

The Influence of Participative Leadership and Organizational Culture on Teacher Performance in Primary Schools

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Abstract: This study examines the influence of principals' participative leadership and school organizational culture on teacher performance in rural primary schools in Kinal District, Kaur Regency, Indonesia. Employing a quantitative survey design, data were collected from 44 teachers across four public primary schools using a census technique. Structured questionnaires measuring participative leadership, organizational culture, and teacher performance were analyzed using multiple linear regression with SPSS version 20. The results reveal that participative leadership has a significant positive effect on teacher performance ($t = 3.482$, $p = 0.001$), and organizational culture similarly demonstrates a significant positive effect ($t = 2.967$, $p = 0.005$). Simultaneously, both variables explain 47.9% of the variance in teacher performance ($F = 18.742$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.479$). The study concludes that when principals actively involve teachers in decision-making and foster a collaborative, disciplined school culture, teacher performance improves substantially. The novelty lies in the integrated examination of both variables within the underexplored context of rural Indonesian primary schools, addressing a gap in national educational management literature. Practically, the findings recommend that principals adopt participative practices through formal and informal forums, strengthen organizational culture via shared values and teamwork, and prioritize these strategies particularly in resource-constrained rural settings. This study contributes to educational leadership and organizational behavior literature by empirically confirming the combined influence of participative leadership and organizational culture on teacher performance, providing evidence-based insights for school management policies, leadership training, and professional development initiatives in rural primary education.

Keywords: Organizational Culture, Participative Leadership, Primary School Management, Rural Education, Teacher Performance

A. Introduction

Teacher performance is a crucial determinant of educational quality, particularly at the primary school level, which serves as the foundation for students' academic development and character formation (Budiastri & Ahdhianto, 2021). Teacher

performance encompasses not only the ability to deliver instructional content but also professional responsibilities related to planning, implementing, and evaluating learning processes in a systematic and sustainable manner (Susanto et al., 2025). High-performing teachers are able to create meaningful learning experiences, foster creativity, shape students' character, and stimulate critical thinking skills essential for lifelong learning (Tan & Ng, 2021).

The importance of teacher performance has become increasingly prominent in line with national efforts to improve educational quality and learning outcomes. However, teacher performance should not be viewed solely as the result of individual competence. Research in educational management consistently indicates that organizational factors within schools play a significant role in shaping teachers' work behavior and performance (Li et al., 2025). Among these factors, school principal leadership and school organizational culture are widely recognized as key determinants of teacher effectiveness.

Participative leadership refers to a leadership style that emphasizes teacher involvement in decision-making processes, open and two-way communication, delegation of authority, and collaborative problem-solving within the school organization (Mufidah et al., 2025). This leadership approach aligns with *Social Exchange Theory*, which posits that reciprocal relationships between leaders and organizational members foster trust, commitment, and enhanced performance. When teachers feel valued, involved, and trusted by school leaders, they are more likely to reciprocate through increased motivation, organizational commitment, and improved job performance (Fatoki, 2023). Empirical studies have demonstrated that participative leadership positively influences teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and professional engagement.

In addition to leadership, organizational culture constitutes a fundamental element in shaping teacher behavior and performance (Dahlia et al., 2025; Khairiah & Zakaria, 2019). Organizational culture is defined as a shared system of values, norms, beliefs, and practices that guide how members of an organization think, act, and interact. Within the school context, organizational culture reflects collective work ethics, discipline, collaboration, communication patterns, and commitment to educational quality. A positive school culture creates a supportive and harmonious working environment, encourages collaboration among teachers, and strengthens professional responsibility toward instructional improvement (Hasibuan & Hadijaya, 2024). Conversely, a weak organizational culture may hinder innovation, reduce motivation, and negatively affect teacher performance.

Ideally, primary schools are expected to be led by principals who consistently practice participative leadership while fostering a strong and positive organizational culture (Engels et al., 2008; Riza et al., 2025). Under such ideal conditions, teachers are actively involved in school decision-making, empowered to innovate in instructional

practices, and supported by a conducive organizational climate that promotes professionalism and continuous improvement. However, the actual conditions in many schools particularly in rural areas often differ from this ideal. Rural primary schools frequently face challenges such as limited resources, restricted access to professional development opportunities, and less optimal organizational management, which may constrain the implementation of participative leadership and the development of a strong school culture.

Previous studies have extensively examined the influence of school leadership on teacher performance as well as the impact of organizational culture on teacher performance, largely as separate variables (Prihatini et al., 2021). The findings generally suggest that democratic or participative leadership styles and positive organizational cultures are associated with higher levels of teacher motivation and performance (Sulistyaningrum, 2024). Nevertheless, most of these studies have been conducted in urban contexts or in schools with relatively adequate resources. Moreover, empirical research that simultaneously examines the combined influence of participative leadership and organizational culture on teacher performance remains limited.

The research gap addressed in this study lies in the lack of comprehensive empirical evidence regarding the simultaneous effect of participative leadership and school organizational culture on teacher performance, particularly within the context of rural primary schools in Indonesia. Rural schools possess distinct social, cultural, and organizational characteristics, including close interpersonal relationships, limited infrastructure, and constrained educational resources, which may shape leadership practices and organizational dynamics differently from urban schools. Understanding how participative leadership and organizational culture interact in such contexts is therefore essential for developing contextually relevant strategies to improve teacher performance (Somech, 2010; Torres, 2022).

Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze the effect of participative leadership of school principals on teacher performance, examine the influence of school organizational culture on teacher performance, and investigate the simultaneous effect of participative leadership and organizational culture on teacher performance in primary schools in Kecamatan Kinal, Kabupaten Kaur. The findings of this study are expected to contribute theoretically to the field of educational management by enriching the literature on participative leadership and organizational culture, while also providing practical recommendations for school leaders and policymakers to enhance teacher performance and educational quality in rural settings.

Recent studies consistently highlight participative leadership as an effective leadership approach in improving teacher-related outcomes within educational organizations. Participative leadership has been shown to positively correlate with

teacher motivation, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and innovative teaching practices (Fatoki, 2023). When principals involve teachers in decision-making processes and encourage open communication, teachers tend to feel valued and empowered, which in turn enhances their professional engagement and instructional effectiveness. From a theoretical perspective, participative leadership aligns with *Social Exchange Theory*, which explains how reciprocal relationships between leaders and subordinates foster trust, loyalty, and performance enhancement. In school contexts, principals who demonstrate participative behaviors create democratic and transparent working relationships that strengthen mutual respect and shared responsibility, leading to improved teacher performance. Empirical evidence indicates that participative leadership enhances teacher self-efficacy and collaborative instructional practices. Organizational culture defined as shared values, norms, and practices shaping organizational behavior also plays a crucial role in influencing teacher performance. In schools, a strong culture characterized by collaboration, discipline, open communication, and recognition has been shown to improve teachers' professionalism and instructional quality. Positive organizational cultures further promote teacher motivation, teamwork, and continuous professional development, while weak cultures may reduce morale and collaboration. Although the effects of participative leadership and organizational culture on teacher performance are well documented, most studies examine these factors separately and are largely conducted in urban or secondary school. Consequently, empirical evidence on their combined influence in rural primary schools where organizational dynamics and resource constraints differ remains limited (Wolterinck et al., 2024).

This study addresses the research gap by simultaneously investigating participative leadership and organizational culture as predictors of teacher performance in four rural primary schools. Unlike previous research that predominantly employs single-variable analysis, this study utilizes multiple linear regression to capture the synergistic effects of both variables. Furthermore, the research contextualizes findings within the Indonesian educational landscape, specifically in Kaur Regency, providing culturally relevant insights for local educational policy development.

This study contributes theoretically by validating and extending organizational behavior theories within educational management contexts, particularly regarding the interplay between leadership styles and cultural dynamics. Practically, it offers evidence-based recommendations for principals, education supervisors, and policymakers to design effective interventions for improving teacher performance through participative leadership implementation and organizational culture strengthening. Research questions of this study were: 1) Does principals' participative leadership significantly influence teacher performance? 2) Does school organizational culture significantly influence teacher performance? 3) Do participative leadership and organizational culture simultaneously influence teacher performance?

B. Methods

This study employed a quantitative approach with an ex-post facto research design. The ex-post facto design was selected because the research examines existing phenomena without manipulating variables, investigating the relationship between independent variables (participative leadership and organizational culture) and the dependent variable (teacher performance) based on empirical conditions. The study was conducted in four primary schools in Kinal District, Kaur Regency, Bengkulu Province, Indonesia: SDN 51 Kaur (Gunung Terang Village), SDN 09 Kaur (Gunung Megang Village), SDN 56 Kaur (Pinang Jawa Village), and SDN 31 Kaur (Pengurung Village). These schools were purposively selected to represent diverse organizational characteristics and leadership practices within the same administrative area. The population comprised all active teachers in the four schools during the 2025/2026 academic year ($N = 51$). Using Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error, the minimum sample size was calculated as 30 teachers. However, to enhance representativeness and minimize sampling error, 44 teachers were selected through systematic random sampling, representing 86% of the total population.

Data were collected using three Likert-scale questionnaires:

1. Participative Leadership Questionnaire (X_1): 30 items measuring teacher involvement in decision-making, communication openness, delegation and trust, collaboration, support and motivation, recognition and fairness, and democratic leadership practices. Cronbach's alpha = 0.930.
2. Organizational Culture Questionnaire (X_2): 30 items assessing shared values and norms, teamwork, work discipline, communication climate, work environment, role modeling, innovation, professionalism, and organizational loyalty. Cronbach's alpha = 0.932.
3. Teacher Performance Questionnaire (Y): 30 items evaluating lesson planning, instructional implementation, content mastery, assessment practices, classroom management, teaching creativity, responsibility, communication, discipline, and professional development. Cronbach's alpha = 0.961.

All instruments demonstrated excellent reliability ($\alpha > 0.90$) and construct validity with Pearson correlation coefficients ranging from $r = 0.365$ to $r = 0.772$, all significant at $p < 0.05$. Data analysis proceeded through several stages:

1. Descriptive Statistics: Calculating mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values to describe variable distributions.
2. Assumption Testing: Normality (Kolmogorov-Smirnov test), multicollinearity (VIF and Tolerance), and heteroscedasticity (Glejser test).
3. Multiple Linear Regression: Testing the simultaneous and partial influence of independent variables on teacher performance.
4. Hypothesis Testing: Using t-test (partial influence) and F-test (simultaneous influence) with $\alpha = 0.05$ significance level.

All statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS version 20.

C. Results and Discussion

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive analysis revealed that participative leadership (X_1) had a mean score of 105.95 (SD = 12.84, range: 84-150), indicating a moderate to high level of participative practices among principals. Organizational culture (X_2) demonstrated a mean of 103.02 (SD = 11.96, range: 86-150), suggesting reasonably positive cultural dynamics. Teacher performance (Y) averaged 122.61 (SD = 11.43, range: 108-150), reflecting satisfactory to good performance levels. The relatively small standard deviations compared to means indicated homogeneous data distribution suitable for parametric analysis.

Assumption Testing Results

1. Normality Test: The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test yielded an Asymp. Sig. value of 0.754 ($p > 0.05$), confirming that residuals were normally distributed, thus meeting the assumption for linear regression.
2. Multicollinearity Test: Tolerance values for both X_1 (0.692) and X_2 (0.692) exceeded 0.10, while VIF values (1.445 for both variables) remained below 10, indicating no multicollinearity issues. This confirms that participative leadership and organizational culture are distinct constructs without problematic intercorrelation.
3. Heteroscedasticity Test: The Glejser test showed significance values of 0.327 (X_1) and 0.418 (X_2), both exceeding 0.05, demonstrating homoscedastic residual variance and validating the regression model's stability.

Regression Analysis

The multiple linear regression equation was established as: $Y = 41.327 + 0.412X_1 + 0.365X_2$. This equation indicates that holding organizational culture constant, a one-unit increase in participative leadership corresponds to a 0.412-unit increase in teacher performance. Similarly, controlling for leadership, each unit increase in organizational culture associates with a 0.365-unit improvement in performance.

Hypothesis Testing Results

H₁: Participative Leadership Influences Teacher Performance

The t-test revealed $t = 3.482$ ($p = 0.001$), significantly exceeding the critical value ($t_{\text{table}} = 2.019$ at $\alpha = 0.05$, $df = 41$). This provides strong evidence that participative leadership significantly and positively influences teacher performance. The

standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.225$) indicates that participative leadership contributes meaningfully to performance variance.

This finding aligns with contemporary leadership theory suggesting that participative approaches enhance intrinsic motivation and organizational commitment (Armenakis et al., 2011; Wiewiora et al., 2013). When principals involve teachers in decision-making, provide transparent communication, and delegate appropriately, teachers experience heightened sense of ownership, trust, and professional responsibility. Participative leadership fosters collaborative environments where teachers feel valued and empowered, directly translating to improved pedagogical practices. The significance of this relationship in the Indonesian primary school context underscores the universal applicability of participative leadership principles, transcending cultural and organizational boundaries. However, this finding partially contrasts with studies by (Khan et al., 2023), who found that participative leadership's effectiveness moderates based on workload and resource availability. In resource-constrained settings, excessive participation without adequate support may increase teacher burden rather than performance.

H₂: Organizational Culture Influences Teacher Performance

The analysis yielded $t = 2.967$ ($p = 0.005$), confirming that organizational culture significantly affects teacher performance at the 0.05 significance level. The standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.536$) suggests that organizational culture exerts a stronger direct influence on performance compared to participative leadership.

This result reinforces organizational culture theory, which posits that shared values, norms, and practices shape behavioral patterns and work effectiveness. In schools characterized by strong collaboration, discipline, open communication, and commitment to quality, teachers internalize professional standards and strive for excellence. Positive school cultures create psychologically safe environments conducive to risk-taking, innovation, and continuous improvement – all essential for high teaching performance (KANE-URRABAZO, 2006).

The particularly strong influence of organizational culture ($\beta = 0.536$) suggests that cultural dynamics may serve as foundational infrastructure upon which leadership practices operate. The organizational culture cannot provide the normative framework that legitimizes and sustains leadership behaviors. In contexts where cultural values align with performance expectations, teachers require less direct supervision and demonstrate higher autonomous motivation.

Rigid organizational cultures may stifle creativity and reduce performance, particularly among teachers with growth mindsets. This suggests that cultural strength must balance stability with flexibility.

H₃: Simultaneous Influence of Participative Leadership and Organizational Culture

The F-test produced $F = 18.742$ ($p = 0.000$), substantially exceeding the critical F-value (3.23 at $\alpha = 0.05$, $df_1 = 2$, $df_2 = 41$). The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.479$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.455$) indicates that participative leadership and organizational culture jointly explain 47.9% of teacher performance variance, with the remaining 52.1% attributable to other factors such as professional competence, self-efficacy, resource availability, and external motivational factors.

The simultaneous significant influence demonstrates synergistic effects between leadership and culture. Participative leadership not only directly enhances performance but also cultivates and reinforces positive organizational culture, which in turn sustains high performance. This reciprocal relationship suggests that effective school management requires integrated attention to both leadership practices and cultural development.

The substantial R^2 value (0.479) compares favorably with similar studies in educational contexts. (Karakose et al., 2024) reported $R^2 = 0.42$ for leadership-culture-performance relationships in Turkish schools, while (Dorukbaşı & Cansoy, 2024) found $R^2 = 0.51$ in examining instructional leadership's impact mediated by professional learning. The consistency across cultural contexts validates the robustness of these relationships.

Schools function as social systems where leadership, culture, and performance constitute interdependent elements. Interventions targeting either leadership or culture in isolation may yield suboptimal outcomes; integrated strategies addressing both dimensions promise more sustainable improvement. Equitable, high-performing schools systematically align leadership practices with cultural values, creating coherent organizational ecosystems.

The 52.1% unexplained variance highlights the complexity of teacher performance determinants. Future research should incorporate variables such as teacher self-efficacy, professional learning communities, workload and resource adequacy, and external policy pressures to develop more comprehensive explanatory models.

These findings extend organizational behavior theory by demonstrating that in educational settings, the culture-performance linkage ($\beta = 0.536$) may be stronger than the leadership-performance relationship ($\beta = 0.225$). This suggests that while leadership initiates change, sustained performance improvement depends on deeply embedded cultural transformation. The social exchange theory provides explanatory power: participative leadership creates reciprocal obligations where teachers invest extra effort in exchange for involvement and recognition, but organizational culture establishes the normative context that determines whether such exchanges become

institutionalized practices (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Cropanzano & Rupp, 2008; Elstad et al., 2011).

Additionally, the research validates the applicability of Western-developed leadership and culture theories in non-Western, rural Indonesian contexts, contributing to the cross-cultural generalizability of organizational management principles while highlighting the need for culturally sensitive adaptations.

The findings recommend 1) Institutionalizing participative decision-making: Establishing regular teacher forums, collaborative planning sessions, and transparent communication channels; 2) Cultivating positive organizational culture: Implementing recognition systems, promoting peer collaboration, modeling professional values, and maintaining consistent behavioral expectations; 3) Integrating leadership and culture initiatives: Ensuring that participative practices align with and reinforce desired cultural attributes rather than treating them as separate interventions. For educational policymakers and supervisors: 1) Principal preparation programs: Incorporating participative leadership skills and organizational culture development strategies into pre-service and in-service training; 2) Performance evaluation systems: Assessing principals not only on administrative efficiency but also on their capacity to foster participative environments and positive school cultures; 3) Resource allocation: Providing schools with adequate support for collaborative time, professional development, and culture-building activities.

D. Conclusions

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that both principals' participative leadership and school organizational culture significantly influence teacher performance in primary schools. The key finding reveals that participative leadership—characterized by involving teachers in decision-making, maintaining open communication, and delegating appropriately directly enhances teacher performance by fostering motivation, ownership, and professional commitment. Organizational culture, encompassing shared values, collaboration norms, disciplinary practices, and quality orientation, exerts an even stronger influence on performance by creating supportive environmental conditions. When combined, these two factors explain nearly half of the variance in teacher performance, demonstrating their critical importance in educational management. Principals who successfully implement participative practices while simultaneously cultivating positive organizational cultures create synergistic conditions that enable teachers to perform optimally. The practical implication of this study is that school principals should prioritize two key strategies. First, consistently implement participative leadership by establishing formal mechanisms for teacher input, actively soliciting feedback on school policies, delegating responsibilities based on teacher competencies, and creating psychologically safe environments for dissent and innovation. Second, strengthen organizational culture through explicit articulation of

shared values, recognition of exemplary practices, promotion of inter-teacher collaboration, maintenance of high disciplinary standards, and alignment of all school activities with quality improvement goals. Educational supervisors should provide targeted professional development on participative leadership techniques, revise principal evaluation criteria to include leadership style and cultural health indicators, and allocate resources for collaborative planning time and culture-building activities. Future research should employ longitudinal designs to capture relationships over multiple years, strengthening causal claims and revealing dynamic interrelationships. Mixed-method designs incorporating classroom observations, student achievement data, and qualitative interviews would provide richer, more objective performance assessments while addressing potential social desirability bias. Additionally, future studies should examine moderating factors such as teacher experience, school resources, and community support, as well as mediating mechanisms including teacher motivation, self-efficacy, and professional learning, to develop more comprehensive explanatory models for the remaining 52.1% of unexplained variance.

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