a nurturing educational environment. Furthermore, the study emphasized establishing a comfortable and suitable educational setting as a critical strategic objective. This approach was expanded to provide opportunities for self-development for educators and learners, highlighting the importance of individual advancement in the educational process.

Additionally, efficient supervision of school activities was recognized as vital to ensure the seamless functioning of the educational institution and the alignment of activities with its overarching goals. Aligning these findings with current research, it is evident that the emphasis on a multifaceted leadership strategy, characterized by modelling good conduct, fostering communication, and creating a nurturing environment, resonates with the broader instructional leadership literature. Research results substantiate the importance of leaders engaging in “promoting and participating in teacher learning and development” as it significantly impacts student outcomes (Nelson, 2019; Zhou, 2022).

Ariyabuddhiphong asserts that providing supportive working conditions is pivotal for effective leadership, aligning with establishing a comfortable and suitable educational setting (Ariyabuddhiphongs & Boonsanong, 2019). Moreover, contemporary studies emphasize the significance of professional development and personalized learning in enhancing educational outcomes (Anggraeni, 2019; Fadlyansyah & Nurhayati, 2020; Musa et al., 2022; S. Nurhayati, 2021; Sri Nurhayati, 2018) echoing the focus on individual advancement and self-development for educators and learners. The emphasis on efficient supervision and aligning activities with the school's overarching goals is consistent with Hallinger & Walker framework of instructional leadership, which underscores the principal's role in coordinating, controlling, supervising, and developing the curriculum and instruction (Hallinger & Walker, 2017). Additionally, fostering interaction and communication, as found in the study, aligns with the growing body of literature emphasizing the importance of collaborative cultures in schools (Latif et al., 2023; Sri Nurhayati, 2021; Sri Nurhayati, Qudsi, et al., 2023; Sanders, 2018). Establishing such cultures is essential for promoting the interchange of ideas and insights, contributing to a nurturing educational environment. The research findings from SMP Muhammadiyah Boarding School Masbagik align well with current research in the field of instructional leadership. The multifaceted strategy adopted by the principal and teachers, focusing on modelling conduct, fostering a nurturing environment, emphasizing individual advancement, and ensuring efficient supervision, is corroborated by existing literature, thereby contributing valuable insights to the ongoing discourse on effective instructional leadership practices.

The roles described in this study align with the existing literature on instructional leadership, providing valuable insights into the complex interaction of leadership aspects within educational environments. First, is the principal's instructional leadership role as a strategic visionary. Contemporary scholarly investigations emphasize the significance of visionary leadership in establishing the trajectory and ambience of educational establishments (DeMatthews et al., 2020). The principal's position as a strategic visionary at SMP Muhammadiyah Boarding School Masbagik is consistent with this viewpoint, highlighting the need for a well-defined vision to effectively integrate character education and cultivate an environment favorable to learning.
Second, the Principal serves as an innovative innovator. The literature emphasizes the importance of creativity in integrating character education into the learning experience (Badawi et al., 2020; Eliawati & Harahap, 2019), which aligns with the role of the Principal as an educational innovator. The school’s implementation of innovative strategies exemplifies the profound impact of education in cultivating individuals with comprehensive development. Third, the Principal serves as an Adaptive Problem Solver. The concept of adaptability in leadership is a prominent topic in educational research, highlighting the importance of leaders being able to effectively address issues and customize their approaches to accommodate various needs (Ehrhart et al., 2018). The Principal’s approach to problem-solving at the school demonstrates alignment with this topic, highlighting the significance of flexibility and adaptation in leadership.

Fourth, the roles of evaluator and assessor are crucial in the academic context. The Principal’s evaluating function is consistent with scholarly research that underscores the significance of assessment and evaluation in guaranteeing the efficacy of educational programs (Sri Nurhayati, Hidayat, et al., 2023; Suharyat et al., 2022). Incorporating a comprehensive assessment framework for character education within the educational institution exemplifies the prioritization of responsibility and ongoing enhancement.

Fifth, one of the critical roles of an individual inside a community is that of a community builder. The Principal’s function as a community builder aligns with the existing body of literature that emphasizes the importance of community engagement and collaboration within the field of education (Latif et al., 2023; Sri Nurhayati, Qudsi, et al., 2023; Nurmalia et al., 2022; Rumsari & Nurhayati, 2020). Establishing collaborative relationships with parents and the community exemplifies the interdependence of different stakeholders in building a nurturing atmosphere for pupils.

Sixth, the role of a cultural architect is to design and shape the artistic aspects of an organization or community. The Principal’s role as a cultural architect is consistent with scholarly findings that emphasize the impact of leadership on the formation of school culture and the cultivation of a values-oriented atmosphere (Tyaningsih et al., 2021). The instillation of principles such as responsibility and environmental consciousness within the educational institution reflects the Principal’s influence on the establishment’s cultural identity.

Seventh, a "responsive adapter" refers to a device or system capable of adapting and adjusting to various environmental inputs or changes. This adaptability allows the Principal’s leadership style, characterized by responsiveness and adaptability, to align with the existing literature that highlights the importance of educational leaders being able to adjust to changes in society and cultural dynamics (Husin, 2020). The correlation between character education methodologies and the ever-changing societal environment highlights the significance of adaptive leadership.

Eighth, the Principal’s contemplation of the long-term consequences of instructional leadership is consistent with the overarching educational goals discussed in the academic literature (Leek, 2019; Misbah Fatima, Shabana Akhtar, 2021; Želvys et al., 2019). The strategic approach highlighted in this statement emphasizes the Principal’s dedication to ensuring that character development aligns with the broader educational objectives and students’ future paths.
IV. CONCLUSION

This study underscores the essential role of instructional leadership in enhancing the educational experience and developing student character. The leadership exhibited at Junior High School (SMP) Muhammadiyah Boarding School Masbagik embodies the multifaceted nature of instructional leadership outlined by Hallinger. Through articulating a clear vision, overseeing instructional practices, aligning resources, enhancing teacher performance, and expanding leadership beyond the school, the principal plays a critical role in shaping an educational environment that fosters holistic development and character-building among students. This comprehensive approach underscores the intrinsic link between effective instructional leadership and the success of educational objectives, highlighting the principal's central role in navigating and enhancing the educational landscape. The principal emerged as a critical figure, fostering a collaborative environment among educators, parents, and students to achieve the educational objectives in line with the school's vision and mission. A strong correlation was found between instructional leadership and student character development, emphasizing the principal's role in character building, organizational change, and human resource management. These findings align with contemporary research, highlighting the diverse responsibilities of leadership in character education. This research contributes to understanding instructional leadership's impact on student growth and development within educational settings. The practices observed provide valuable insights into practical strategies for creating a nurturing and conducive learning environment. The study offers critical perspectives on how leadership influences student character, underlining the significance of strategic and empathetic leadership in educational environments.

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VI. REFERENCES


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