

Nurturing Student Leadership from Within: An Integrative Framework of School Culture Management and 'The Leader in Me'

Renisa Septia^{1*}, Lina Novita², Elly Sukmanasa³

^{1,2,3}Education Management Department, Universitas Pakuan, Bogor, West Java, Indonesia

Email: renisaseptia@gmail.com¹, linov12@unpak.ac.id², ellysukmanasa@unpak.ac.id³

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze how school culture management strengthens student leadership by integrating The Leader in Me approach and student voice from an educational management perspective. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design conducted in a school. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, passive participant observation, and document analysis. Data analysis was conducted using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, while data validity was tested through source and technique triangulation. The results show that student leadership develops through an integrated school culture management system, rather than through a stand-alone leadership program. The core values of ICARE (Integrity, Collaboration, Active, Respect, and Excellence) serve as the foundation of school culture in building and strengthening student leadership. These values are internalized through a continuous process of learning, role modeling, and habituation within the framework of The Leader in Me approach. Furthermore, the internalization of these values is achieved through the Kreativa Voice of Leaders program, which provides a space for student participation to convey ideas, develop self-leadership, and strengthen social leadership. Based on these findings, this study proposes an integrative framework to strengthen student leadership through school culture management. This framework provides practical implications for educational management in developing sustainable student leadership through strengthening values, culture, and active student participation.

Keywords: *School Culture, Student Leadership, The Leader in Me, ICARE Values*

Abstrak:

Studi ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana manajemen budaya sekolah memperkuat kepemimpinan siswa melalui integrasi pendekatan *The Leader in Me* dan suara siswa dalam perspektif manajemen pendidikan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus yang dilaksanakan di sebuah sekolah. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif pasif, dan analisis dokumen. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman, sementara keabsahan data diuji melalui triangulasi sumber dan teknik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan siswa berkembang melalui sistem manajemen budaya sekolah yang terintegrasi, bukan melalui program kepemimpinan yang berdiri secara terpisah. Nilai-nilai inti ICARE (*Integrity, Collaboration, Active, Respect, dan Excellence*) berperan sebagai fondasi budaya sekolah dalam membangun dan memperkuat kepemimpinan siswa. Nilai-nilai tersebut diinternalisasi melalui proses pembelajaran, keteladanan, serta pembiasaan yang dilakukan secara berkelanjutan dalam kerangka pendekatan *The Leader in Me*. Selanjutnya, internalisasi nilai tersebut diwujudkan

melalui program *Kreativa Voice of Leaders* sebagai ruang partisipasi siswa untuk menyampaikan gagasan, mengembangkan kepemimpinan diri (*self-leadership*), dan memperkuat kepemimpinan sosial (*social leadership*). Berdasarkan temuan tersebut, penelitian ini mengusulkan kerangka kerja integratif dalam penguatan kepemimpinan siswa berbasis manajemen budaya sekolah. Kerangka ini memberikan implikasi praktis bagi manajemen pendidikan dalam mengembangkan kepemimpinan siswa yang berkelanjutan melalui penguatan nilai, budaya, dan partisipasi aktif siswa.

Kata Kunci: *Budaya Sekolah, Kepemimpinan Siswa, The Leader in Me, nilai ICARE*

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INTRODUCTION

Educational systems worldwide are undergoing a profound transformation as schools are expected not only to improve academic performance but also to prepare students to become responsible, adaptive, and collaborative citizens (Darling-Hammond & McGuire, 2023; Garba & Byabazaire, 2026; Parrish, 2022). This shift reflects growing societal demands for individuals who are capable of responding to rapid technological change, global competition, and increasingly complex social challenges (Cheng, 2024; Shafik, 2026). International organizations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) emphasize that future-ready education requires the balanced development of knowledge, competencies, values, and student agency rather than the transmission of academic content alone (Mertanen & Brunila, 2024; Rismawati et al., 2026; Shek, Chau, & Lee, 2025). Indonesia has adopted a similar direction through the National Education System and the Merdeka Curriculum, which encourage meaningful, student-centered learning while promoting critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, and independence (Thornhill-Miller et al., 2023). Consequently, strengthening student leadership has become an educational priority because leadership equips students to participate actively in learning communities, solve problems collaboratively, and contribute positively to society beyond school settings.

Student leadership is increasingly recognized as a fundamental competency for sustainable social development because leadership behaviors established during childhood frequently influence future civic engagement, organizational participation, and professional success (Kim & Holyoke, 2022; Magjuka & Marke, 2023; Ntsizwane, 2026). Contemporary educational research argues that leadership should no longer be viewed as a privilege reserved for a small number of students holding formal positions but rather as a universal competency that can be cultivated in every learner through daily educational experiences. Students who demonstrate initiative, responsibility, communication skills, and collaborative problem-solving are more likely to adapt successfully to changing educational and professional environments (Tuan & Tho, 2025). Therefore, schools carry an important social responsibility to establish learning environments that systematically nurture leadership as part of students' character formation. Developing student leadership is thus not merely an institutional

objective but also a strategic investment in preparing future citizens who can contribute constructively to society.

Despite broad agreement on the importance of student leadership, many schools continue to struggle to develop leadership as an integral part of everyday educational practice (Fidan & Ayyıldız, 2022). Leadership programs are frequently implemented as extracurricular activities, temporary projects, or training sessions that involve only selected students rather than the broader student population (Fidan & Ayyıldız, 2022; Holquist, Mitra, Conner, & Wright, 2023). As a result, leadership development often remains fragmented and disconnected from classroom learning, school culture, and students' daily interactions. Previous studies suggest that although positive school environments encourage participation and responsibility, many students still have limited opportunities to practice leadership authentically through meaningful decision-making and collaborative learning experiences (Özgenel et al., 2025; Porkodi, Saranya, Sultana, & Mittal, 2023). This situation creates a significant gap between leadership values promoted by schools and students' actual experiences. Consequently, strengthening student leadership requires a comprehensive management approach that embeds leadership consistently within the school's organizational culture rather than relying on isolated educational interventions.

School culture has consistently been identified as one of the most influential organizational factors shaping educational quality because it determines shared values, norms, beliefs, and patterns of interaction among school members (Aypay, Çakır, Özkan, & Bellibaş, 2026; Ott, Meusburger, & Quenzel, 2023). Numerous studies have demonstrated that positive school cultures enhance collaboration, responsibility, student engagement, and character development while creating conditions that support leadership (Joshi, Li, & Walker, 2025; Ogunbayo & Yassim, 2025; Özgenel et al., 2025). Parallel research has shown that the leader in me, grounded in Covey's Seven Habits, effectively develops self-leadership, responsibility, and social-emotional competencies by integrating leadership principles into classroom routines and school activities (Aladwan & Sawalhi, 2026; Gubbels, Hornstra, van Weerdenburg, Diepstraten, & Bakx, 2025). Meanwhile, studies on student voice emphasize that students develop stronger agency and leadership when they are genuinely involved in expressing opinions, participating in decision-making, and shaping school improvement initiatives. Collectively, these studies confirm that each element contributes positively to leadership development.

Although previous studies provide valuable insights, existing literature remains theoretically fragmented because school culture, The Leader in Me, and student voice are often examined as separate constructs. Research on school culture primarily focuses on organizational climate. In contrast, studies on The Leader in Me tend to evaluate leadership and social-emotional learning outcomes without explaining how leadership values are embedded in broader organizational processes (Aypay et al., 2026; Joshi et al., 2025; Ott et al., 2023). Similarly, student voice research emphasizes participation, democratic education, and learner agency but pays limited attention to its connection to the internalization of leadership values and school culture (Ogunbayo & Yassim,

2025). Therefore, the managerial processes linking school culture, leadership internalization, and authentic student participation remain insufficiently understood.

To address this gap, this study proposes an integrated perspective that conceptualizes student leadership as the result of interconnected school culture management processes. Unlike previous research that investigates school culture, The Leader in Me, or student voice independently, this study positions school culture as the organizational foundation, The Leader in Me as a mechanism for internalizing leadership values, and student voice as a platform for applying those values in educational practice (Oppi, Eisenschmidt, & Jögi, 2022). The novelty of this study lies in explaining the dynamic interaction among these elements as an integrated leadership development system and proposing a conceptual framework for sustainable student leadership development.

Based on this perspective, this study addresses the research problem: How can school culture, The Leader in Me, and student voice be integrated into a coherent school culture management framework that strengthens student leadership? This study argues that sustainable student leadership requires more than isolated leadership programs; it emerges through systematic organizational processes in which leadership values are embedded in school culture, internalized through The Leader in Me, and practiced through meaningful student voice. Accordingly, this research aims to develop an integrated framework that contributes to educational management theory and provides practical guidance for schools in cultivating students' self-leadership and social leadership.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore how school culture management strengthens student leadership through the integration of The Leader in Me and student voice. A qualitative case study was considered appropriate because the study sought to understand the meanings, processes, interactions, and management practices underlying student leadership development within its natural context rather than to examine causal relationships. Consistent with Yin (2017), this design enables an in-depth investigation of contemporary educational phenomena situated within real-life settings (Annamalah et al., 2026). The research was conducted from January to July 2026 at SD Kreativa Bogor, Indonesia, which was purposively selected as an information-rich case because it has implemented The Leader in Me since 2013 and has maintained FranklinCovey Lighthouse School certification since 2016, demonstrating a sustained commitment to leadership-based school culture.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their knowledge, experience, and direct involvement in student leadership implementation. They included the Director of Yasmina Foundation, the Foundation's Research and Development Division, the Coordinator of Special Activities and Student Affairs, the school principal, fourth- and fifth-grade homeroom teachers, and students participating in the Kreativa Voice of Leaders program. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, passive participant observation, and document analysis. Interviews explored participants' perspectives on school culture management, leadership value internalization,

student voice, supporting factors, implementation challenges, and sustainability strategies. At the same time, observations and institutional documents provided complementary evidence regarding classroom practices, leadership activities, school policies, and organizational routines.

Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), in which data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously through data condensation, thematic data display, and conclusion drawing (Mawaddah et al., 2023). Interview transcripts, observation notes, and institutional documents were systematically coded, categorized, and interpreted to identify emerging themes related to student leadership development. To ensure trustworthiness, the study employed source and method triangulation by integrating evidence from multiple participants and data collection techniques. Member checking was also conducted by returning interview summaries and preliminary interpretations to selected participants, thereby enhancing the credibility, dependability, confirmability, and overall rigor of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

School Culture as the Foundation of Student Leadership

School culture, in the context of this study, refers to the organizational system that intentionally shapes students' leadership through shared values, daily routines, school policies, learning practices, and interactions among school members. At SD Kreativa Bogor, school culture is operationalized through the ICARE values: Integrity, Collaboration, Active, Respect, and Excellence, which serve not only as institutional values but also as the foundation for educational management and student development. Rather than functioning as symbolic statements, these values are embedded in classroom instruction, school activities, leadership programs, and teacher–student interactions. Consequently, student leadership is cultivated through continuous exposure to organizational values that guide students' attitudes and behaviors in everyday school life. The findings indicate that school culture functions as the primary organizational foundation upon which subsequent leadership development processes are systematically built.

The principal explained that the ICARE values constitute the foundation of all educational processes rather than merely representing the school's vision. She stated, "ICARE is not merely a slogan but the foundation of our school system. Every learning activity, classroom interaction, and student program refers to these values so that leadership becomes part of students' daily habits rather than an additional activity." According to the principal, leadership development begins by strengthening students' personal integrity and responsibility, then gradually expands to collaboration, active participation, mutual respect, and the pursuit of excellence. These findings suggest that leadership is developed through a systematic cultural process in which organizational values consistently guide educational decision-making and students' daily experiences. From the researcher's perspective, the principal's explanation demonstrates that leadership development is intentionally embedded within school management, allowing leadership values to become an integral part of students' everyday learning rather

than isolated instructional content.

The Director of Yasmina Foundation explained that the ICARE values originated as the foundation's organizational culture and were later systematically integrated into school management, teacher development, and classroom learning through *The Leader in Me* and the Seven Habits. This alignment ensured consistency between organizational values and leadership education across all school activities. Classroom observations and document analysis confirmed that teachers embedded ICARE values into instruction through collaborative learning, value-based feedback, and shared responsibilities. At the same time, students practiced leadership by leading prayers, facilitating discussions, presenting projects, and resolving conflicts respectfully. The ICARE values and the Seven Habits were also visibly reinforced through classroom displays, lesson plans, leadership modules, assessment rubrics, school regulations, and annual programs. Overall, the findings indicate that leadership development is institutionalized within the school's culture management system, enabling students to continuously experience, practice, and internalize leadership values as part of their everyday learning and school life.



Figure 1. School Cultural Hierarchy in Student Leadership Formation

Figure 1 illustrates the hierarchical process through which school culture strengthens student leadership at SD Kreativa Bogor. The process begins with the Yasmina Foundation's organizational values, which are transformed into ICARE values (Integrity, Collaboration, Active, Respect, and Excellence) and implemented through school policies, programs, classroom practices, and daily routines. Through continuous learning, reflection, collaboration, and responsibility, these values become internalized as students' leadership behaviors. The figure highlights that student leadership emerges from a systematically managed school culture rather than from an isolated program.

Value Internalization through *The Leader in Me*

Value internalization in this study refers to the systematic process through which leadership values embedded in school culture are transformed into students' beliefs, attitudes, and habitual behaviors. At SD Kreativa Bogor, *The Leader in Me* functions not as an independent leadership program but as the mechanism for translating ICARE values into daily learning experiences. Through the Seven Habits framework, students are guided to practice, reflect on, and reinforce leadership values, enabling the development of self-awareness, responsibility, discipline, and collaboration as continuous educational processes.

The Director of Yasmina Foundation explained that internalization begins with developing students' leadership identity before introducing the Seven Habits. He emphasized that students must first recognize their own leadership potential, after which habits such as *Be Proactive*, *Begin with the End in Mind*, and *Put First Things First* can be practiced more effectively. These habits are strengthened through Wildly Important Goals (WIGs), which encourage students to set goals, monitor progress, and evaluate personal development. These findings indicate that leadership development at SD Kreativa Bogor prioritizes mindset transformation as the foundation for behavioral change.

The principal further explained that ICARE values and the Seven Habits operate as complementary components, with ICARE providing shared values and the Seven Habits translating them into daily actions. Classroom observations and document analysis showed that teachers consistently integrated leadership language into learning activities, collaboration, problem-solving, and reflection. Various practices, including Leadership Roles, WIG, My Leadership Portfolio (MLP), Historical Leadership Report Card (HLRC), Project with Parents, and Leadership Day, reinforce this process. Thus, *The Leader in Me* serves as a systematic mechanism for embedding leadership values through learning, modeling, habituation, and reflection.

Table 1. Value Internalization through *The Leader in Me*

Informant Position	Interview Excerpt	Indicator
Director of Yasmina Foundation	"Every child is a leader. Therefore, we first build students' mindset before introducing the Seven Habits. Leadership begins with how children perceive themselves."	Leadership paradigm as the starting point of value internalization
Principal of SD Kreativa Bogor	"ICARE is the language of values, while the Seven Habits are the language of action. Both are inseparable in everyday learning."	Integration of ICARE values and the Seven Habits
Fourth-Grade Homeroom Teacher	"Every lesson is connected to one of the Seven Habits, and students always reflect on how they have practiced the habit during learning."	Integration of leadership habits into classroom instruction
Fifth-Grade Homeroom Teacher	"Leadership is strengthened through daily reflection, teacher modeling, and leadership tools such as WIG and Leadership Roles."	Teacher modeling and structured leadership practices
Fourth-Grade Student	"We write our goals in WIG and try to achieve them little by little. Teachers help us reflect on our progress."	Self-regulation and personal responsibility
Fifth-Grade Student	"The Seven Habits are not only discussed in class but also practiced during projects, presentations, and school activities."	Leadership habituation through authentic learning experiences

Table 1 demonstrates that value internalization through *The Leader in Me* is perceived consistently across all participant groups as a continuous developmental process rather than a stand-alone instructional program. School leaders emphasized the importance of beginning with the leadership paradigm by cultivating students' belief that every child possesses leadership potential before introducing specific leadership behaviors. Teachers highlighted the integration of the Seven Habits into classroom instruction, reflection activities, and daily

routines. In contrast, students described leadership as something they experienced through goal setting, collaborative learning, classroom responsibilities, and project-based activities. The convergence of these perspectives indicates that leadership values are reinforced through multiple educational experiences rather than through isolated lessons, thereby strengthening the credibility of the findings across different sources of evidence.

Student Voice as Authentic Leadership Practice

Student voice in this study refers to a structured educational process that enables students to express ideas, participate in decision-making, and contribute actively to the school community. At SD Kreativa Bogor, student voice is integrated into classroom learning, collaborative activities, reflective discussions, and leadership programs, rather than being limited to public speaking. The findings show that student voice serves as the practical expression of leadership values internalized through The Leader in Me, particularly through the Kreativa Voice of Leaders program, which develops students' confidence, communication skills, critical thinking, and leadership responsibility.

The Director of Yasmina Foundation explained that student voice is an essential element of The Leader in Me because leadership develops when students are trusted to express ideas and participate meaningfully. He emphasized that students are encouraged to share perspectives, engage in discussions, and contribute to learning activities rather than merely follow instructions. These findings indicate that student voice is intentionally managed as an educational strategy to transform students from passive learners into active contributors, thereby allowing leadership to emerge through authentic participation in daily experiences.

The Principal of SD Kreativa Bogor and the Foundation's Research and Development Division described Kreativa Voice of Leaders as a strategic initiative derived from The Leader in Me Framework 4.0 to strengthen students' leadership potential. Classroom observations and document analysis confirmed that student voice was embedded through questioning, discussions, presentations, feedback, reflection, and leadership roles such as speakers, moderators, and members of the organizing committee. The consistency of interview, observation, and document data demonstrates that student voice functions as a school culture management strategy that connects classroom participation with sustainable student leadership development.

Table 2. Student Voice as Authentic Leadership Practice

Informant Position	Interview Excerpt	Indicator
Director of Yasmina Foundation	"Students are encouraged to communicate their own ideas, participate actively, and contribute their perspectives. Leadership begins when students realize that their voices have value."	Student empowerment through meaningful participation
Principal of SD Kreativa Bogor	"The <i>Kreativa Voice of Leaders</i> program is designed to strengthen students' confidence in communicating ideas publicly while reinforcing the leadership values developed through school culture."	Student voice as a leadership development strategy

Research and Development Division	"The program originated from Framework 4.0 of <i>The Leader in Me</i> . It was created as an internal platform where students progressively build confidence before participating in broader leadership opportunities."	Progressive pathway of leadership development
Coordinator of Special Activities and Student Affairs	"Student voice has become part of our everyday school culture, while <i>Kreativa Voice of Leaders</i> strengthens these practices through structured leadership experiences."	Integration of student voice into school culture
Fourth-Grade Student	"After joining the program, I became more confident to express my ideas and participate in class discussions."	Growth of confidence and communication
Fifth-Grade Student	"The opportunities to speak in front of teachers and friends prepared me to become the Student Lighthouse Team President."	Student voice leading to authentic leadership roles

Table 2 shows strong agreement among participants regarding the role of student voice in strengthening student leadership. School leaders identified student voice as a structured strategy that enables students to participate in learning, decision-making, and leadership experiences. The *Kreativa Voice of Leaders* program supports this process by developing students' confidence, communication skills, and leadership responsibility. Consistent evidence from interviews, observations, and documents indicates that student voice serves as a mechanism for transforming internalized leadership values into authentic leadership behaviors through progressive participation and empowerment.



Figure 2. Leadership Development Sequence Through Student Voice Practices

Figure 2 illustrates the progressive sequence through which student leadership is strengthened at SD Kreativa Bogor. The process begins at the managerial level, where school leaders establish organizational commitment by embedding student voice within the school culture through *The Leader in Me*. This commitment is translated into the instructional level, where classroom practices encourage students to ask questions, express ideas, collaborate, and participate actively in learning. These experiences are reinforced through the Leadership Program, particularly *Kreativa Voice of Leaders*, which systematically develops students' confidence, communication, critical thinking, and leadership responsibility. The process culminates in leadership outcomes in which students demonstrate authentic leadership through initiative, meaningful participation, shared decision-making, and positive contributions to the school community. Overall, the sequence demonstrates that student voice functions as a systematically managed pathway connecting organizational commitment, classroom pedagogy, and structured leadership experiences, thereby transforming internalized leadership values into authentic leadership practices.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that strengthening student leadership is fundamentally rooted in school culture management rather than isolated leadership interventions. This finding supports Schein and Schein (2017), who argue that organizational culture shapes members' beliefs and behaviors through shared assumptions, values, and everyday practices, and is consistent with Deal and Peterson (2016), who emphasize that school culture is sustained through routines, symbols, traditions, and interactions rather than formal policy statements (Obeng et al., 2025; Mawaddah et al., 2023). Likewise, recent studies have shown that positive school culture promotes responsibility, collaboration, participation, and character development. However, the present study extends previous scholarship by demonstrating that school culture is not merely a contextual factor that supports leadership but rather functions as an integrated management system that aligns organizational values, instructional practices, leadership policies, and daily interactions. From an educational management perspective, student leadership emerges from the systematic management of school culture, which continuously reinforces leadership behaviors across all organizational levels, rather than from fragmented or short-term leadership initiatives (Lohia & Srivastava, 2026).

The findings further reveal that The Leader in Me serves as the primary mechanism by which organizational values are intentionally internalized into students' everyday behavior. This finding is consistent with Covey et al. (2014), who argue that leadership development begins with the belief that every child possesses leadership potential and progresses through habits that are deliberately taught, modeled, and practiced over time (Raudoniute & Beresford-Dey, 2026; Sithole, 2025). Similarly, Villares et al. (2023) reported that implementing The Leader in Me improves school climate and strengthens leadership behaviors, while Miller et al. (2024) demonstrated that leadership-related social-emotional competencies develop more effectively when teachers and students participate in the same developmental process (Kröger, Palacios-Abad, & Radl, 2024; Villares, Miller, & Chevalier, 2023). Nevertheless, this study advances existing knowledge by positioning The Leader in Me not merely as a leadership or social-emotional learning program but as a structured mechanism for the internalization of values within school culture management. The integration of leadership mindset, the Seven Habits, teacher modeling, reflective learning, leadership tools, and habituation activities illustrates how leadership values are transformed systematically into students' personal attitudes and behaviors through continuous educational experiences.

Another important finding concerns the role of student voice as the authentic enactment of leadership values. Previous research has consistently recognized student voice as a means of promoting agency, participation, and democratic engagement. Recent studies have also shown that meaningful participation improves students' engagement, well-being, and leadership capacities (Kirk, 2025; Sharma et al., 2025). The present findings support these studies but further demonstrate that student voice does not operate independently

(Ahmadi, 2022; Conner et al., 2025). Instead, it becomes effective because it is preceded by systematic value internalization through The Leader in Me and supported by a strong organizational culture. The Kreativa Voice of Leaders program illustrates how authentic participation enables students to translate internalized leadership values into observable leadership behaviors through communication, collaboration, decision-making, and responsibility. Consequently, student voice should be understood not only as a participatory practice but also as the practical mechanism through which leadership competencies are exercised and strengthened within everyday school life (Briffett-Aktaş & Ying, 2025).

Theoretically, this study contributes to educational management literature by proposing an integrated framework that explains student leadership as the product of interconnected organizational processes rather than separate educational interventions. Existing studies have generally examined school culture, The Leader in Me, or student voice independently, leaving limited understanding of how these components interact to strengthen leadership development (Conner et al., 2025; Flores & Ahn, 2024; Thrash, 2026). The present findings demonstrate a sequential relationship in which school culture provides the organizational foundation, The Leader in Me functions as the value internalization mechanism, and student voice serves as the authentic context in which leadership values are enacted (Briffett-Aktaş & Ying, 2025; Sharma et al., 2025). This integrated perspective enriches theories of school culture management by illustrating how organizational values are transformed into sustainable leadership behaviors through structured management processes. It also extends leadership development theory by emphasizing that effective student leadership requires organizational alignment between culture, pedagogy, leadership practices, and authentic student participation rather than relying on isolated leadership training programs.

In practical terms, the findings have important implications for school leaders, teachers, and educational policymakers seeking to strengthen student leadership in primary education (Strating et al., 2025). Schools should move beyond implementing occasional leadership activities and instead develop comprehensive school culture management systems that integrate organizational values, classroom learning, leadership habits, reflective practices, and authentic opportunities for student participation. Leadership development should begin by cultivating students' leadership identity, continue through systematic internalization of values, and culminate in meaningful participation that enables students to exercise leadership in real educational contexts (Kirk, 2025; Santos et al., 2024). Programs similar to Kreativa Voice of Leaders may therefore be adapted as sustainable leadership platforms because they connect classroom learning with authentic leadership experiences. Overall, this study offers a practical model of integrated school culture management to guide schools in developing future-ready students who demonstrate self-leadership, collaborative leadership, responsibility, communication, and active participation as essential competencies for the twenty-first century.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that sustainable student leadership is developed not through isolated leadership programs but through an integrated school culture management system. School culture functions as the organizational foundation, The Leader in Me as the mechanism for internalizing leadership values, and student voice as the space for applying these values in daily educational practices. The findings highlight that leadership is a continuous process that involves the interplay among shared values, pedagogical practices, and meaningful student participation, thereby transforming leadership principles into habitual behaviors. The main contribution of this study is the development of an integrated conceptual framework that connects school culture, The Leader in Me, and student voice, which have previously been examined separately in educational management research. However, this study is limited by its single-case design at a single Indonesian primary school, which may affect the transferability of the findings. Future studies should examine the framework across different educational contexts using comparative, longitudinal, or mixed-method approaches to explore its broader applicability in developing sustainable student leadership.

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