IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT
TO OPTIMIZE CHARACTER EDUCATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Abstract	This study aims to describe and explore the implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) in optimizing character education at the primary school level. The research explicitly examines how schools plan, implement, and evaluate character education programs within the SBM framework, and identifies the supporting and inhibiting factors that influence their effectiveness. A descriptive qualitative approach with a multi-site study design was employed, involving three primary schools in Purworejo Regency: SDN Purworejo 01, SDN Purworejo 03, and SDN Purworejo 05. The research sites were selected purposively based on the schools' formal integration of character education into their School Development Plans (RKS). Data were collected through in-depth interviews with principals, teachers, and school committee members; classroom and school culture observations; and document analysis, including RKS documents, character education programs, and operational guidelines related to school management. Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that SBM supports character education through school autonomy in designing student-oriented character programs, visionary principal leadership that promotes a positive school culture, teachers' and school committees' active participation in habituation activities, and the integration of character values into thematic learning. The study also identifies several inhibiting factors, including limited monitoring of character programs, inconsistent parental reinforcement, and teachers' administrative workload. These results highlight the importance of strengthening SBM practices by enhancing leadership capacity, improving family involvement, and developing operational, measurable SOPs to support sustainable character education in primary schools.
Keywords	School-Based Management; Character Education; Courtesy Behavior; Primary Schools.

INTRODUCTION

Character education at the elementary school level plays a fundamental role in shaping students' personalities and social behavior from an early age (Supiyardi et al., 2024). At this stage of development, children are at a very sensitive time to the formation of values, attitudes, habits, and perspectives on social life (Sardila, 2015) (Afnita & Latipah, 2021). Ideal character education must include three main domains, namely *moral knowing*, *moral feeling*, and *moral action* (Lickona, 2009; (Lickona, 1992). These three domains cannot be separated because character is not only formed through the mastery of moral concepts, but also through the appreciation of values and habits of acting morally (Anam, 2014) (Abdurahman et al., 2025). In Indonesia, the challenge of character education is increasing along with the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, which encourages schools to develop contextual, flexible, and student-centered learning (Nurhayati et al., 202) Tamimi et al., 2025). Nonetheless, such flexibility requires schools to ensure that character education is not just an incidental activity, but is truly directed, measurable, and sustainable (Toron, 202 (Saputra et al., 2023).

The phenomenon of changing student behavior today is also influenced by the development of digital technology, social media, and online games (Tasya, 2025). Data from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII, 2023) shows that 98.2% of school-age children and adolescents are active internet users, with more than 70% of them playing online games every day (Triono et al., 2025) (Chanra, 2024). In addition, a report by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (2022) revealed that increased exposure to gadgets was associated with decreased emotional control and reduced study focus. It increased mild aggressive behavior among elementary school students (Bekasi & Sukma, 2022). UNICEF findings (2021) also mention that excessive digital activity has an impact on social empathy and face-to-face interaction skills (Aditia et al., 2021) (Keysinaya, 2022). The data support the claim that behavioral changes, such as declining discipline, poor manners, limited social awareness, and increased egocentrism among students, are not merely anecdotal phenomena but have been identified as national problems that require systematic intervention.

In the context of education management in Indonesia, School-Based Management (SBM) is a strategy that is believed to be able to strengthen the implementation of character education (Sunaryo, 2023) (Rahmat & Husain, 2020). SBM gives autonomy to schools to manage resources, formulate programs, and make decisions according to the needs of students (Mulyasa, 2015) (Aziz, 2015). The

main principles of MBS include independence, participation, transparency, accountability, and flexibility (Aisyah, 2021) (Hakim, 2016). Independence requires schools to design programs based on students' real needs. Participation emphasizes the involvement of all stakeholders, including school principals, teachers, education staff, parents, school committees, and the community (Timpal, 2024) (Ekawati et al., 2024). Transparency ensures that the program's planning and implementation are carried out openly, while accountability requires schools to be accountable for their performance. The flexibility allows policy adjustments according to social dynamics and local needs (Nurlaili, 2024) (Appeal, 2024).

However, implementing SBM to strengthen character education does not always run smoothly. Character education programs in several schools often stop at the administrative level, such as slogans, rules, or annual ceremonial activities, without an ongoing evaluation of student behavior. Rahmat and Fauzi (2022) explained that the implementation of character education is often unsustainable and highly dependent on individual teachers' commitment, rather than on the strength of the school management system (Fauzi, 2024). Other challenges arise from low parental involvement and value inconsistencies across home, school, and social environments.

At SDN Purworejo 01, character education is part of the curriculum, but its implementation still shows inconsistencies between planning and classroom practice. The results of the observations showed that strengthening character as a habit of discipline in practice. Responsibilities were carried out sporadically, at the teacher's initiative. School principals revealed that although there has been a character program, coordination between teachers and supervision by school principals has not been optimal, resulting in a less thorough integration of character values into daily learning. School documentation shows that most character activities remain ceremonies, such as morning apples and holiday commemoration ceremonies, without structured follow-up of student behavior evaluations.

The implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) is considered strategic for overcoming this, as it provides SDNs with the autonomy to design and implement character evaluation programs tailored to their contexts. Context-specific challenges in school implementation include low parental involvement in supporting the program, variations in teachers' understanding of character values, and the influence of high student gadget use, which poses a threat to character formation. This condition underscores the need to implement SBM, with planning, supervision, and evaluation carried out continuously and involving all stakeholders, so that character education does not stop at the administrative level but really shapes students' consistent behavior and personality.

Several studies show the role of SBM in implementing character education. Although SBM has been implemented in China and incorporated into instructional planning, its integration into daily learning remains limited and still depends on teacher readiness and principal leadership (Rahmadani et al., 2024). The success of character education relies on the collaboration of teachers and school committees in planning, with character values such as discipline, responsibility, and respect must be integrated in every subject (Panggabean, 2022). Research (Arief & Rusman, 2019) emphasizes the importance of principals as *instructional leaders* in ensuring that the vision of character education is translated into learning policies and practices. In addition, character education management involves planning, implementation, supervision, and evaluation that must be carried out consistently (Hidayat et al., 22). Research on the importance of school committee involvement in supervision so that the implementation of character does not stop as an administrative program (Shokhiyatun et al., 2023). Consequently, research shows that character challenges are also influenced by low learning motivation, lack of parental involvement, and intense exposure to digital technology (Carvina et al., 2023).

Based on preliminary findings conducted by researchers in three elementary schools that are the research locus, several main problems were found: (1) character education programs have not been consistently integrated in learning, (2) the implementation of daily habituation does not run uniformly among teachers, (3) character supervision by school principals is still reactive, and (4) parental involvement is relatively low. These preliminary findings indicate that the three schools follow the principles of SBM and practice it in the field, demonstrating managerial skills and a readiness to optimize SBM as a character education enhancer.

Based on literature reviews, empirical data, and preliminary research findings, it can be concluded that implementing MBS faces significant challenges. The research gap is also seen in the absence of a comprehensive MBS implementation model for character strengthening in elementary schools. Therefore, this study aims to describe the application of SBM in strengthening character education, identify its strengths and weaknesses, and address the challenge of character.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive, qualitative approach with a multi-site design to understand in depth the implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) to strengthen character education in elementary schools. The location of the research is determined through purposive sampling

techniques with clear criteria, namely: (1) the school has documented the implementation of SBM in the School Work Plan (RKS), (2) the school has internal policy tools such as the SOP for Strengthening Character Education and the School Self-Evaluation (EDS) document, and (3) the school has obtained institutional recognition, for example as a Driving School or a school with the predicate of "good performance" based on the results of the supervision of the Education Office Purworejo Regency.

The three schools were used as the object of the ERP Purworejo 03 and SDN Purworejo 05. The selection of these schools was based on the researchers' initial findings that showed a variety of strategies in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of character programs. These variations are relevant to be studied through comparative case studies, thereby enabling an in-depth examination of the practice of SBM and its supporting and inhibiting factors at the elementary school level. The research subjects were selected *purposively*, guided by the ontology of SBM. The principal is chosen because he is the policy-maker of the school; classroom teachers and subject teachers because they are the direct implementers of the character-strengthening program; and students because they are the recipients of the program. The program's impact grew through the *snowball technique*, which added new informants based on recommendations from previous contacts when the emerging data were deemed inadequate.

Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. The interview was conducted to explore the planning process, habituation strategies, SBM mechanisms, parental involvement, and obstacles to implementing the value of politeness. Observation is carried out directly during daily activities such as the duringag ceremony, morning apple, classroom learning, teacher exemplary practice, student interaction, and greetings—the observation from January 3, 2025, to February 28, 2025, at three research schools. Documentation studies were conducted on RKS, and supervision documents included SOPs, activity reports, habituation journals, and student behavior evaluation records, all collected during the same period. All of these techniques are used repeatedly until the data reaches a saturation point.

The data analysis follows the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, but focuses on field practice. At the data reduction stage, the researcher selected key statements from the interviews, recorded the dominant behavior of the observed students, and marked the parts of the document related explicitly to Sg and politeness. Each data is given thematic codes such as "MBS-based planning", "exemplary", "habituation", "supervision", "parental support", and

"implementation barriers". The codes are then grouped to find patterns and differences between schools.

The data were presented in terms of strategies between schools; for example, the accessibility of the programs in the RK for the practice of character habituation in the field. In addition, the narrative dynamics of student-interaction responses. Conclude by re-reading the pattern of findings, testing the consistency between data sources, and connecting them to character education theory and SBM principles. The verification process is carried out through triangulation of sources (principals, teachers, committees, students) and technical triangulation (interviews, observations, documents with informants). Peer debriefing with fellow researchers, re-interviews, observations, documents, subjectivity, and reducing potential interpretation bias. This combination of techniques ensures that the research results are accurate, credible, and reflect empirical conditions in the field.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This section presents the findings on the implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) to strengthen education, particularly behavior, in three primary schools in SDN Strengthen 01, SDN Purworejo 03, and SDN Purworejo 05. Data were collected through interviews with principals, teachers, and school committees, classroom observations, and document analysis (RKS, SOP, and character program reports), and analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

1. Integration of Courtesy Values in School Planning

All three schools formally integrated courtesy values into their Rencana Kerja Sekolah (RKS), annual character programs, and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). At SDN Purworejo 01 and SDN Purworejo 03, planning meetings actively involved principals, teachers, and the school committee, reflecting participatory decision-making—a core component of SBM. SDN Purworejo 05 showed strong teacher collaboration but limited committee involvement. Courtesy-related programs documented at the planning stage included:

a. "Gerakan Sapa Pagi" (Morning Greeting Movement)

b. Weekly courtesy themes

c. Classroom routines emphasizing respectful speech

d. Integration of politeness indicators in learning assessments

This indicates that SBM-enabled autonomy enabled these schools to design character programs tailored to their contextual needs, though the degree of stakeholder participation varied.

2. Implementation Throughtailoredionatheir l Processes

Teachers integrated courtesy values into thematic learning, storytelling activities, group work, and reflective discussions. At SDN Purworejo 01, teachers consistently prompted students to use polite sentence structures, encouraged turn-taking and attentive listening, and assigned roles fostering respect and responsibility. SDN Purworejo 03 showed similar practices but slightly less consistency, while SDN Purworejo 05 integrated courtesy values intermittently. Observations of classroom consistency in SDN Purworejo 01 showed the most consistent polite behaviors, followed by SDN Purworejo 03, while SDN Purworejo 05 showed the most significant variation.

3. Habituation and School Culture Practices

Courtesy was reinforced through gestures, including morning greetings, queuing routines, daily reflections, collaborative cleaning activities, and Friday "Courtesy Day." Students at SDN Purworejo 01 and SDN Purworejo 03 consistently practiced greetings and polite communication during structured routines, while SDN Purworejo 05 exhibited lower consistency, particularly during unstructured times such as recess. These differences suggest the need for stronger supervision and culture-building in SDN Purworejo 05.

4. Teacher Modeling as the Strongest Reinforcing Factor

Teacher modeling was the most influential factor shaping students' courtesy behaviors. Teachers at SDN Purworejo 01 consistently greeted students warmly, used polite language, mediated conflicts calmly, and demonstrated empathy, resulting in higher student adherence to courtesy norms. SDN Purworejo 03 showed moderate consistency in modeling behaviors, whereas SDN Purworejo 05 teachers exhibited less systematic modeling, correlating with lower student courtesy levels. This aligns with Lickona's moral action dimension, emphasizing the role of adult exemplars in character development.

5. Supporting Factors

Successful implementation across the schools was supported by:

a. Strong principal leadership, particularly in SDN Purworejo 01 and 03

b. Collaborative teacher culture enabling program continuity

c. Active school committee involvement, especially in SDN Purworejo 01

d. Favorable school climate where students felt respected and valued, most pronounced in SDN

Purworejo 01

6. Inhibiting Factors

Barriers identified included inconsistent monitoring, particularly during breaks and transitions (most evident in SDN Purworejo 05), teachers' administrative workload reducing their focus on character mentoring (in all schools), uneven parental reinforcement, particularly in SDN Purworejo 03, and limited teacher training in value-based pedagogy. These hindering factors contributed to variations in courtesy behavior across grade levels and schools.

Table 1. Summary of Findings on SBM for Courtesy Development

No	Focus Area	Findings	Description
1	Planning	Integrated into RKS	Courtesy embedded in school development plans
2	Instruction	Value integration	Values infused in thematic lessons & group work
3	Habituation	Daily routines	Greeting, queuing, reflection, and cleanliness duty
4	Modeling	High impact	Teachers' polite behavior shapes student conduct
5	Supporting Factors	Leadership, culture	Strong leadership = stronger courtesy and consistency
6	Inhibiting Factors	Monitoring, parents	Courtesy is less consistent when unsupervised

Source: Research data collected from SDN Purworejo 01, 03, and 05 (January–February 2025)

Table 2. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in SBM-Based Courtesy Education

Category	Factors	Explanation
Supporting	Principal Leadership	Monitors routines, reinforces culture
Supporting	Teacher Collaboration	Shared strategies sustain consistency
Supporting	Committee Involvement	Strengthens school–community partnership
Inhibiting	Administrative Burdens	Limits teachers' character engagement
Inhibiting	Weak Monitoring	Values decline outside structured activities
Inhibiting	Family Inconsistency	Students get mixed messages at home

Source: Research data collected from SDN Purworejo 01, 03, and 05 (January–February 2025)

The findings presented in Table 1 confirm that the implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) in the three schools, namely SDN Purworejo 01, SDN Purworejo 03, and SDN Purworejo 05, has succeeded in integrating the value of politeness in various aspects of school planning and activities. In terms of planning, all schools have included the value of politeness in the School Work Plan (RKS), the annual character education program, and interdemonstrating, showing that the SBM principle allows schools to design character tailored according to their recontextual needs. The integration of these values is also reflected in the learning process, where teachers instill polite behavior through thematic lessons, group work, storytelling activities, and reflective discussions, as well as in daily routines such as morning greetings, queues before entering class,

daily reflections, and manipulation activities. In addition, teacher modeling or exemplary behavior is the main reinforcing factor, where consistent teacher polite behavior is contagious to students, thereby strengthening the practical application of character values in the field.

Furthermore, Table 2 emphasizes that several significant internal factors support the successful implementation of SBM-based character education. The principal's leadership in monitoring daily routines and enforcing a culture of politeness is the primary determinant of the program's sustainability. Collaboration also plays a vital role in maintaining consistency of character practice across the classroom. At the same time, school committee involvement strengthens school–community partnerships, including funding support and program oversight. The combination of these supporting factors creates a favorable school climate, where students feel valued, motivated to practice the value of politeness, and demonstrate more disciplined and responsible social behavior. These findings show that implementing increases internal school involvement, but also strengthens the school's social and cultural structure that supports the formation of students' character.

On the other hand, both tables also highlight the need for pre-inhibition considerations to strengthen SBM implementation. Inconsistent monitoring, especially when students are outside during breaks, leads to varied behavior among students and between students and teachers, which is manageable at Sejo 0. Notably, the administrative burden on teachers limits their focus on character guidance, while family inconsistency in supporting good manners leads to inconsistent use of different behaviors across mixed schools. The limitations of teacher training in value-based pedagogy are also an obstacle, so not all teachers can instill values effectively. Thus, while SBM is a managerial framework for character education, its successful implementation still depends on alignment between leadership, teacher collaboration, committee engagement, and parental support, as well as the need for ongoing oversight to ensure the value is truly embedded in the school

Discussion

This study found that the implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) at SDN Purworejo 01, SDN Purworejo 03, and SDN Purworejo 05 has a significant role in strengthening character education based on politeness. At SDN Purworejo 01, the integration of politeness values seems consistent in the School Work Plan (RKS), internal SOPs, and daily habituation activities such as the "Morning Greeting Movement", class queues, daily reflections, and community service. Meanwhile, SDN Purworejo 03 applies a similar principle. However, the intensity and consistency

of habituation activities remain moderate due to limitations in supervision and the remaining variability in ter participation. SDN Purworejo 05 faces a greater challenge, as the greater r-value presence in the classrooms is not sustained due to minimal involvement of the school committee and a weak monitoring system. These findings support Caldwell and Spinks' theory that school autonomy and participatory mechanisms are at the heart of SBM, as school-level decision-making enables more effective quality improvement (Caldwell & Spinks, 2003).

However, this study expands the understanding of the theory by emphasizing that school autonomy alone does not guarantee character program innovation; The success of SBM implementation is highly dependent on the active participation of teachers, principals, students, and school committees. These findings align with the research of Rahmadani et al. (2024), which confirms that school community collaboration and committee involvement are essential factors in the success of character education in elementary schools. Thus, SBM not only becomes a managerial framework, but also becomes a strategic mechanism that enables the development of programs with relevant and contextual characteristics; in addition, the internalization of the value of politeness occurs through integrated learning practices that include aspects of knowing, feeling, and action, as stated by Lickona (1991; 2004). At SDN Purworejo 01, politeness values are integrated into thematic learning, stories, group work, and reflective discussions.

The teacher encourages students to use polite sentences, take turns speaking, and take responsibility in each group task. At SDN Purworejo 03, although a similar approach was applied, the frequency of grade reinforcement during learning was lower, resulting in students' behavior. At SDN Purworejo 05, the integration of politeness values is more about how and when, and is highly dependent on the teacher who taught at that stage, suggesting that the process of internalizing values is highly dependent on the learning provided. These findings open a dialogue between Lickona's emphasis on cognitive, affective, and action-oriented integration and Narvaez's theory, which emphasizes the importance of repetitive practice to form moral competence (Narvaez, 2014). Field data show that daily routines such as queuing, greeting, polite talking, and following daily procedures are the main mechanisms of internalization. This suggests a tension between Licona's focus on holistic integration and Narvaez's on repetition.

Still, the two theories complement each other in the practice of character education in elementary schools. These findings are reinforced by international research, such as Görün (2025), which affirms the importance of learning experiences and teacher exemplars (Görün et al., 2025), as

well as by Sp and Spaasich (2022), and by reflective dialogue, which reinforces the internalization of values (Spaas et al., 2022). Thus, integrating values into daily learning activities is an effective strategy for building a culture of politeness in school. Research on teachers emerged as a central mechanism shaping SDN Purworejo 01. It shows that teachers who consistently set an example through polite language, empathy, and calm conflict mediation can form a clean shape that later becomes school culture.

At SDN Purworejo 03, teachers who demonstrate high exemplarity succeed in modeling behavior among students, but variations among teachers mean not all students interpret the same thing. Mehile, at SDN Purworejo 05, the example of teachers is the main determining factor, because the formal politeness program is still not structured. These findings support the social learning theory of Berkowitz and Bier (2005), which states that character education is most effective when values are modeled and demonstrated by figures students regularly observe. Moreover, the teacher's example not only influences individual behavior but also shapes cumulative classroom norms, thus creating a broader, more sustainable school culture. This emphasizes that exemplary behavior is not just a complement to character programs but a determinant of the successful internalization of the value of politeness.

The principal's instructional leadership and strong school culture help strengthen the consistency of the politeness program. SDN Purworejo 01 shows very active leadership, with the principal directing, monitoring, and setting an example in the habituation. SDN Purworejo 03 also has good instructional leadership. Still, variations in teacher and committee involvement cause differences in effectiveness across SDN Purworejo 05. The principal's participation in supervising daily routines is relatively low, and the reinforcement of the value of politeness is uneven. These findings align with Linalignam's (2025) research, which emphasizes that leadership and school climate are the main foundations of character building. In this regard, school committee involvement has proven essential for extending the range of politeness values into the family environment, supporting the findings of Yulfizar (2023) and Yulfizar & Zulganef (2023), who show that school-community collaboration determines the success of value transfer (Yulfizar & Zulganef, 2023). In this study, when the committee is less active, the reinforcement of values at home becomes inconsistent, thereby reducing the effectiveness of politeness education. Thus, collaboration between schools, families, and communities is an inseparable element in building a cohesive character ecosystem.

This study also identified several inhibiting factors, including a weak monitoring system, a high administrative burden on teachers, and inconsistent values in the family environment. This obstacle is more evident at SDN Purworejo 05, where teachers have to divide their time between administrative tasks and character development, resulting in less optimal internal development of politeness. These findings show that SBM is often hampered when accountability is not maintained (Oluremi & Ishola, 2024). In addition, the high administrative burden supports Hardiansyah's (2022) findings, which highlight the impact of bureaucracy on learning effectiveness (Hardiansyah, 2022). While SBM provides a supporting framework, the success of its implementation depends heavily on the quality of cross-agency oversight, monitoring, and synergy, as well as on the involvement of all stakeholders.

Overall, SBM in these three elementary schools is not just a managerial framework but a structure that enables schools to develop character education programs focused on politeness in a structured manner. The internalization of the value of politeness is most effective when schools integrate planning, learning, habituation, exemplification, and monitoring into a single system that supports each other. Principal's leadership and teacher's role model emerge as determining factors, while parental and committee involvement strengthens or weakens the outcomes achieved in schools. These findings confirm previous research while providing empirical evidence that effective character development requires an integrated, sustainable ecosystem. Within this school, teacher capacity and family involvement work in harmony.

In other words, this study confirms that integrating Lickona and Narvaez's theories with SBM practice at SDN Purworejo results in a more holistic character-learning strategy, with daily habituation, teacher example, principal's leadership, and school-family collaboration as the main pillars of the success of politeness-based character education. These findings show that character programs cannot rely solely on formal documents or policies.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that School-Based Management (SBM) plays a substantial role in strengthening character education, particularly the development of courtesy behavior in primary school students. The findings demonstrate that courtesy values are effectively cultivated when they are systematically integrated into school planning documents, embedded in instructional practices, reinforced through daily habituation routines, and consistently modeled by teachers. SBM provides

the managerial and structural foundation that enables schools to design contextually relevant character programs through autonomy, participatory decision-making, transparency, and shared responsibility. The study also reveals that successful courtesy development depends on strong instructional leadership, collaborative teacher culture, active school committee involvement, and a favorable school climate. At the same time, several inhibiting factors—such as weak monitoring systems, administrative burdens on teachers, limited parental reinforcement, and insufficient training in value-based pedagogy—pose challenges to the sustainability of character initiatives. Addressing these issues is essential for ensuring that courtesy behaviors are internalized not only during structured routines but also in students' everyday interactions. Overall, this research contributes to the theoretical understanding of how SBM supports character education and provides practical guidance for primary schools seeking to strengthen the development of courtesy. Schools are encouraged to enhance monitoring mechanisms, provide continuous teacher training, strengthen home–school partnerships, and refine SBM-based policies to ensure the consistent implementation of character values across contexts. Future studies may explore quantitative measures of courtesy behavior or comparative analyses across different school regions to enrich the understanding of character education practices in Indonesia.

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