



Examining the Impact of Democratic Leadership, Organizational Communication, and Work Environment on Teachers' Work Culture: Evidence from Islamic Junior High Schools in Indonesia

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis hubungan antara gaya kepemimpinan demokratis, komunikasi organisasi dan lingkungan kerja terhadap budaya kerja guru di SMP Islam se-Kecamatan Pringgabaya, Lombok Timur, Indonesia. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan jenis korelasional. Instrumen pengumpulan data berupa angket. Populasi dalam penelitian ini berjumlah 85 orang guru SMP Islam se-Kecamatan Pringgabaya yang dipilih menggunakan total sampling. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan uji korelasi *Pearson Product Moment* berbantuan aplikasi SPSS versi 25. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa: (1) gaya kepemimpinan demokratis memiliki hubungan yang signifikan terhadap budaya kerja guru; (2) komunikasi organisasi memiliki hubungan yang signifikan terhadap budaya kerja guru; dan (3) lingkungan kerja memiliki hubungan yang signifikan terhadap budaya kerja guru. Hasil analisis secara parsial maupun simultan menunjukkan adanya hubungan yang signifikan. Pada masa mendatang perlu kajian kausal-komparatif terkait budaya kerja kelompok guru ditinjau dari ketiga variabel tersebut.

Kata kunci *Kepemimpinan Demokratis, Komunikasi Organisasi, Lingkungan Kerja, Budaya Kerja Guru*

Abstract

The study aims to analyze the relationship between democratic leadership style, organizational communication, and the work environment with teachers' work culture in Islamic junior high schools in the Pringgabaya sub-district, East Lombok, Indonesia. This research employs a quantitative approach with a correlational design. The data collection instrument used was a questionnaire. The population of this study consisted of 85 teachers from Islamic junior high schools across the Pringgabaya sub-district, selected using total sampling. Data analysis was conducted using the Pearson Product-Moment correlation test with the assistance of SPSS version 25. The results of the study indicate that: (1) democratic leadership style has a significant relationship with teachers' work culture; (2) organizational communication has a significant relationship with teachers' work culture; and (3) the work environment has a significant relationship with teachers' work culture. Both partial and simultaneous analyses show that these relationships are significant. In future research, it is necessary to undertake a causal-comparative investigation of teachers' work culture across groups, examined in relation to these three variables.

Keywords *Democratic Leadership, Organizational Communication, Work Environment, Teacher's Work Culture*



Introduction

Work culture is a set of norms and behaviors upheld by individuals within an organization that significantly influence performance. Triguno states that work culture is a way of life that shapes character and is reflected in attitudes, beliefs, aspirations, values, and activities manifested in work (Triguno, 2010). Meanwhile, Hartanto (2009) views work culture as a way of life embedded in the everyday work environment. In the context of Islamic educational institutions, such as Islamic junior high schools, educational success depends not only on curriculum and facilities but is also strongly influenced by teachers' work culture. A positive work culture fosters teachers who are disciplined, responsible, and highly committed to educating and guiding students in accordance with Islamic values.

However, field observations indicate that there are still issues of low discipline, insufficient work motivation, and weak collaboration among teachers (Safrijal, 2021). Normatively, teachers' work culture from an Islamic perspective is measured not only in terms of professionalism but also in terms of spiritual values, as emphasized in the Qur'an verse no. 105 (Departemen Agama RI, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya*, 2005):

وَقُلْ اَعْمَلُوا فَسَيَرَى اللّٰهُ عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ

“*Say, Work, for Allah will see your deeds, and so will His Messenger and the believers.*”

This verse emphasizes the importance of a work ethic grounded in sincerity, discipline, and responsibility in every human activity. Allah commands His people to work diligently, as every deed will be observed by Allah, His Messenger, and the believers. In the context of education, particularly for teachers in Islamic schools, this verse serves as a theological foundation for developing a work culture characterized by integrity and professionalism. A positive work culture is marked by discipline, responsibility, cooperation, commitment, and high motivation, which in turn foster teachers' loyalty and enthusiasm in carrying out both instructional duties and school administrative tasks (Fuadah et al., 2023).

Previous studies have indicated that multiple factors influence teachers' work culture. One key determinant is democratic leadership style. As articulated by Thoha in his research, democratic leadership is associated with personal influence and the active involvement of followers in problem-solving processes as well as in decision-making (Thoha, 2013). Meanwhile, Nawawi (2013) emphasizes the importance of maintaining harmonious relationships between leaders and subordinates as a means of preserving organizational authority. Empirical evidence further demonstrates that a democratic leadership style exerts a positive influence on teachers' performance, as it fosters opportunities for participation and innovation (Supriyadi et al., 2024). In addition, organizational communication plays a crucial role in shaping work culture. Pace (2006) argues that effective organizational communication enhances coordination and promotes shared understanding within the organization.

Other studies have found that effective organizational communication enhances teachers' discipline and sense of responsibility (Sarief, 2023). Furthermore, empirical evidence indicates a significant relationship between organizational communication and teachers' work culture (Aqilla et al., 2024). Parwata et al. (2023) also asserts that effective communication contributes to higher levels of employee commitment and discipline.

Another important factor is the work environment. According to Sedarmayanti (2001), the work environment encompasses both physical and non-physical conditions that support the execution of tasks. Hidayat's study reports a positive relationship between the work environment and teachers' work culture, revealing that the work environment significantly influences work culture in private schools (Astuti et al., 2021). In line with this, Djafar et al. (2021) explain that a conducive work environment enhances teachers' motivation and discipline.

Although numerous studies have examined the effects of democratic leadership style, organizational communication, and work environment on teachers' performance or work culture individually, a review of the literature reveals a lack of research investigating these three variables simultaneously in relation to teachers' work culture, particularly in Islamic junior high schools within the Pringgabaya sub-district. Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the relationship between democratic leadership style, organizational communication, and work environment and teachers' work culture in Islamic junior high schools across Pringgabaya. This research is significant as it provides empirical contributions regarding the combined influence of these factors on teachers' work culture within the context of Islamic education. Furthermore, the findings are expected to serve as a basis for formulating policies aimed at improving school management quality and strengthening teachers' work culture.

Methods

This study employs a quantitative approach with a correlational design, aimed at examining and establishing the extent of the relationship between one variable and one or more other variables (Pertiwi et al., 2023). The population of the study consists of 108 teachers from Islamic junior high schools across the Pringgabaya sub-district. The distribution of teachers in each Islamic junior high school in Pringgabaya is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Population Distribution

No	Schools	Number of Teachers
1	SMP IT NW Benyer	16
2	SMP IT NW Teko	21
3	SMP Islam Al-Ikhlas Pohgading	33
4	SMP IT Yasnuhu NW Pringgabaya	38
	Total	108

The sample size in this study consisted of 85 respondents, determined using the Yamane formula. The sampling procedure employed a proportionate random sampling technique, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Sample Distribution

No	Schools	Population	Sample
1	SMP IT NW Benyer	16	13
2	SMP IT NW Teko	21	17
3	SMP Islam Al-Ikhlas Pohgading	33	26
4	SMP IT Yasnuhu NW Pringgabaya	38	29
	Total	108	85

The variables in this study are categorized into two types: independent and dependent variables. The independent variables consist of democratic leadership style (X_1), organizational communication (X_2), and work environment (X_3), while the dependent variable is work culture (Y). A correlational research design is employed, as the study seeks to describe and examine the relationships among two or more variables. Specifically, it aims to analyze the association between democratic leadership style (X_1), organizational communication (X_2), and work environment (X_3) and work culture (Y). Data were collected using a closed-ended questionnaire based on a Likert scale, developed in accordance with the indicators of each variable. The instrument comprises four variables: democratic leadership style (3 indicators, 11 items), organizational communication (3 indicators, 7 items), work environment (3 indicators, 9 items), and work culture (4 indicators, 13 items). The indicators were derived from theoretical frameworks and have been tested for validity and reliability.

The research instrument was subjected to validity and reliability testing prior to its implementation. Content validity was established through expert judgment by a university lecturer. A pilot test of the instrument was conducted with 30 teachers at MTs Al Azhar Apitaik. Validity testing was analyzed using SPSS version 25 with a significance level of 5% (i.e., $\alpha = 0.05$) and an r -table value of 0.361. The results indicated that all 40 questionnaire items were valid.

Subsequently, reliability testing confirmed that the instrument met the required reliability criteria and was suitable for use in the study. Data analysis techniques included descriptive statistics and Pearson Product-Moment correlation, performed using SPSS version 25. The prerequisite test applied was the Kolmogorov–Smirnov normality test. The coefficient of determination was employed to assess the magnitude of the contribution of independent variables to the dependent variable. Hypothesis testing was conducted at a 5% significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$), with hypotheses accepted when the significance value was less than 0.05.

Results

The normality test was conducted as a prerequisite for regression analysis to ensure that the residual data were normally distributed. The results of the normality test, using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Shapiro–Wilk methods, are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Normality-Test Outcomes

	Kolmogorov-smirnov			Shapiro-wilk		
	Statistic.	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Unstandardized Residual	0.046	85	0.200	0.988	85	0.646

The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test yielded a statistic of 0.046 with 85 degrees of freedom (df) and a significance value of 0.200. Meanwhile, the Shapiro–Wilk test produced a statistic of 0.988 with 85 degrees of freedom (df) and a significance value of 0.646. Since both significance values exceed 0.05, the residual data can be considered normally distributed. Therefore, the normality assumption required for regression analysis has been satisfied.

With the normality assumption satisfied, the analysis proceeded using the Pearson Product–Moment correlation test. The results of the correlation analysis among the research variables are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Correlation Test Outcomes of Intra-Variable

Pearson's Correlation				
Variable	X ₁	X ₂	X ₃	Y
X ₁	1.000	0.339	0.337	-0.440
X ₂	0.339	1.000	0.558	-0.731
X ₃	0.337	0.558	1.000	-0.758
Y	-0.440	-0.731	-0.758	1.000
Sig.				
Variable	X ₁	X ₂	X ₃	Y
X ₁	-	0.000	0.000	0.000
X ₂	0.000	-	0.000	0.000
X ₃	0.000	0.000	-	0.000
Y	0.000	0.000	0.000	-

Based on Table 4, the results of the Pearson correlation analysis indicate that democratic leadership style has a correlation coefficient of -0.440 with a significance value of 0.000 in relation to teachers' work culture, suggesting a moderate, negative, and statistically significant relationship. Organizational communication shows a correlation coefficient of -0.731 with a significance value of 0.000 , indicating a strong, negative, and significant relationship with teachers' work culture. Meanwhile, the work environment demonstrates a correlation coefficient of -0.758 with a significance value of 0.000 , reflecting a very strong, negative, and statistically significant relationship with teachers' work culture.

These findings suggest that all independent variables are significantly associated with teachers' work culture, with relationships consistently negative in direction. Given the presence of significant correlations among the variables, the analysis was further extended to examine the magnitude of the contribution of the independent variables to work culture through the coefficient of determination, as presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Coefficient Determination Outcomes

R	R Square	Coefficient Determination
0.853	0.728	72.8%

Based on Table 5, the R value of 0.853 indicates a very strong simultaneous relationship between the independent variables and work culture. The coefficient of determination (R Square) of 0.728 suggests that 72.8% of the variance in work culture can be explained by democratic leadership style, organizational communication, and the work environment within the research model, while the remaining 27.2% is attributable to other factors beyond the scope of this study.

Discussion

The results of the Pearson correlation test indicate that the relationship between democratic leadership style and work culture has a correlation coefficient of -0.440 with a significance value of 0.000 . The negative coefficient suggests an inverse relationship between the two variables, meaning that higher implementation of democratic leadership tends to be associated with a decline in teachers' work culture. Although, in theory, democratic leadership emphasizes participation, openness, and deliberation, its implementation in Islamic junior high schools in the Pringgabaya sub-district has not fully contributed to improving teachers' work culture. This condition may be influenced by prolonged decision-making processes, a lack of leadership assertiveness, or reduced teacher discipline resulting from autonomy that is not balanced with effective control. In addition, teachers may not yet be fully prepared to adapt to a participatory leadership model, leading to suboptimal use of the autonomy provided. Thus, the application of democratic leadership without adequate firmness and supervision may lead to decreased work discipline and a weakening of work culture values. These findings are consistent with Pratami (2019), who reported that democratic leadership can negatively affect work culture if not accompanied by assertiveness and clear task allocation. Similarly, Sutikno (2020) found that excessive freedom in democratic leadership may reduce teacher discipline, thereby influencing work culture. Furthermore, Banuyekti (2024) argues that the effectiveness of democratic leadership is highly dependent on subordinates' readiness; when teachers lack strong commitment and responsibility, participatory leadership may instead generate uncertainty and weaken work ethic. Wahyuni (2022) also emphasizes that democratic leadership can produce negative outcomes if it is not supported by firm leadership, clear division of responsibilities, and continuous supervision. Therefore, the implementation of democratic leadership should be complemented by clear regulations and effective monitoring to ensure that teacher participation contributes positively to the development of a strong work culture.

Furthermore, organizational communication also demonstrates a significant relationship with work culture, with a correlation coefficient of -0.731 and a significance value of 0.000 . This coefficient indicates a negative direction, suggesting that, within the actual conditions of the schools studied, improvements in organizational communication are paradoxically associated with a decline in work culture.

From a theoretical perspective, effective organizational communication is expected to reinforce work values, enhance coordination, clarify task distribution, and foster discipline and responsibility. However, the negative relationship identified in this study suggests that the existing communication patterns may not yet be fully effective in supporting the development of a positive work culture. Factors such as limited openness, unclear information from leadership, or communication barriers may contribute to this outcome. Moreover, a high intensity of communication does not necessarily imply high quality. When communication is predominantly instructive, one-directional, or prone to misunderstanding, it may lead to fatigue, reduced motivation, and weakened commitment to work culture values. These findings are consistent with Rahmawati (2021), who, in a study of private junior high schools in Sumbawa Regency, identified a significant yet negative relationship between organizational factors and work culture. Similarly, Haryanto (2020) found that ineffective organizational

communication can undermine work culture, as unclear information leads to confusion and diminished employee commitment. Wijaya and Nurhayati (2022) further emphasize that the quality of communication, rather than merely its intensity, plays a critical role in shaping a conducive work culture; when communication lacks feedback mechanisms and recognition, work culture tends to deteriorate. Therefore, it is essential to evaluate existing communication systems, strengthen transparency, and improve the quality of two-way feedback to ensure that organizational communication contributes positively to the development of a more effective work culture.

Furthermore, the relationship between the work environment and teachers' work culture in Islamic junior high schools across the Pringgabaya sub-district shows a correlation coefficient of -0.758 with a significance value of 0.000 . The negative coefficient indicates an inverse relationship, suggesting that improvements in the work environment are associated with a decline in teachers' work culture.

From a theoretical standpoint, a conducive work environment, both in its physical and non-physical dimensions, is expected to support the development of a positive work culture. However, the findings of this study suggest that, within the context examined, the existing work environment has not yet contributed meaningfully to enhancing teachers' work culture. This may be attributed to the tendency of teachers to prioritize moral responsibility, professionalism, and religious commitment in carrying out their duties.

Moreover, the negative direction of the relationship implies that improvements in the work environment have not been accompanied by a corresponding strengthening of work-related values. As such, enhancements in facilities and infrastructure alone appear insufficient without parallel efforts to foster attitudes, work ethic, and professional commitment.

These findings are consistent with Rahmawati and Hidayat (2020), who reported a significant yet negative relationship between the work environment and work culture in private junior high schools in Sumbawa Regency. Similarly, Nurbaya and Hasanah (2022) found that while the work environment is significantly related to work culture, the quality of social relationships and teamwork plays a more decisive role than physical facilities alone. Therefore, schools should not only focus on improving physical conditions but also prioritize the development of a supportive work climate through the enhancement of discipline, strengthening of collaboration, and the implementation of continuous supervision.

Based on the results of the Pearson correlation analysis, all three independent variables in this study, i.e., democratic leadership style, organizational communication, and work environment, exhibit significant relationships with teachers' work culture in Islamic junior high schools across the Pringgabaya sub-district; however, all relationships are negative in direction. This finding indicates that, in practice, improvements in these three factors have not yet effectively contributed to a positive enhancement of work culture.

Individually, democratic leadership style, which theoretically emphasizes participation, openness, and teacher involvement in decision-making, has not demonstrated a positive impact on work culture. This condition may arise when its implementation is not balanced with firmness, consistent supervision, and clear work regulations, such that the autonomy granted may instead reduce teachers' discipline and sense of responsibility. Organizational communication also shows a negative relationship, suggesting that the existing communication

patterns have not been fully effective in fostering a positive work culture. Communication that is predominantly one-way, lacks feedback, or emphasizes demands rather than motivation may weaken teachers' morale and commitment to work values.

Similarly, a favorable physical work environment does not necessarily lead to an improved work culture if it is not accompanied by a healthy organizational climate, harmonious social relationships, and consistent supervision and enforcement of discipline. Comfort without adequate control and evaluation mechanisms may adversely affect teachers' levels of discipline and responsibility.

Overall, these findings suggest that the three factors have not yet been optimally managed as supportive elements in the development of a positive work culture. Therefore, it is essential to establish a balance between democratic and assertive leadership, implement open and participatory communication systems, and manage the work environment in a manner that emphasizes discipline and professionalism, so that teachers' work culture can develop more effectively.

Conclusion

The findings of this study on the relationship between democratic leadership style, organizational communication, and work environment and teachers' work culture in Islamic junior high schools across the Pringgabaya sub-district indicate that all three independent variables are significantly associated with teachers' work culture. This is evidenced by the results of the Pearson correlation test, which show a significance value of 0.000 for all variables, indicating values below the 0.05 threshold. Therefore, statistically significant relationships exist between each independent variable and teachers' work culture.

The correlation analysis reveals that democratic leadership style has a correlation coefficient of -0.440 , indicating a moderate and negative relationship. This suggests that higher levels of democratic leadership implementation, as measured in this study, tend to be associated with lower scores of teachers' work culture, and vice versa. The relationship is statistically significant, implying that changes in democratic leadership style are meaningfully associated with changes in teachers' work culture within the school context.

Organizational communication demonstrates a correlation coefficient of -0.731 with a significance value of 0.000, indicating a strong and negative relationship with teachers' work culture. This finding suggests that organizational communication plays a substantial role in shaping work culture. As the level or intensity of communication increases, as measured in this study, there is a corresponding tendency for teachers' work culture scores to decline, and vice versa. This highlights organizational communication as a key factor contributing to the dynamics of teachers' work culture.

The work environment exhibits the highest correlation coefficient, at -0.758 with a significance value of 0.000, indicating a very strong and negative relationship with teachers' work culture. This implies that both physical and non-physical aspects of the work environment are closely associated with variations in teachers' work culture. Compared to the other variables, the work environment emerges as the most dominant factor influencing work culture in this study.

Overall, the results confirm that democratic leadership style, organizational communication, and work environment are all significantly related to teachers' work culture in Islamic junior high schools in the Pringgabaya sub-district. Collectively, these variables contribute to shaping teachers' work-related attitudes, behaviors, and professional characteristics within the school setting. These findings underscore the importance for school management to give careful attention to leadership practices, the effectiveness of communication systems, and the creation of a supportive work environment to foster and sustain an improved teachers' work culture.

Limitation and Recommendation

The present study is limited to a correlational analysis of the relationships between the independent variables (X_1 , X_2 , and X_3) and the dependent variable (Y) within a single group. To achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the direct effects of democratic leadership styles, organizational communication, and work environments on teachers' work culture, future research should employ a causal-comparative design involving two distinct groups of teachers with respect to X_1 , X_2 , and X_3 .

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