



## The Influence of School Culture on the Character of Grade IV Students

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the influence of school culture on the character of Grade IV students at SD YPK Inamo, Sorong Regency. A quantitative survey method with a correlational approach was employed. The study population comprised all Grade IV students ( $n = 15$ ), selected using a saturated sampling technique. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire and documentation. Reliability analysis yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.841 for the school culture instrument and 0.671 for the student character instrument, both confirming sufficient reliability. Normality testing using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method indicated that both variables were normally distributed (Asymp. Sig. = 0.200 > 0.05). Homogeneity testing confirmed equal variance between groups (Sig. = 0.001). Simple linear regression analysis revealed that the t-calculated value (4.820) substantially exceeded the t-table value (0.641), with a probability of  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ , indicating a significant positive influence of school culture on student character. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) was 0.641, indicating that school culture accounts for 64.0% of the variance in student character, with the remaining 36% attributable to other factors not examined in this study. The correlation coefficient ( $R = 0.801$ ) falls within the "strong" category of influence. These findings

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Confirm that school culture is a significant predictor of student character development in the elementary school context.

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## INTRODUCTION

School serves as a formal educational institution in which students learn, interact, are educated, and are guided. Beyond the transmission of academic knowledge, school functions as an environment in which students are equipped with values, norms, social etiquette, traditions, and cultural practices. The overarching aim of schooling is to shape students into individuals who possess strong moral character. As stipulated in Article 3 of the Indonesian National Education System Law (Undang-Undang No. 20 Tahun 2003), national education is mandated to develop and form the character and civilization of a dignified nation, with the objective of developing students' potential so that they become human beings who are faithful and devoted to God Almighty, noble in character, knowledgeable, creative, independent, and responsible democratic citizens.

Character development in students is inseparable from the educational environment in which they are immersed. Schools bear institutional responsibility for character formation (character building) as part of their educational mandate (Ansori, 2020). Character, however, does not emerge in isolation; it requires systematic cultivation through habituation over an extended period, both within and beyond classroom supervision. Lickona (1991), whose framework has been widely applied in Indonesian character education policy, argued that character is built through knowledge of the good, desire for the good, and practice of the good, a process that demands structured, sustained environmental support. Schools that lack a coherent cultural framework are unlikely to produce students with strong moral character (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). School culture thus constitutes an

indispensable foundation for character education.

Character itself may be understood as an individual's consistent patterns of thinking and behaving in interactions with family, society, nation, and state (Samani & Hariyanto, 2012). Tridhonanto (2012) defines character as a set of behaviors that enables a person to distinguish between good and bad actions. Teachers play a dual role in character education: they not only instruct students in character values but also serve as behavioral models who must themselves embody the character qualities they seek to cultivate. Research by Berkowitz and Bier (2005) and Arthur (2020) consistently demonstrates that teacher modeling is among the most effective mechanisms for transmitting character values in school settings. The surrounding community also shares responsibility for monitoring and supporting students' character development, underscoring the socio-ecological nature of character formation.

School culture has been conceptualized in various ways in the educational literature. Short and Greer (as cited in Zuchdi, 2011) define school culture as the beliefs, policies, norms, and habits within a school that are formed, reinforced, and maintained through the leadership of principals and teachers. Zamroni (2011) similarly describes school culture as the pattern of values, principles, traditions, and habitual practices formed within the school environment that guide the actions and behavior of all school community members. In essence, school culture constitutes a system of shared values that underpins the daily conduct of students and staff and creates a distinctive institutional identity (Peterson & Deal, 2016; Hinde, 2004).

The school culture and student character dimensions examined in this study at SD YPK Inamo, Sorong Regency, encompass four school culture indicators, honesty culture, cooperation culture, reading culture, and cleanliness culture, and four character dimensions: religiosity, tolerance, discipline, and responsibility. Field observations and teacher interviews revealed that although these cultural practices have been introduced at the school, their implementation has not been consistently observed by all students, resulting in suboptimal character outcomes. Idris (2022) documented analogous findings at

SMPIT Al-Fityan School Gowa, where a significant positive relationship between school culture and student character was confirmed. The prior study by Andari (2013) at SDN Jumeneng Lor, Sleman, Yogyakarta, similarly demonstrated a positive influence of school culture on student character, providing a foundational comparative basis for the present research.

Based on the foregoing background, this study was conducted to investigate the influence of school culture on the character of Grade IV students at SD YPK Inamo, Sorong Regency, and to determine the magnitude of that influence.

## **METHODS**

### **Research Design**

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a survey method with a correlational design. A survey correlational design is appropriate when the objective is to examine whether a relationship exists between an independent variable (X) and a dependent variable (Y) and to determine the strength and significance of that relationship (Sugiyono, 2019). In the present study, the independent variable was school culture (X) and the dependent variable was student character (Y). The correlational design was selected because it enables the simultaneous measurement of both variables within a naturalistic setting without experimental manipulation, thereby producing findings that accurately reflect real-world conditions at the research site.

### **Population and Sample**

The study population consisted of all Grade IV students at SD YPK Inamo, Sorong Regency, during the 2024/2025 academic year. Using a saturated sampling technique, in which all population members are included as the sample when the total population is small and manageable, a sample of 15 students (9 male and 6 female) was obtained (Sugiyono, 2019). This approach ensures maximum data representativeness and minimizes sampling error, which is particularly important when the population size is limited.

## Data Collection Instruments

Data were collected using two structured questionnaire instruments and document review. The school culture questionnaire (Variable X) comprised 20 items covering four dimensions: honesty, cooperation, reading habits, and cleanliness. The student character questionnaire (Variable Y) also comprised 20 items covering four character dimensions: religiosity, tolerance, discipline, and responsibility. All items were rated on a Likert scale. Both instruments were validated by relevant experts prior to administration. Instrument reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient via IBM SPSS Statistics version 26.

## Data Analysis

Data analysis comprised four stages: (1) reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha; (2) normality testing using the one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test; (3) homogeneity testing using the Levene test; and (4) simple linear regression analysis to test the hypothesis and determine the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ). Significance was assessed at  $\alpha = 0.05$  for all inferential tests. Descriptive statistics including range, minimum, maximum, sum, mean, and standard deviation were calculated for both variables. Frequency distribution tables were constructed to categorize respondents' scores into interpretive categories.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Descriptive Statistics: School Culture (Variable X)

Descriptive analysis of the school culture variable is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics – School Culture (X)

Variable	N	Range	Min	Max	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev.
School Culture (X)	15	43.00	46.00	89.00	1043.00	69.53	11.224
Valid N (listwise)	15						

Source: IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 26

As shown in Table 1, the school culture scores of the 15 respondents ranged from a minimum of 46.00 to a maximum of 89.00, with a range of 43.00, a sum of 1043.00, a mean of 69.53, and a standard deviation of 11.224. The frequency distribution of school culture scores is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Frequency Distribution – School Culture Questionnaire

Score Interval	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Category
46–56	1	6.7%	Very Low
57–67	4	26.7%	Sufficient
68–78	5	33.3%	Good
79–89	3	20.0%	Very Good

Based on Table 2, the frequency distribution of school culture scores is as follows: one respondent (6.7%) scored in the "very low" category (46–56); four respondents (26.7%) were classified as "sufficient" (57–67); five respondents (33.3%) fell in the "good" category (68–78); and three respondents (20.0%) were classified as "very good" (79–89). The modal category was "good" (interval 68–78). These findings indicate that school culture at SD YPK Inamo Grade IV is generally at a good level, with the highest frequency clustering in the 68–78 score range.

### Descriptive Statistics: Student Character (Variable Y)

Descriptive analysis of the student character variable is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Descriptive Statistics – Student Character (Y)

Variable	N	Range	Min	Max	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev.
Student Character (Y)	15	22.00	68.00	90.00	1168.00	77.87	6.978
Valid N (listwise)	15						

Source: IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 26

The student character scores ranged from a minimum of 68.00 to a maximum of 90.00 (range = 22.00), with a sum of 1168.00, a mean of 77.87, and a standard deviation of 6.978. The frequency distribution of student character scores is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Frequency Distribution – Student Character Questionnaire

Score Interval	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Category
68–78	7	46.7%	Low
79–89	7	46.7%	Good
90–100	1	6.7%	Sufficient
101–111	0	0.0%	Very Good

The frequency distribution (Table 4) reveals that seven respondents (46.7%) scored in the "low" category (68–78); seven respondents (46.7%) were classified

as "good" (79–89); one respondent (6.7%) scored in the "sufficient" category (90–100); and no respondents (0.0%) reached the "very good" category (101–111). The bimodal distribution with the majority of scores concentrated in the "low" and "good" categories indicates that student character at the research site is still developing and has not yet reached its full potential, providing a strong rationale for continued implementation and strengthening of school culture programs.

### Instrument Reliability

The reliability of both instruments was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Results are presented in Tables 5 and 6.

**Table 5.** Reliability Statistics – Student Character Instrument

Reliability Statistics – Student Character (Y)	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.671	20

Source: IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 26

**Table 6.** Reliability Statistics – School Culture Instrument

Reliability Statistics – School Culture (X)	
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha
.841	.841

Source: IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 26

The Cronbach's alpha value for the student character instrument was 0.671, and for the school culture instrument, it was 0.841. Both values exceed the minimum reliability threshold of 0.60 recommended for exploratory research (Hair et al., 2019), confirming that both instruments are sufficiently reliable for use in this study. The school culture instrument, with an alpha of 0.841, falls within the "very good" reliability range, indicating a high degree of internal consistency.

### Normality Test

**Table 7.** One-Sample Kolmogorov–Smirnov Normality Test

One-Sample Kolmogorov–Smirnov Test	School Culture			Student Character		
	Stat.	df	Sig.	Stat.	df	Sig.
N	15			15		
Mean	69.53			77.87		
Std. Deviation	11.224			6.978		

Test Statistic	.144	15	.153	15
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.200		.200	

Note: <sup>c</sup> Lilliefors significance correction applied. <sup>d</sup> This is a lower bound of the true significance level.

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test results (Table 7) show that both the school culture variable and the student character variable yielded an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.200, which is substantially greater than 0.05. These results confirm that both datasets are normally distributed, satisfying the parametric assumption required for simple linear regression analysis.

### Homogeneity Test

**Table 8.** Levene's Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Test of Homogeneity of Variances - School Culture					
Basis	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.	
Based on the mean	92.431	2	4	.000	
Based on Median	11.483	2	4	.022	
Based on Median (adj. df)	11.483	2	2.000	.080	
Based on Trimmed Mean	75.336	2	4	.001	

Source: IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 26

The Levene's homogeneity test based on the trimmed mean (Table 8) yielded a significance value of 0.001, which exceeds 0.05 at the "based on median with adjusted df" level (Sig. = 0.080 > 0.05). The results are interpreted as confirming sufficient homogeneity of variance between the variables, consistent with the parametric assumptions for the regression analysis employed.

### Hypothesis Testing: Simple Linear Regression (t-Test)

Simple linear regression analysis was performed to test the hypothesis that school culture (X) significantly influences student character (Y). The t-test results indicated that the t-calculated value of school culture (4.820) substantially exceeded the t-table value (0.641), with a probability value of  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ . Accordingly, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) is accepted. It is therefore concluded that school culture exerts a statistically significant positive influence on the character of Grade IV students at SD YPK Inamo, Sorong Regency.

## Coefficient of Determination

**Table 9.** Model Summary - Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ )

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R-squared	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.801 <sup>a</sup>	.641	.614	4.338

<sup>a</sup> Predictors: Constant, School Culture

Source: IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 26

The Model Summary (Table 9) reveals a correlation coefficient of  $R = 0.801$  and a coefficient of determination of  $R^2 = 0.641$ . This indicates that school culture accounts for 64.1% of the variance in student character scores, with the remaining 35.9% attributable to other factors beyond the scope of this study (e.g., family environment, peer influence, teacher competence, and individual student motivation). The interpretation of the correlation coefficient is guided by Table 10.

**Table 10.** Correlation Coefficient Interpretation Guide (Sugiyono, 2019)

Correlation Coefficient Interval	Level of Influence
0.00 - 0.199	Very Weak
0.20 - 0.399	Weak
0.40 - 0.599	Moderate
0.60 - 0.799	Strong
0.80 - 1.000	Very Strong

Based on Table 10, the  $R$  value of 0.801 falls within the interval 0.80–1.000, which corresponds to the "very strong" category of influence. This finding demonstrates that the school culture implemented at SD YPK Inamo has a very strong positive relationship with student character outcomes.

## Discussion

The findings of this study unequivocally demonstrate that school culture exerts a significant, strong, and positive influence on the character of Grade IV students at SD YPK Inamo, Sorong Regency. These results are consistent with an extensive body of empirical literature affirming the pivotal role of school culture in shaping student character and moral development.

Peterson and Deal (2016) and Hinde (2004) have extensively documented the mechanisms through which school culture shapes student identity and behavior. Positive school cultures, characterized by shared values, consistent norms, and ritualized practices such as honesty, cooperation, and cleanliness, create an environment in which character development occurs organically through daily habituation. Berkowitz and Bier (2005), in a landmark review of 33 exemplary character education programs, identified school-wide cultural practices, positive teacher modeling, and explicit character instruction as the three most consistently effective components of character education. The school culture practices examined in this study, honesty, cooperation, reading, and cleanliness, directly correspond to these evidence-based components.

The finding that school culture explains 64.1% of the variance in student character ( $R^2 = 0.641$ ) is broadly consistent with prior Indonesian research. Hasnadi (2019) demonstrated that the application of character values through school culture significantly and positively influences student character outcomes. Rachmawati et al. (2018) confirmed that school culture based on cadet values effectively shaped student character in vocational school contexts. Idris (2022) found a significant positive correlation between school culture and student character at the secondary school level in Gowa Regency, South Sulawesi. Widiyanto and Istiqomah (2019) further established that school culture promotion through civic awareness activities significantly improved students' national character. The convergent evidence from these national studies and the present findings strongly supports the conclusion that school culture is a robust predictor of student character development across different educational levels and contexts in Indonesia.

From an international perspective, Arthur (2020) argued that character education is most effective when it is embedded within a coherent school culture, rather than implemented as an isolated curriculum add-on. Lickona (1991) similarly emphasised that school culture, comprising classroom climate, whole-school ethos, and community partnerships, constitutes the essential

"third teacher" in character education, alongside formal instruction and direct mentoring. The four character dimensions examined in this study (religiosity, tolerance, discipline, and responsibility) are among the eighteen character values prioritized in Indonesian national character education policy (Kemendiknas, 2010), reinforcing the policy relevance of the present findings.

The relatively high proportion of students in the "low" character category (46.7%, interval 68–78) notwithstanding the strong school culture scores underscores an important pedagogical insight: the mere presence of school culture policies is insufficient unless accompanied by consistent implementation, monitoring, and modeling by all school community members. Mulyasa (2016) argues that school culture becomes formative only when it is practiced habitually, consistently enforced, and visibly exemplified by teachers and school leaders. Future interventions at SD YPK Inamo should therefore focus on strengthening the quality and consistency of school culture implementation, particularly through enhanced teacher–student interaction, structured character habituation programs, and parental involvement in reinforcing school values at home.

## CONCLUSION

This study examined the influence of school culture on the character of Grade IV students at SD YPK Inamo, Sorong Regency. The results of simple linear regression analysis confirmed that school culture exerts a significant positive influence on student character ( $t$ -calculated = 4.820 >  $t$ -table = 0.641;  $p$  = 0.000 < 0.05). The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$  = 0.641) indicated that school culture accounts for 64.1% of the variance in student character, with the remaining 35.9% attributable to external factors. The correlation coefficient ( $R$  = 0.801) places the relationship in the "very strong" category. These findings affirm that school culture is a powerful and significant predictor of character development in elementary school students.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that school principals and

Teachers at SD YPK Inamo and comparable elementary schools strengthen the systematic and consistent implementation of positive school culture across all aspects of school life, including routine activities, spontaneous responses, teacher modeling, and environmental conditioning. The four culture dimensions examined, honesty, cooperation, reading, and cleanliness, should be integrated into daily instructional and non-instructional activities to maximize their formative impact on character. Future research should investigate the mediating and moderating variables that account for the remaining 36% of unexplained variance in student character, such as parental involvement, peer influence, and teacher pedagogical competence.

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### Declarations

- Author Contribution : Marteda Suparto: Conceptualization, Data Collection, Writing - Original Draft, and Visualization; Gika Apia: Methodology, Formal Analysis, and Writing - Review & Editing; Muhammad Faizin: Supervision and Validation.
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