



From Leadership Practices to Literacy Culture: Understanding Multidimensional Principal Leadership in an Indonesian Secondary School

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Abstract :

This study examines how school principals mobilize, guide, motivate, and model literacy practices to build a sustainable literacy culture in secondary schools. A qualitative single-case study was conducted at a senior high school in Lampung, Indonesia. Researchers collected data through semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis involving ten purposively selected participants, and analyzed them using thematic interpretation to identify patterns in leadership practices and their interactions. The findings reveal that literacy implementation depends not only on policy availability but also on leadership processes that integrate routines, resources, motivation, and contextual adaptation. Mobilizing practices linked literacy policies to stakeholder coordination and school routines, while guiding practices built teacher capacity through ongoing learning and collaboration. Motivational practices strengthened participation through rewards, facilities, and literacy activities, although engagement varied in depth. Principal modeling increased credibility by demonstrating commitment to literacy through visible involvement and daily practices. Together, these four leadership dimensions operated synergistically to institutionalize literacy culture, including through Islamic literacy activities embedded in school routines and values. The study contributes to literacy leadership theory by conceptualizing leadership as an interconnected process. It highlights the practical need to align policy, capacity development, resources, motivation, and exemplary practices in strengthening school literacy ecosystems.

INTRODUCTION

Literacy is a fundamental condition for education, participation, and human development because the ability to access, interpret, evaluate, and communicate information shapes how individuals learn and contribute to society. Research has linked literacy with broader intellectual and socioeconomic development, indicating that literacy should be understood not merely as a school outcome but as a societal capability (Herries, 2022; Min & Munasinghe, 2022; Wagner & Hedidar, 2023). International assessments, including PISA, demonstrate continuing challenges in Indonesian reading proficiency and reinforce concerns about persistent literacy gaps (Nasihah & Tabroni, 2022; Rahmadanita, 2022). Consequently, strengthening literacy culture requires more

than isolated reading activities. It requires institutional systems that make literacy routine, meaningful, and sustainable. Schools therefore represent a crucial setting for systematically cultivating literacy habits, while educational leadership becomes central to translating literacy goals into collective practice across communities.

The general problem is that literacy policies do not automatically become sustained literacy practices in schools. Although Indonesia has promoted the Gerakan Literasi Sekolah (GLS) by integrating literacy into curricula and daily routines, implementation remains uneven when institutional commitment, resources, coordination, and engagement are insufficient. Previous studies of Indonesian schools indicate that literacy culture depends on effective management of programs, facilities, participation, and school routines rather than policy alone (Marmoah & Poerwanti, 2022; Merawati, 2023; Prawira et al., 2023a). The problem is therefore organizational: schools must transform formal literacy expectations into everyday behaviors shared by principals, teachers, and students. This transformation is challenging amid digital distractions, variable motivation, and contextual differences. Without coherent leadership, literacy initiatives may become episodic activities, administrative compliance, or short-term programs rather than an embedded culture supporting meaningful reading practices across the school community.

This problem is visible in the school context examined in this study, where literacy is organized through routines combining academic and religious practices. At Senior High School, literacy activities include scheduled Qur'anic reading, academic reading, evaluation, digital literacy, reading corners, library use, competitions, and poetry activities. The principal serves as policy holder, coordinator, mentor, motivator, and visible participant, showing how leadership operates through multiple forms of engagement. However, observations identified students who merely skimmed books during mandatory sessions, suggesting that participation does not ensure deep engagement. This reveals a persistent tension between compliance and meaningful literacy development. The school therefore provides a context for examining how leadership practices interact to sustain literacy culture while responding to motivational, technological, organizational, and culturally grounded challenges in daily school life and broader educational practice. This makes the case analytically valuable.

Existing scholarship confirms that principals influence school culture through policy, resource allocation, collaboration, and change-oriented leadership (Atasoy, 2020; Jiang, et al., 2026). Literacy research has likewise examined leadership through specific functions. Studies discuss principals' contributions to Qur'anic literacy and school reading culture (Munawar, 2023; Yang & Lin, 2025), their roles as motivators and policymakers (Falentin, 2021; Novita et al., 2022; Rinah, 2023), and the use of structured programs or rewards to strengthen student reading engagement (Kheang et al., 2024; Xu et al., 2025). These contributions establish leadership's importance, yet literature commonly analyzes discrete functions or particular literacy forms. Consequently, knowledge remains fragmented regarding how policy mobilization, instructional guidance, motivation, and behavioral modeling operate together within the literacy ecosystem. The unresolved issue is how interconnected practices collectively institutionalize literacy culture in culturally and structurally complex educational environments.

Three limitations sharpen this gap. First, studies of literacy leadership often isolate policy implementation, supervision, mentorship, or motivational interventions rather than examining their interactions coherently. For example, research on Qur'anic literacy leadership documents strategic roles but gives limited attention to guidance, motivation, and leading by example (Junaedi & Falah, 2023; Rofiq & Suwandi, 2023). Second,

quantitative orientations can privilege measurable outcomes while providing less insight into how leaders navigate digital distractions and fluctuating motivation (Lowery, 2019; Mchunu et al., 2023; Suryati, 2022). Third, Indonesian cultural and institutional contexts remain insufficiently integrated into leadership explanations, particularly where Islamic values shape literacy practices and meanings (Izzati et al., 2023; Kristiawan et al., 2023; Nurkamto et al., 2021). Addressing these limitations is important because culturally responsive literacy leadership requires understanding relationships among practices, people, context, and institutional routines.

This study advances an integrated conception of literacy leadership as a multidimensional process involving four reinforcing practices: mobilizing, guiding, motivating, and modeling. Rather than treating these functions as separate competencies, the study examines how they interact to institutionalize literacy in everyday school life. This perspective extends prior fragmented work by connecting policy integration and stakeholder coordination with teacher development, motivation, resources, and visible participation. It is also culturally responsive because the case incorporates Islamic literacy practices alongside academic and digital literacy, allowing leadership processes to be interpreted within an Indonesian public school's values and routines. Novelty lies in explaining leadership not as an antecedent of literacy outcomes, but as an interconnected mechanism through which culture becomes organized, practiced, reinforced, and legitimized.

Against this background, this research examines how school principals holistically mobilize, guide, motivate, and model literacy practices, and how these roles help schools respond to technological disruption, limited resources, and uneven engagement. The study argues that sustainable literacy culture requires more than policy enforcement or isolated interventions; it is provisionally understood as an important outcome of complementary leadership practices aligning institutional policy, professional capacity, motivation, and exemplary behavior. This argument is examined through qualitative inquiry at a Senior High School in Indonesia, using interviews, observations, and document analysis. By positioning leadership as multidimensional and culturally responsive, the study contributes an integrated analytical framework for understanding principal-led literacy development. It offers practical insight for schools moving beyond formal literacy policy toward sustained, collective practice within Indonesian schools today.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative single-case study with a descriptive orientation to examine how a school principal enacts multidimensional leadership in cultivating literacy culture within its institutional context (Priya, 2021; Nanni, 2021). The study was conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Tegineneng, Pesawaran, Lampung, Indonesia, purposively selected because it had implemented a structured literacy program continuously since 2018, integrating academic, religious, and digital literacy practices. The researcher served as the primary instrument and maintained reflexive field notes throughout the research process (Olmos-Vega et al., 2023).

Participants were purposively selected based on their involvement in literacy policy, implementation, resource management, or participation. The sample comprised the principal, three literacy-support teachers, the head librarian, and five students from Grades X–XII. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, direct observations, and document analysis covering school policies, literacy schedules, curriculum materials, attendance records, program reports, and student achievements.

These complementary sources supported contextualized examination and triangulation of institutional practices (Marmoah et al., 2022; Sumiran et al., 2022; Nanni, 2021; Fadlilah et al., 2022). Data collection continued until subsequent interviews yielded no substantial new information, and participants were retained based on relevance and information richness.

Table 1. Research Informants

Informant	Code	Number	Selection Criteria
Principal	MJ	1	Responsible for literacy policy and school leadership
Literacy Teachers	MW, T1, T2	3	Directly involved in literacy program implementation
Head Librarian	FK	1	Responsible for literacy facilities and resources
Students	BL, BI, S3, S4, S5	5	Active participants from Grades X–XII with different academic achievements
Total	—	10	Purposive sampling

Table 1 presents the characteristics of the research informants. Participants were purposively selected to represent different perspectives involved in literacy implementation, including policymakers, program implementers, facility managers, and student beneficiaries. This variation enabled data triangulation and enhanced the credibility of the findings.

Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman’s interactive model of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The team systematically coded interview transcripts, observation records, and documents according to four analytical dimensions: mobilizing, guiding, motivating, and modeling. Initial codes, including literacy policy, stakeholder coordination, teacher training, digital literacy, reward systems, literacy facilities, and principal role modeling, were compared across data sources and consolidated into broader themes. Themes were presented through descriptive narratives, matrices, tables, and selected quotations, while conclusions were iteratively developed by examining patterns, convergences, divergences, and contextual relationships. This procedure ensured a transparent link between research questions, coding, interpretation, and claims, consistent with contemporary qualitative methodological guidance (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Taquette & Souza, 2022).

Trustworthiness was strengthened through triangulation across principals, teachers, the librarian, students, observations, and school documents, supported by peer debriefing with two researchers (Marmoah et al., 2022; Sumiran et al., 2022). Reflexive field notes were maintained throughout data collection and analysis to examine the influence of researcher positionality and assumptions (Olmos-Vega et al., 2023). Rather than relying on member checking as a universal quality criterion, the study emphasized triangulation, peer debriefing, and reflexive documentation (Motulsky, 2021; Zairul, 2021). Ethical procedures included informed consent, coded identities, encrypted data storage, and attention to autonomy, confidentiality, risk awareness, and ongoing ethical reflexivity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Mobilizing Literacy Policy and Coordinating Stakeholders

Mobilizing literacy policy refers to the principal’s capacity to translate literacy objectives into organized school practices through curriculum integration, resource

allocation, stakeholder coordination, and regular scheduling. Interview data indicate that the principal involved relevant stakeholders in program preparation while providing budgetary and infrastructural support. The principal explained, “I involve them in the preparation for implementation of the literacy program, including allocating the budget and providing infrastructure. We also integrate literacy into the curriculum, such as providing special reading time every week.” (MJ, Principal). This statement demonstrates that literacy mobilization involved participatory planning, institutional resource provision, and curricular integration, positioning literacy as a sustained organizational priority rather than merely an extracurricular activity.

Other informants confirmed that mobilization operated through coordinated implementation across the school community. The Indonesian Language teacher stated, “In the meeting, we set the schedule of activities, such as reading the Qur'an on Monday-Wednesday at 07.15-07.30 WIB and reading academic books on Tuesday-Thursday before the second break.” (MW, Indonesian Language Teacher). Similarly, the head librarian emphasized, “With meetings, the literacy program can be better planned and implemented.” (FK, Head of Library). From the student perspective, the policy was communicated through school events and participation requirements: “He always conveys the importance of literacy during ceremonies or school events. We are also required to write down the results of reading after literacy hours.” (BI, Student). Collectively, these accounts show that the principal’s mobilizing role connected policy direction, resource allocation, scheduling, coordination, and supervision, while involving teachers, the librarian, and students in the implementation of recurring literacy practices.

Table 2. Interview Evidence of the Principal’s Mobilizing Role

Informant Position	Interview Excerpt	Indicator
Principal	“I involve them in the preparation for implementation of the literacy program, including allocating the budget and providing infrastructure. We also integrate literacy into the curriculum, such as providing special reading time every week.”	Stakeholder involvement; resource allocation; infrastructure provision; curricular integration
Indonesian Language Teacher	“In the meeting, we set the schedule of activities, such as reading the Qur'an on Monday-Wednesday at 07.15-07.30 WIB and reading academic books on Tuesday-Thursday before the second break.”	Program coordination; activity scheduling; operationalization of literacy routines
Head Librarian	“With meetings, the literacy program can be better planned and implemented.”	Organizational coordination; implementation planning
Student	“He always conveys the importance of literacy during ceremonies or school events. We are also required to write down the results of reading after literacy hours.”	Policy communication; student participation; accountability

The interview evidence in Table 2 shows that the principal’s mobilizing role operated through a connected sequence of institutional commitment, coordination, operationalization, and participation. The principal’s account demonstrates the upstream dimension of mobilization through stakeholder involvement, resource allocation, infrastructure provision, and curricular integration. In contrast, the teacher’s account shows how these institutional decisions were translated into concrete activity schedules. The head librarian’s statement further indicates that coordination meetings functioned as an organizational mechanism for converting policy intentions into implementable

activities. At the student level, the requirement to communicate literacy messages and document reading outcomes demonstrates that the policy was also translated into explicit participation and accountability expectations. Taken together, the indicators suggest that mobilization was not a single administrative act but a multi-level process linking leadership decisions with organizational coordination and student-level implementation. The convergence across informants strengthens the finding that literacy policy was operationalized through distributed involvement rather than principal action alone.

Table 3. Weekly Literacy Schedule

Day	Activities	Time
Monday	Lampung Mengaji (Al-Qur'an)	07.15–07.30 WIB
Tuesday	Lampung Mengaji + Academic Reading	07.15–07.30 WIB + before the second break
Wednesday	Academic Reading	Before the second break
Thursday	Academic Reading	Before the second break
Friday	Literacy Evaluation	–

Table 3 demonstrates that the weekly literacy schedule institutionalized the principal’s mobilization efforts by integrating literacy into routine school activities from Monday to Friday. The combination of Lampung Mengaji, academic reading, and Friday literacy evaluation reflects an organized approach that integrates religious and academic literacy with monitoring. Through policy direction, resource allocation, coordination, scheduling, communication, and supervision, the principal engaged teachers, the librarian, and students in recurring literacy practices. Observations confirmed that these arrangements supported organizational consistency and collective participation. However, some students merely skimmed books, indicating that regular implementation did not necessarily ensure meaningful engagement. Thus, the findings highlight both the strength of institutionalized literacy routines and the need to deepen students’ active participation in literacy activities.

Guiding Teachers and Students Through Professional and Digital Literacy Support

the guiding role refers to the principal’s efforts to strengthen teachers’ literacy instruction through professional development and support students’ engagement with digital literacy resources. Interview data indicate that teacher capacity building was facilitated through seminars. The principal explained, “My role as a mentor is to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills they need to teach literacy effectively. One of the ways I do this is through seminar activities.” (MJ, Principal). This statement positions guidance as a developmental process aimed at strengthening teachers’ instructional competence rather than merely supervising program implementation. Seminars therefore served as a mechanism for supporting teachers’ knowledge and skills in facilitating literacy activities.

The Indonesian Language teacher reinforced this finding, stating, “The guiding role of the principal is done by contributing through seminar activities. Meanwhile, support for students is by encouraging the use of technology in literacy.” (MW, Indonesian Language Teacher). This account highlights two complementary dimensions of guidance: professional development for teachers and technology-supported literacy engagement for students. While seminars helped strengthen teachers’ capacity to implement literacy instruction, encouraging the use of technology provided students with additional opportunities to access literacy resources. Collectively, the findings suggest

that the principal’s guiding role combined educator capacity building and student support to facilitate literacy development across the school community.

Table 4. Interview Evidence of the Principal’s Guiding Role

Informant Position	Interview Excerpt	Indicator
Principal	“My role as a mentor is to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills they need to teach literacy effectively. One of the ways I do this is through seminar activities.”	Teacher capacity building; professional development; literacy mentoring
Indonesian Language Teacher	“The guiding role of the principal is done by contributing through seminar activities. Meanwhile, support for students is by encouraging the use of technology in literacy.”	Professional learning; digital literacy support; student guidance

The interview evidence presented in Table 4 shows a complementary pattern between teacher-oriented and student-oriented guidance. The principal’s statement emphasizes the developmental input provided to teachers through knowledge and skills, while the teacher’s statement confirms the implementation of this guidance through seminar participation. At the same time, the teacher identifies technological encouragement as a corresponding form of support directed toward students. The indicators therefore reveal a two-level guidance structure: professional capacity building for teachers and technology-supported literacy participation for students. This pattern is significant because the principal’s guiding role was not confined to one organizational group. Instead, interview evidence indicates that guidance differed by each participant's role within the literacy program. Teachers were positioned as recipients and implementers of professional learning, whereas students were positioned as users of technological resources for literacy engagement.

Table 5. Literacy Program Mentorship

Activities	Location	Visual Description
Literacy Seminar	Swiss Bell Hotel, Bandar Lampung	 Principal and teachers attend literacy seminar
Digital Literacy	SMA N 1 Tegineneng	 Students use laptops/tablets to access e-books or digital literacy platforms.

Table 5 provides observational and documentary evidence supporting the interview findings on the principal’s guiding role. Documentation confirmed a literacy seminar at Swiss Bell Hotel, Bandar Lampung, attended by the principal and teachers, while observations recorded students using laptops or tablets to access e-books and digital literacy platforms. These activities demonstrate the implementation of teacher professional development and technology-supported student literacy practices.

However, the evidence establishes the existence of these practices rather than their measurable effects on teachers’ instructional competence or students’ literacy outcomes.

Motivating Literacy Participation Through Rewards and Adequate Facilities

The principal’s motivating role refers to encouraging sustained student participation in literacy through motivational reinforcement and supportive facilities. These strategies included rewards, classroom reading corners, library resources, smart TVs, competitions, and student publication activities. The principal explained, "The strategy applied is by giving rewards. The school also provides facilities such as reading corners in each class." (MJ, Principal). This statement demonstrates that motivation was implemented through both recognition of students’ participation and accessible reading resources, enabling literacy to become part of everyday school activities rather than relying solely on verbal encouragement.

Other informants confirmed the implementation of these complementary strategies. The Indonesian Language teacher stated, "The library is well-equipped, and the school has installed smart TVs to support literacy activities." (MW, Indonesian Language Teacher). The head librarian added, "Rewards are given to frequent library visitors. Reading corners are created in every classroom." (FK, Head of Library). From the student perspective, literacy participation was encouraged through school events, as one student explained, "Class meetings and Language Month events encourage participation in poetry, storytelling, and journalism competitions" (BL, Student). Collectively, these accounts indicate that the principal’s motivating role combined recognition, accessible facilities, technological support, and creative participation opportunities to foster student engagement in the school literacy program.

Table 6. Interview Evidence of the Principal’s Motivating Role

Informant Position	Interview Excerpt	Indicator
Principal	"The strategy applied is by giving rewards. The school also provides facilities such as reading corners in each class."	Motivational reinforcement; provision of literacy facilities; classroom-based literacy access
Indonesian Language Teacher	"The library is well-equipped, and the school has installed smart TVs to support literacy activities."	Provision of physical and technological facilities; institutional support for literacy activities
Head of Library	"Rewards are given to frequent library visitors. Reading corners are created in every classroom."	Recognition of student participation; accessibility of reading facilities
Student	"Class meetings and Language Month events encourage participation in poetry, storytelling, and journalism competitions."	Student engagement; creative literacy activities; participation opportunities

Table 6 reveals that the principal’s motivational role was enacted through rewards, supportive facilities, and participatory literacy activities. Interview data highlighted reading corners, library resources, smart TVs, and poetry, storytelling, and journalism competitions. Observations and documentation further confirmed these facilities and activities, including poetry-reading competitions and collaborative wall

magazine (*mading*) production. These findings indicate that the principal integrated recognition, resource accessibility, and creative participation to support student engagement in the literacy program. However, the evidence confirms the availability and use of these strategies without establishing their direct causal effects on students' literacy achievement.

Table 7. Literacy Motivation and Facility Documentation		
Activities/Facilities	Description	Visual Evidence
Library	Air-conditioned, comfortable, neat shelves	 Interior photo of library with students reading
Poetry Reading Competition	Students perform original poems	 Photo of students who won 1st place in the poetry competition
Wall Magazine (Mading)	Students collaborate in design and production	 Photo of students putting together a <i>Mading</i> in the school hall

Table 7 presents documentation of literacy-supporting facilities and student literacy activities implemented at the school. The documentation includes the school library, poetry reading competitions, and wall magazine (Mading) activities, which represent different forms of literacy engagement. The library provides a comfortable reading environment with organized collections and adequate facilities, while poetry competitions encourage students to express their ideas through creative writing and public performance. In addition, wall magazine activities involve students in collaboratively planning, writing, designing, and displaying literacy products. Classroom observations confirmed that these facilities and activities were regularly utilized during the implementation of the school literacy program, with active participation from both teachers and students.

Leading by Example Through Direct Literacy Participation

The principal’s role as a model refers to demonstrating literacy behaviors through direct participation, encouraging others to engage in similar practices, and supporting the documentation of literacy activities. The principal explained, "I try to be a good example by participating in literacy activities such as reading poetry to students." (MJ, Principal). This statement indicates that the principal communicated the importance of literacy through observable actions rather than verbal instructions alone. By participating in

poetry reading, the principal demonstrated the literacy practices expected of the school community and positioned herself as an active participant in the literacy program.

Other informants confirmed that the principal's modeling practices were reinforced through collective involvement. The Indonesian Language teacher stated, "The principal's role as a model is continuously being optimized, with support from other educators." (MW, Indonesian Language Teacher). The head librarian added, "The principal reads together with students and ensures all literacy activities are documented and reported." (FK, Head of Library). From the student perspective, one student explained, "She inspires us by reciting poems and encouraging active participation." (BL, Student). Collectively, these accounts demonstrate that the principal's modeling role involved reading with students, participating in poetry activities, encouraging engagement, and documenting literacy practices, while the involvement of other educators reinforced the visibility of literacy as a shared school commitment.

Table 8. Interview Evidence of the Principal's Modeling Role

Informant Position	Interview Excerpt	Indicator
Principal	"I try to be a good example by participating in literacy activities such as reading poetry to students."	Leadership by example; direct participation in literacy activities
Indonesian Language Teacher	"The principal's role as a model is continuously being optimized, with support from other educators."	Consistent modeling; collaboration with educators
Head of Library	"The principal reads together with students and ensures all literacy activities are documented and reported."	Joint participation; monitoring and documentation of literacy practices
Student	"She inspires us by reciting poems and encouraging active participation."	Student inspiration; encouragement of active participation

Table 8 reveals a consistent pattern of visible and participatory literacy leadership. The principal modeled literacy practices through poetry reading and reading activities with students, while teachers reinforced these practices through their own participation. The head librarian highlighted the principal's direct involvement and the documentation and reporting of literacy activities, whereas the student's account emphasized the inspiration and encouragement derived from the principal's example. These findings indicate that literacy leadership operated through three interconnected dimensions: modeling literacy behaviors, participating alongside the school community, and encouraging collective involvement.

Observations and documentation corroborated the interview findings, confirming the principal's and teachers' active participation in poetry reading and other literacy activities. Rather than functioning solely as a program supervisor, the principal demonstrated the behaviors expected of the school community, making literacy leadership visible in everyday practice. Teachers' involvement further reinforced this modeling, while documentation helped integrate the activities into the school's literacy program. Although students perceived the principal's participation as encouraging, the evidence demonstrates the presence and consistency of modeling practices rather than a direct causal relationship between leadership behavior and students' literacy outcomes.

Table 9. Documentation of Literacy Leadership Through Action

Activity	Description	Visual Evidence
Poetry Reading by Principal	Principal recites a poem in public	 Poetry reading done by the Principal
Poetry Reading by Teacher	Teachers read poetry to inspire students	 Poetry reading done by Teacher

Table 9 demonstrates that the principal's modeling role was enacted through visible and participatory literacy practices, particularly public poetry reading by the principal and teachers. These activities reflect leadership by example, in which the principal demonstrates literacy behaviors and teachers reinforce them through their own participation, making literacy a shared school practice. Visual documentation confirms that these practices occurred in observable school activities rather than being limited to interview accounts. However, the evidence demonstrates the visibility of literacy leadership without establishing its direct causal effect on students' literacy achievement.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that literacy leadership at Senior High School operates as an integrated process rather than a collection of isolated administrative functions. The principal mobilizes policy through stakeholder coordination, scheduled literacy routines, resource allocation, and curricular integration. This pattern aligns with research showing that principals shape literacy culture by establishing structures, coordinating actors, and embedding literacy in school routines (Marmoah et al., 2022; Fadlilah et al., 2022; Wibowo et al., 2023). It also aligns with evidence that instructional leadership is associated with collaborative school culture, suggesting that leadership effects are partly realized through organizational relationships (Atasoy & Özden, 2022; Arifin et al., 2025). However, the present study extends this literature by showing how policy mobilization is connected directly to mentoring, motivation, and modeling within one leadership configuration. Theoretically, this supports a multidimensional conception of literacy leadership in which institutionalization begins with policy but depends on interconnected practices across organizational levels.

The second finding, concerning guidance, shows that the principal develops literacy capacity through teacher seminars while encouraging students to use technology for literacy activities. This result corresponds with studies identifying principal leadership as an important condition for teachers' digital-literacy development and professional competence (Devisa et al., 2023; Susanti et al., 2023; Sogalrey et al., 2022). It also resonates with Francois's (2022) qualitative study, in which literacy leadership involved nurturing teacher capacity while supporting students' reading experiences. Nevertheless, the present evidence adds a differentiated perspective: teachers receive professional-

capacity support, whereas students receive technology-mediated participation opportunities. The theoretical implication is that literacy leadership should be understood developmentally, with the principal functioning as a capacity builder rather than merely a program supervisor. Practically, schools can institutionalize this role through sustained professional learning, technology-supported literacy activities, and differentiated support mechanisms that connect teacher expertise with students' changing literacy practices and digital environments.

The third finding indicates that motivation is constructed through a combination of rewards, accessible facilities, and participatory literacy events. Reading corners, library resources, smart TVs, poetry competitions, storytelling, journalism, and wall-magazine activities create multiple entry points for participation. This finding aligns with Indonesian studies that emphasize facilities, school culture, and leadership as mutually relevant conditions for literacy development (Marmoah et al., 2022; Fadlilah et al., 2022; Pirgianti et al., 2023; Suratman & Sugiyono, 2025). It also complements Kierstead et al. (2023), who identified principal practices involving awareness, expertise, momentum, and resource use as interconnected influences on literacy culture. Yet the observation that some students skimmed books introduces an important qualification: participation in structured activities does not necessarily indicate deep literacy engagement. The practical implication is that principals should combine incentives and infrastructure with strategies that cultivate reading depth, reflection, student agency, and meaningful production. The study therefore distinguishes between institutional participation and substantive engagement.

The fourth finding shows that the principal leads by example through poetry reading, reading alongside students, encouraging participation, and supporting documentation, while teachers also model literacy practices. This evidence strongly corresponds with contemporary literacy-leadership research emphasizing visible principal engagement, relational leadership, and collective participation (Francois, 2022; Thompson & Brezicha, 2022; Kierstead et al., 2023). It further supports research conceptualizing collective leadership as a mechanism through which leadership practices become shared across educators rather than remaining concentrated in one formal leader (Eckert & Morgan, 2023; Aminah et al., 2025). The distinctive contribution of the present study lies in connecting modeling with the other three dimensions: the principal does not merely communicate literacy policy, but embodies the practices that policy seeks to institutionalize. The theoretical implication is therefore a shift from role-based leadership to practice-based literacy leadership. In practice, principals can strengthen credibility by participating visibly, while teachers can reproduce and normalize literacy behaviors through shared exemplification.

Taken together, the four findings generate the study's principal novelty: a contextually grounded model of literacy leadership organized through the interaction of mobilizing, guiding, motivating, and modeling. Existing studies commonly examine particular leadership functions, literacy domains, or measurable relationships, whereas this case demonstrates how complementary practices form a reinforcing institutional process (Sumiran et al., 2022; Wibowo et al., 2023; Busra & Mahnun, 2026; Rahmawati et al., 2025). The Indonesian context further matters because academic reading is integrated with Lampung Mengaji, positioning literacy within locally meaningful religious

and cultural practices rather than treating literacy as a culturally neutral routine. The theoretical contribution is a multidimensional framework explaining how literacy culture can be institutionalized through structural, developmental, motivational, and symbolic mechanisms. Practically, the model offers school leaders a transferable framework for planning literacy programs, developing teacher capacity, allocating resources, motivating participation, and demonstrating expected practices. Its impact lies in linking leadership coherence with sustainable literacy culture formation.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that a sustainable literacy culture is driven not by a single leadership function but by the interconnected enactment of four roles: mobilizing literacy policy and stakeholders, guiding teachers and students, motivating participation through rewards and facilities, and modeling literacy practices through direct involvement. The key lesson is that literacy culture becomes more institutionalized when leadership moves beyond administrative coordination and combines structural commitment, capacity building, motivational support, and visible exemplary practice within the school's everyday routines, while culturally embedded practices such as Lampung Mengaji show the importance of aligning literacy initiatives with the local context. The study contributes theoretically by proposing an integrated, multidimensional understanding of literacy leadership and empirically by showing how these four roles operate together in an Indonesian secondary-school context, with implications for research and leadership practice on the design, implementation, and sustainability of school literacy programs. Nevertheless, the study is limited by its single-school qualitative case design, purposive and relatively small group of participants, and reliance on interview, observation, and documentary evidence that cannot establish causal relationships between leadership practices and measurable literacy outcomes; therefore, future research should examine multiple schools and educational contexts through longitudinal or mixed-method designs, incorporate broader stakeholder perspectives, and investigate how integrated leadership practices influence the depth and sustainability of students' literacy engagement and achievement over time.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGY

The authors used Grammarly solely for English language refinement, including grammar, spelling, translation, and readability. The authors retain full responsibility for the research design, data analysis, interpretation, originality, and integrity of the manuscript.

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