

# Educator-Principal and School Culture: A Case Study Analysis

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**Abstract:** This article examines the interactive relationship between educator-principals and school culture construction. Through case analysis, it explores how principal leadership shapes school culture. Educator-principals play dual roles as cultural leaders and agents of change. Their core characteristics include firm educational beliefs, innovative thinking, and outstanding leadership, enabling them to advance school culture through value guidance, behavioral modeling, and institutional innovation. The study takes Principal Wan Yuxia of Wuhan Changqingshu Experimental School as a representative case, analyzing her practice centered on "life development education." By establishing a "dual-subject" moral education model, developing student-centered classrooms, and building a teaching staff system known as the "Eagle-Goose Team," she integrates care for life into the material environment, institutional design, and behavioral culture, thereby forming a distinctive system of holistic education. Research shows that the cultural leadership of educator-principals significantly enhances school educational quality, promotes comprehensive student development, and strengthens school cohesion. The case highlights the need in future education to emphasize the integration of cultural inheritance and innovation, reinforce mechanisms for collaborative campus culture creation by both teachers and students, and balance the promotion of traditional culture with contemporary relevance. This study further recommends deepening long-term tracking and cross-case comparisons to identify broader patterns in how educator-principals contribute to school culture construction.

**Keywords:** Educator-principal; School Culture; Case Study; Leadership; Cultural Development

## 1. Introduction

Educator-principals are characterized by firm educational beliefs, innovative educational thinking, excellent leadership, and profound humanistic concern. They not only possess professional educational knowledge and teaching capabilities, but also have extensive school management experience, an innovative mindset, acute insight into education, and a forward-looking vision. These qualities enable them to lead schools toward healthy and sustainable development amid complex and ever-changing educational environments. A good principal makes a good school. Culture is the foundation of nurturing individuals, and educator-type principals place high importance on cultivating school culture. A positive and vibrant school culture can stimulate students' enthusiasm for learning and teachers' passion for teaching, promote holistic student development and professional growth among educators, and elevate the overall quality of education.

## 2. Roles and Functions of Educator-Type Principals

### 2.1 Definition and Characteristics of Educator-Type Principals

Educator-type principals are those who emphasize both educational philosophy and practice, engage in systematic theoretical research on education, hold unique approaches to school leadership, achieve outstanding results in their roles, and exert significant social influence in both educational thought and practice.<sup>[1]</sup> Tang Shengchang and others argue that educator-type principals should embody five key traits: dedication to education, practical application, wisdom, courage, and innovation.<sup>[2]</sup>

### 2.2 The Importance of School Culture Construction

School culture represents the root and soul of

an institution; it is essential for high-quality education, cultural cultivation, and distinctive, differentiated schooling. School culture refers to a composite formed within the specific social organization of a school, encompassing shared values, behavioral norms, institutional systems, and physical environments created and maintained collectively by teachers and students. Strengthening cultural foundations has become a central theme in school reform and upgrading in the new era. Building a strong school culture is also vital for fostering distinctive and connotative development, advancing strategic school planning, optimizing the educational structure, enhancing sustainability, and cultivating a shared spiritual environment.

### **2.3 Educator-Type Principals as Cultural Leaders**

Schools are not only educational institutions but also cultural entities. School culture reflects the institution's collective spirit and serves as a key indicator of its educational quality. The development of school culture involves both preserving historical traditions and shaping future aspirations. As leaders in advancing school development, educator-type principals play an irreplaceable role in promoting school culture.<sup>[3]</sup>

#### **2.3.1 Setting directions and providing value-based leadership**

Educator-type principals serve as cultural leaders who must align the school's history and current context with future-oriented goals by formulating clear development plans and ensuring meaningful actions. This includes establishing core values, educational missions, and institutional visions that are integrated into daily management and teaching practices.<sup>[4]</sup>

For example, through strategic planning, principals can clarify the school's educational direction and learning objectives, uniting teachers and students around common goals.

In addition, principals must guide the formation of shared values within the school. By modeling their own educational beliefs and behaviors, they influence the attitudes and conduct of teachers, students, and staff. For instance, through personal example and direct engagement, principals can promote values such as honesty, integrity, respect for others, and dedication to learning, fostering a positive and progressive school climate.

#### **2.3.2 Leading by example and exemplary leadership**

Educator-type principals must lead by example, using their leadership skills to mobilize resources and create conditions that encourage active participation from all members in building school culture. Since teaching is the central function of schools and classrooms are the primary setting for instruction, principals can exercise curriculum leadership by driving forward curriculum reforms and pedagogical innovations. When necessary, based on the school's actual needs, advanced educational concepts and teaching methods should be introduced from the perspective of fostering virtue and nurturing talent. This approach updates teaching content and curriculum systems, thereby enhancing teaching effectiveness and stimulating students' interest in learning.

#### **2.3.3 Active regulation and proactive creation**

During the process of school culture development, scholar-principals must establish feedback mechanisms to understand cultural dynamics and the developmental needs of teachers and students, maintain clear direction, and balance attention to individuals with broader cultural development goals. This balanced approach fosters enthusiasm among teachers and motivation among students. For instance, cultivating a positive academic environment, building strong teacher-student relationships, and encouraging student engagement in both learning and campus activities help embed humanistic care and life education into the school culture. At the same time, principals should also focus on teaching quality by providing instructional support and resources that enable teachers to improve their effectiveness.

Through their personal educational philosophies and leadership capabilities, scholar-principals actively guide the entire process of school culture development, continuously enriching and expanding its Connotation, transforming it into a powerful driver for sustained and healthy institutional growth.

### **2.4 Scholar-Principals as Change Agents**

Scholar-principals are not only leaders in shaping school culture but also catalysts for change. By aligning their unique educational philosophies with the current state and

practical needs of the school, they cultivate distinctive institutional cultures.

#### 2.4.1 Enhancing personal innovation awareness and updating educational philosophy

A distinctive school culture requires a principal with a distinctive educational vision. The innovation mindset, awareness of uniqueness, and individualized educational philosophies of scholar-principals play a vital role in establishing such distinctiveness. As a catalyst for transforming school culture, the principal should skillfully apply his or her educational philosophy and leverage the strengths of the school to develop unique insights, strengthen personal educational beliefs, and implement them effectively.<sup>[5]</sup>

#### 2.4.2 Emphasizing cultural inheritance and innovation

An education-oriented principal must thoroughly explore the school's historical heritage and cultural foundations, integrating these into the development of school culture. At the same time, cultural innovation and progress require the introduction of new elements and core values to enrich both the depth and breadth of the school's cultural identity. This effective integration of tradition and innovation supports the formation of a distinctive cultural character and strengthens the school's brand advantage.

#### 2.4.3 Cultivating awareness and capacity for innovation

Education is an act of sowing seeds—what is planted will eventually bloom. A school culture that prioritizes innovation and holistic development nurtures innovative teachers and produces students who demonstrate both creativity and practical ability. Therefore, principals must pay close attention to both teacher professional development and student all-around growth. On one hand, by offering ongoing training and career advancement opportunities, principals can help teachers improve their instructional skills and professional expertise. For instance, organizing participation in educational seminars and teaching workshops enables educators to stay current with emerging pedagogical concepts and methods. On the other hand, principals can arrange diverse campus cultural, scientific, and club activities, providing students with multiple platforms for learning and experiential growth, thus cultivating their

comprehensive abilities and innovative potential.

### 3. The Profound Impact of School Culture on Institutional Development

By exercising leadership, education-minded principals shape and advance school culture, using it as a tool to influence and educate. These efforts have a deep and multifaceted impact on the school, particularly evident in fostering teacher professional growth, supporting student holistic development, improving educational quality, and shaping the school's spirit and ethos.

#### 3.1 School Culture and Teachers' Professional Growth

School culture exerts a profound influence on teachers' professional development. Supportive institutional frameworks and resources provided by the school create favorable conditions for such growth. For instance, schools can establish professional development funds to support teachers' participation in training programs, workshops, and academic conferences. In addition, teacher development centers can be established to offer pedagogical consultation, curriculum design, and research assistance, thereby providing institutional and resource support that enables continuous professional advancement. Moreover, mechanisms that promote collaboration and sharing help enhance communication and teamwork among teachers. Through teaching and research groups, workshops, or project teams, teachers can collectively address pedagogical challenges, exchange instructional experiences, and share educational resources. This culture of collaboration and sharing not only enhances teachers' pedagogical capabilities but also fosters mutual learning and support among educators, creating a positive environment for professional growth. Furthermore, school culture promotes teachers' self-development through reflection and self-assessment. Educators can reflect on and evaluate their teaching practices by maintaining teaching journals, engaging in peer reviews, and conducting classroom-based research. This reflective and evaluative culture enables teachers to identify their strengths and areas for improvement, clarify their professional goals, and develop targeted strategies for growth. Finally, school culture

motivates teachers to pursue excellence by recognizing and rewarding outstanding performance. Schools can acknowledge such achievements through the establishment of teaching awards, exhibitions of instructional accomplishments, and formal teacher recognition programs. This culture of acknowledgment not only increases teachers' job satisfaction and sense of fulfillment but also encourages continuous improvement in teaching effectiveness and professional competence.

### **3.2 School Culture and Students' Holistic Development**

School culture plays a vital role in shaping students' holistic development by providing an educational environment that supports comprehensive growth. On one hand, it facilitates knowledge acquisition and skill development through a wide range of curricula and extracurricular activities. A school culture that prioritizes holistic development values academic success alongside physical education, the arts, and social engagement. Schools can offer diverse academic courses, organize cultural, scientific, and sporting events, and encourage student involvement in clubs and community service, thereby expanding students' perspectives and strengthening their creativity and practical skills. On the other hand, students' interest in learning and desire for exploration are stimulated by school culture through the creation of a supportive and challenging learning environment. A school culture that promotes innovation and critical thinking can spark students' curiosity and thirst for knowledge, encouraging them to actively explore, ask questions, and engage in in-depth research. Such an environment contributes to the development of lifelong learning habits and enhances problem-solving abilities. Furthermore, by establishing democratic and equal teacher-student relationships, school culture strengthens students' mental health and social adaptability. A school culture that respects individuality and differences among students provides a secure, supportive, and encouraging learning environment. Within this environment, students can freely express their opinions, build confidence, learn to communicate and collaborate with others, and develop positive interpersonal relationships and social

adaptability. Finally, school culture expands students' developmental space by reinforcing home-school collaboration and social engagement. An open and inclusive school culture encourages parents and the community to participate in school education, providing students with broader platforms for learning and practice. Through home-school cooperation and social practice activities, students can gain a deeper understanding of society and cultivate civic consciousness and social responsibility.

### **3.3 School Culture and the Improvement of Educational Quality**

School culture represents the concentrated embodiment of a school's spiritual outlook. It encompasses not only the school's values, educational philosophy, and codes of conduct but also its physical environment, institutional systems, and historical traditions. A positive and distinctive school culture plays a crucial role in enhancing educational quality. On one hand, students' values and behavioral habits are shaped by school culture. Schools subtly shape students' thoughts and behaviors through their unique cultural atmosphere, helping them develop a correct worldview, outlook on life, and value system. A school culture centered on integrity, respect, and diligence encourages students to act honestly, treat others with consideration, and pursue their studies diligently, thus fostering responsible citizens with strong moral character. Furthermore, school culture plays a vital role in stimulating teachers' passion for teaching and supporting their professional growth. An open, inclusive environment that values innovation provides ongoing opportunities for educators to learn and develop professionally. Within such a culture, teachers are more inclined to explore new teaching methods, engage actively in educational research, and continuously enhance their instructional effectiveness. This professional development ultimately improves teaching quality and supports the holistic growth of students.

Moreover, school culture drives educational innovation. By emphasizing creativity and practical application, it motivates schools to continually explore new educational models and teaching strategies that align with societal changes and evolving student needs. Such an environment enables schools to cultivate

distinctive educational features and significantly enhance the quality and impact of their educational services. Finally, school culture strengthens institutional branding and social influence. A distinctive and well-defined school culture elevates public recognition and attractiveness, drawing in talented educators and students. At the same time, a robust school culture serves as a valuable asset for external communication and collaboration, enabling the establishment of broader social networks and meaningful partnerships.

### **3.4 School Culture and the Shaping of School Spirit**

School culture embodies both the outward expression and inner essence of school spirit. It not only reflects the institution's educational philosophy and core values but also serves as a fundamental force in shaping its unique spirit and identity. School spirit constitutes the core of school culture, reflecting the institution's intrinsic character and distinctive identity. It plays a significant role in shaping students' personalities and fostering teachers' professional ethics. On one hand, school culture lays the foundation for cultivating school spirit through its system of values and behavioral standards. The mission, vision, and core values of a school are fundamental elements of its culture, offering shared guidelines and spiritual direction to both educators and learners. For instance, a school that upholds "pursuing excellence and nurturing innovation" as its core value will inspire its community to explore actively and embrace creativity, thus developing a forward-looking and pioneering school spirit. On the other hand, school culture provides a practical platform for shaping school spirit through diverse campus activities and cultural traditions. By organizing events such as cultural festivals, science fairs, and sporting competitions, schools create opportunities for students to experience and internalize school spirit through active participation. These activities not only strengthen students' teamwork skills and sense of collective pride but also stimulate their creativity and hands-on abilities, thereby deepening the essence of school spirit.

Furthermore, school culture offers a tangible expression of school spirit through the design and development of physical environments.

Architectural layouts, campus landscapes, and classroom decorations all serve as material carriers of school culture, visibly conveying the institution's educational philosophy and aspirations. A well-balanced, aesthetically enriched, and educationally purposeful campus environment allows students to perceive the presence of school spirit in everyday life, gradually influencing their thinking and behavior.

In addition, school culture reinforces the cultivation of school spirit by establishing a comprehensive institutional framework. School administrative systems, evaluation mechanisms, and incentive structures are all essential components of school culture. These elements regulate the behaviors of teachers and students and guide and promote the formation and development of the school spirit.

In conclusion, school culture constitutes a vital part of school education and exerts a profound influence on the development of both students and teachers. Therefore, an educational leader serving as a principal should fully recognize the importance of school culture, effectively exercise leadership, advance the construction of school culture, and create favorable conditions for the development of students and teachers.

## **4. Principal Wan Yuxia's Practice in School Culture Construction**

School culture is the soul of school development and serves as a key driving force for promoting high-quality educational development. Educational leaders, through their unique educational philosophies and management approaches, play a crucial role in the construction of school culture.

### **4.1 Principal Wan Yuxia's Educational Beliefs and Practices**

Since the establishment of Wuhan Changqingshu Experimental School, Principal Wan Yuxia has demonstrated foresight by defining the soul of the school's development—constructing life-based education focused on holistic development. Centered on each student's autonomous, comprehensive, and sustainable development, she places the cultivation of human spirit and the shaping of personality at the forefront of school development. Guided by the core concept of "life-based education for holistic

development," Principal Wan has established a campus cultural system built upon five pillars: life-oriented philosophy, subject-centered moral education, student-centered curriculum, modern management practices, and an ecological environment.<sup>[6]</sup>

First, implement the educational philosophy of life-based development. President Wan proposed and practiced the educational philosophy of "Life Development Education," emphasizing that education should center on respecting, nurturing, and developing life. A campus cultural system was constructed with five pillars—life-oriented philosophy, subject-based moral education, student-centered curriculum, modern management, and an ecological environment—with the goal of cultivating talents with sound personalities, innovative spirits, and practical abilities.

Second, the "Dual-Subject" model of moral education development was established. President Wan advocated and implemented this dual-subject approach, in which both teachers and students serve as active participants in moral education. Through teacher-student and peer-to-peer interaction, this model promotes the internalization and externalization of moral values.

Third, the "P+S Self-Motivated Development Classroom" was created. The school developed the "P+S Self-Motivated Development Classroom" and introduced student-centered curricula to encourage autonomous learning and collaborative inquiry, stimulating students' interest and potential while fostering innovative thinking and practical abilities.

Fourth, efforts were made to accelerate the development of the teaching staff. The school formed the "Eagle and Wild Geese Team," consisting of master teacher workshops at national, provincial, and municipal levels, promoting the concept of "an eagle-like individual and a wild geese-like team." Through teamwork and professional growth, the overall quality of the teaching staff has been enhanced.

Fifth, outreach for high-quality education was expanded. Beyond implementing educational reforms within the school, President Wan also extended quality educational resources to multiple regions across the country, spreading the "Chinese-style smile" overseas—for instance, by sharing teaching resources

through online platforms and organizing international educational exchange activities.

#### **4.2 Manifestation of the Concept of Life Education in School Culture**

Principal Wan's concept of life education has been taking root since the establishment of the school, emphasizing a people-oriented approach, focusing on students' individualized development and fostering innovation. The school's action principle is engraved on the wall at the main entrance: "Vibrant life grants us growth and progress; the Chinese character endows us with strength for the journey ahead!" All campus space construction follows the principle of respecting the integrity of children's lives, adopting a modern educational model described as "externally explicit and internally implicit." Every cultural wall "speaks," and every "adopted" facility on campus serves an educational purpose. A row of wooden low cabinets is placed outside each classroom door, with compartments filled with spare shoes. Behind each classroom, there is a "Confidential Message Box" where students can write about their adolescent concerns and challenges. Principal Wan firmly integrates the philosophy of life education into school culture, closely aligning the campus environment with cultural values. Each detail of the campus setting reflects care for students' lives, subtly influencing them through cultural immersion and inspiration.<sup>[7]</sup>

#### **4.3 Integration of Moral Education and School Culture**

Exemplary conduct defines the essence of being a teacher, with morality taking precedence. The fundamental mission of education is to cultivate individuals with both moral integrity and competence. Principal Wan believes that moral education should move away from false, grandiose, and empty preaching, instead embedding it throughout the entire educational process and in teachers' daily practices, fully leverage educators' exemplary role. Thus, she proposed the "Dual-Subject" model of moral education and leads by example. Principal Wan dares to envision, acts decisively, and thinks critically. Facing the initial difficulties encountered during the school's founding, she clearly defined its educational goals, courageously confronted challenges, actively sought

solutions, and effectively integrated and created resources to promote positive changes in school culture and optimize the educational environment. Its educational philosophy of respecting life, along with its vibrant vitality, embodies a school culture that influences lives through life itself, inspiring both teachers and students.

#### **4.4 Curriculum Reform and Student Competency Development**

Under Principal Wan's leadership, the team proposed the "P+S" student-centered classroom model aimed at fostering proactive development. This approach encourages autonomous learning and collaborative inquiry, stimulating students' interest and potential while cultivating their innovative thinking and practical abilities. Focusing on five curriculum objectives—physical and mental health, Chinese character, Chu-Han demeanor, intelligent living, and international perspective—Principal Wan deconstructed and restructured the curriculum to create four core literacy areas related to life development: human and self, human and society, human and world, and human and nature. Additionally, a 3,000-square-meter "Changqingshu Maker Workshop" was established on campus. The curriculum reform has transformed classrooms by fully empowering students, allowing teacher development to enhance student autonomy and, in turn, motivating teacher growth through student progress, thus achieving mutual synergy.

#### **4.5 Faculty Team Building and Teacher Development**

Strengthening education begins with strengthening the teaching force. Principal Wan departed from traditional management models and explored flatter organizational structures across the school group. She established the "Yingyan Team," integrating national, provincial, and municipal-level master teacher studios, and launched the "Professional Development Workshop for Teachers," organized into three tiers: individual learning, grade-level group learning, and major teaching research group learning. Addressing the diverse professional needs of teachers at different stages, she actively builds platforms for excellence, encouraging continuous learning and growth to accelerate

faculty development.

Educator-principals, through their educational vision and leadership, contribute meaningfully to school culture, continuously driving positive cultural transformation and enhancing the educational environment. A positive school culture can stimulate students' interest in learning, enhance teachers' enthusiasm for work, promote all-round student development and teacher professional growth, and improve the school's educational quality and overall competitiveness.

### **5. Case Analysis and Research Conclusion**

#### **5.1 In-Depth Analysis of Principal Wan Yuxia's Case**

From the perspective of material culture, the school features a well-planned architectural layout and extensive green spaces. The four campuses have restructured multiple environments that support students' physical and mental growth, including the creation of maker workshops and fully equipped teaching facilities. The school not only provides spaces suitable for survival but also focuses on life development by actively building environments conducive to growth. All campus space construction follows the principle of respecting the integrity of children's lives and emphasizing life development.

From the perspective of spiritual culture, Principal Wan innovates approaches to moral education, centers on the fundamental task of fostering virtue, upholds values of "red identity, national identity, and ethnic identity," and pursues an educational vision of cultivating "physical and mental health, Chinese character, wise living, Chu-Han demeanor, and international perspective." She integrates patriotism and life development education deeply into school practices.

From the perspective of institutional culture, Principal Wan has established a "dual-subject" model for moral education development, improved the moral education management system, challenged traditional management models, and explored flat management structures within the school group. She has formed the "Yingyan Team"—a three-tier master teacher studio at national, provincial, and municipal levels—showcasing her leadership as an educator through innovative reforms, proactive improvements, and

continuous refinement.

From the perspective of behavioral culture, Principal Wan respects every individual in the school community. Teachers and students alike are witnesses and beneficiaries of the school's development. With dedication, emotion, effort, and action, she embodies the spirit of teaching, which is why students affectionately call her "Principal Mom." Whatever she sets out to achieve, she pursues with unwavering dedication. She has led and fostered the development of a school culture characterized by warmth, care, respect for life, and proactive growth.

## **5.2 Achievements and Challenges in School Culture Development**

Through her distinctive educational philosophy and practices, Principal Wan Yuxia has driven the advancement of school culture. The key achievements in this endeavor are as follows:

### **5.2.1 Enhancing educational quality**

Guided by its school culture, the institution has continuously improved its academic standards. In recent years, students have consistently excelled in various competitions, college admission rates have steadily increased, and public recognition of the school has grown significantly.

### **5.2.2 Promoting holistic student development**

By organizing diverse programs, the school offers students platforms for self-expression and fosters their all-around development. Many students have demonstrated exceptional talents in arts, sports, and science and technology, achieving notable success across multiple domains.

### **5.2.3 Optimizing the school environment and strengthening cohesion**

School culture has played a vital role in improving the campus environment, deepening teachers' and students' sense of cultural identity, and enhancing unity within the school community. Faculty, staff, and students work collaboratively toward shared goals, cultivating a harmonious and forward-looking atmosphere.

### **5.2.4 Cultivating leading teacher teams and accelerating workforce development**

The school has formed an "Eagle and Wild Goose Team" composed of master teacher workshops at national, provincial, and municipal levels. Through collaboration and professional growth initiatives, the overall

competence of the teaching staff has been elevated. Principal Wan creates individual development portfolios for each teacher, providing tailored support and assigning suitable roles to fully realize their potential. Under the leadership of Principal YuXia Wan, Wuhan Changqingshu Experimental School has developed a distinctive school culture centered on life development education and oriented toward innovation and practice. This culture is dedicated to cultivating students with Chinese hearts, national spirits, global perspectives, future-oriented minds, and international standards. The school's educational practices and achievements have received widespread recognition and respect from all sectors of society. At the same time, the school also faces certain challenges. For example, while promoting excellent traditional culture, it must continuously adapt and innovate to keep campus culture vibrant and aligned with the times; school culture construction should avoid formalism by emphasizing spiritual cultural development and exploring cultural connotations to enhance cultural taste and promote sustainable school development; online culture may pose challenges and negative impacts on school culture, necessitating stronger guidance and management to harness its positive role in adolescent growth.

## **5.3 Manifestation of an Educator-Principal's Leadership**

Leadership represents the capability principals should possess when conducting educational leadership practices. According to scholar Sergiovanni's definition of leadership, educator-principals demonstrate their leadership through five dimensions: educational leadership, interpersonal leadership, technical leadership, cultural leadership, and symbolic leadership.

### **5.3.1 Educational leadership**

An educator-principal's educational leadership originates from their professional academic cultivation. As the navigator of school educational quality, the principal provides practical guidance and institutional support for both students and teachers in areas such as teaching, teacher development, curriculum design, psychological prevention, and the establishment of lofty ideals.<sup>[8]</sup> Principal Wan led her teaching team to propose the concept of



student-centered classrooms known as the “P+S” proactive development model and implemented curriculum reforms. Targeting five curriculum objectives—physical and mental health, Chinese character, Chu-Han demeanor, wise living, and international vision—the school deconstructed and restructured its curriculum, constructing four core literacy-related course categories focused on human beings and themselves, human beings and society, human beings and the world, and human beings and nature. These efforts stimulate students’ interest and initiative in learning and promote their comprehensive development. Additionally, Principal Wan established the “Yingyan Team” across national, provincial, and municipal levels of master teacher workshops and founded the “Professional Development Workshop for Teachers,” actively creating broad platforms for the growth of outstanding teachers. These initiatives exemplify her educational leadership.

#### 5.3.2 Interpersonal leadership

The interpersonal leadership of an educator-principal refers to the professional competence in managing both internal and external human resources within the school. Principal Wan fully considered students’ practical needs and integrated the concept of life education into the design of campus facilities, demonstrating the school’s care for students’ lives. By shaping and developing school culture, the educational environment has been continuously improved, enabling teachers and students to feel valued and fostering their sense of value-based belonging and cultural identification, thereby fulfilling their needs for respect and self-belonging in work and study. Individual portfolios were established by Principal Wan for each teacher to help them find suitable positions for development, thus fully utilizing teachers’ potential. Additionally, training platforms tailored to teachers at different levels and with varying needs were created to address their requirements at different stages. This initiative was based on Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Theory and represented a practical approach to leadership development. <sup>[9]</sup>

#### 5.3.3 Technological leadership

An educator-principal’s technological leadership is demonstrated through the flexible application of school regulations and

organizational management strategies. Principal Wan broke away from traditional management models by advancing explorations into flat management structures within the school group. He established the “Eagle and Wild Goose Team,” a multi-level network of master teacher workshops at national, provincial, and municipal levels, thus accelerating the development of the teaching staff. Additionally, Principal Wan serves as the chief coordinator for over 130 new schools in Wuhan, fostering a K-12 learning community composed of newly established schools with high developmental aspirations.

#### 5.3.4 Cultural leadership

An educator-principal acts as a leader, builder, and promoter of school culture. Principal Wan, based on the local cultural context and developmental challenges of the school, clearly defined its educational objectives. With a clear direction, he dares to envision, act decisively, and reflect critically, unafraid of difficulties and actively seeking solutions through resource integration and creation. These efforts have promoted positive cultural changes and optimized the educational environment. His educational philosophy centered on respecting life, along with his vibrant vitality, itself constitutes a form of school culture that influences teachers and students through the power of life itself, invigorating the entire school community. By leveraging his personal leadership charisma to guide the construction of school culture, Principal Wan effectively demonstrates cultural leadership.

#### 5.3.5 Symbolic leadership

Symbolic leadership refers to the principal’s ability to establish and communicate the school’s vision for development in alignment with its strategic goals. Principal Wan has proposed and implemented the “Life Development-Oriented Educational Philosophy,” emphasizing that education should center on respecting life, nurturing life, and promoting life. This philosophy integrates patriotic education to cultivate talents with well-rounded personalities, innovative spirits, and practical abilities. Through this approach, he inspires teachers and students to strive toward shared goals, awakening the motivational source of their educational mission. In this form of consensual symbolic leadership, students and teachers demonstrate

proactive and positive engagement in following the educational leadership of principals. <sup>[10]</sup>

#### **5.4 Implications for Future Educational Practices**

Valuable insights can be drawn from the case study of Principal Wan Yuxia's approach to school culture construction, offering significant guidance for future educational practices.

##### **5.4.1 Influence of educational leadership on school culture construction**

Educational principals, through effective use of their leadership, play a vital role as catalysts and facilitators in shaping and advancing school culture.

##### **5.4.2 The importance of cultural integration**

The successful educational practices of Principal Wan Yuxia illustrate that integrating traditional culture with modern education not only enriches curricular content but also enhances students' enthusiasm for learning and their cultural identity. Future education should place stronger emphasis on both cultural inheritance and innovation, embedding cultural education across disciplines through diverse pedagogical strategies.

##### **5.4.3 Co-creation of campus culture by teachers and students**

Encouraging collaborative participation from both teachers and students in building campus culture can strengthen the unity and cohesion of the school community. This approach not only deepens a sense of belonging and accountability among teachers and students but also fosters greater interaction and collaboration, ultimately creating a more harmonious and supportive learning environment.

##### **5.4.4 Emphasis on students' holistic development**

Future education should prioritize the comprehensive development of students, extending beyond academic performance. Schools should provide a wide range of interest groups and extracurricular activities to offer platforms where students can express themselves and hone their skills. Through such activities, students can develop their individual talents and abilities while cultivating teamwork and a sense of social responsibility. Schools can also offer diversified courses, such as art, physical education, and science and technology,

based on students' interests and needs, thus promoting their all-round development. Meanwhile, the introduction of international advanced educational resources and teaching concepts can effectively enhance the school's educational quality.

#### **5.5 Limitations and Future Prospects of the Study**

Although Principal Wan Yuxia has achieved remarkable results in school culture construction, this case study still faces the following limitations:

First, limited case representativeness. The success of Principal Wan largely depends on her personal charisma and leadership, as well as the specific conditions of the school. Such experiences may be difficult to replicate in other schools.

Second, insufficient research depth. Current studies mainly focus on Principal Wan's management strategies and outcomes, with limited exploration into the underlying mechanisms and influencing factors of school culture construction.

Third, lack of long-term follow-up research. School culture construction is a long-term process requiring continuous observation and evaluation. Most existing studies on Principal Wan's case rely on short-term observations and lack comprehensive long-term tracking data. Due to limitations in the author's data collection methods, the gathered information may not be fully comprehensive.

To address the above limitations, future case studies on scholar-principals and school culture construction can be improved and expanded in the following ways:

##### **5.5.1 Multi-dimensional in-depth research**

Future research should pay more attention to internal mechanisms and influencing factors of school culture construction, such as school organizational structure, teacher quality, and student characteristics. Through multi-dimensional and in-depth analysis, a comprehensive understanding of the role and impact of scholar-principals in shaping school culture can be achieved.

##### **5.5.2 Long-term follow-up research**

A long-term follow-up research mechanism should be established to enable continuous observation and evaluation of school culture construction led by scholar-principals. By collecting and analyzing long-term data, a

more accurate understanding of the dynamic process and effectiveness of school culture construction can be achieved.

#### 5.5.3 Cross-case comparative study

Multiple representative cases of educator-principals are selected for comparative analysis to examine the commonalities and differences in school culture construction across diverse contexts. Through cross-case comparison, more universally applicable insights and underlying patterns can be identified.

#### 5.5.4 Integration of theory and practice

Strengthen the connection between theory and practice by incorporating interdisciplinary theories—such as those from pedagogy, management, and sociology—into the study of school culture construction. At the same time, emphasize the application of research findings to practical settings, promoting continuous improvement and development in school culture building.

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