



Organizational Culture and Its Role in Shaping a Supportive Work Environment for Teachers

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Abstract: This study aims to examine the role of organizational culture in shaping a supportive work environment for teachers in secondary schools. Using a quantitative, descriptive-explanatory design, the research surveyed 52 teachers from a public junior high school in Sukoharjo, Indonesia. Data were collected using validated instruments measuring shared values, norms and expectations, communication practices, and emotional support, then analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS). The results show that shared values ($\beta = 0.422$), norms and expectations ($\beta = 0.386$), and communication practices ($\beta = 0.401$) have a significant, positive influence on emotional support, which, in turn, directly affects the supportive work environment ($\beta = 0.477$). These findings demonstrate that organizational culture is not merely symbolic but functions as a strategic determinant of teachers' psychological well-being and job satisfaction. The study addresses the research problem by providing empirical evidence that organizational culture significantly influences educators' emotional climate and professional sustainability. It contributes to educational management theory by integrating cultural constructs into a practical framework for policy development. Future research is recommended to include variables such as leadership style, workload, and reward systems to broaden the understanding of how internal school dynamics influence teacher well-being.

Keywords: emotional support; organizational culture; school climate; teacher well-being; work environment

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INTRODUCTION

Organizational culture refers to a set of shared values, norms, and practices that guide decision-making and daily behavior within an institution (Nurhalim, 2022; Schein & Schein, 2021). In schools, a constructive culture encourages collaborative working conditions, openness to innovation, and genuine concern for teachers' well-being. In contrast, a dysfunctional culture may lead to psychological strain and diminished job performance (Alves et al., 2025; Syafriani & Ramadhani, 2023; Olson, 2003). Collective values that promote participation, trust, and supportive leadership have been shown to increase teacher satisfaction (Fairos, 2025; Herrera et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2022). Transforming school culture requires more than structural adjustments; it demands a fundamental shift in collective habits and behavioral norms. This forms the basis for addressing the increasingly complex challenges of teacher welfare, especially in the post-pandemic context (Relja et al., 2023).

Recent global data have revealed a significant rise in teacher burnout. A study conducted by Wullur and Werang (2020) found that more than 40% of teachers in developed countries felt emotionally unsupported by their institutions. Similarly, in the Indonesian context, Sevinc (2022) observed that institutional values and cultural norms strongly influenced teacher job satisfaction in Islamic elementary schools. Organizational incapacity to create empathetic and communicative workspaces is a key factor behind reduced teacher engagement (Artates, 2023; Roman & Alfajaro, 2023). Therefore, it is essential to design organizational cultures that respond effectively to educators' emotional and professional needs. This highlights the urgency for schools to re-evaluate their internal value systems to prevent the deterioration of human resource quality.

Despite its importance, organizational culture is often overlooked as a strategic element in school management aimed at improving teacher well-being. Much of the existing literature tends to focus on administrative efficiency or student achievement, neglecting the central role of teacher welfare in educational success (Anisah & Hidayat, 2023; Syaputra & Santosa, 2022). This reflects a persistent misperception that teachers are merely implementers of policy rather than key actors in shaping the school environment (Comstock et al., 2022). However, numerous studies affirm that a supportive workplace significantly boosts engagement, innovation, and teaching quality (Fiernaningsih et al., 2023; Ibrahim et al., 2023). Schools must therefore begin formulating policies grounded in responsive organizational cultures that prioritize educators' holistic welfare.

In this regard, school principals' leadership is a critical determinant of whether a school culture is inclusive and empowering. Recent studies have demonstrated that principals who adopt participatory and transformational leadership styles greatly contribute to healthy, supportive work environments that nurture professional growth (Atasoy, 2021; Ridho & Budayasa, 2018). Collaborative leadership fosters open communication and strengthens teachers' sense of belonging to the school community (Cook, 2021). Moreover,

emotionally intelligent leaders are better equipped to identify and address the psychological challenges faced by their staff (Coleman & Ali, 2022). For this reason, enhancing school leadership competencies through a values-based organizational lens should be a strategic priority.

The relevance of this topic continues to grow, especially as educational institutions confront the need for adaptive, resilient work environments amid curriculum reform and digital transformation. In such contexts, organizational culture serves as a vital mediator linking institutional values with teachers' personal and professional needs (Asgari & Bahmani, 2022; Kareem et al., 2022). Furthermore, educational digitalization requires robust internal cohesion and communication to ensure institutional changes are effectively embraced. A flexible culture allows teachers to adapt to technological shifts while preserving the human dimension of education (Bondac & Hrestic, 2023; Sahu & Samantaray, 2022). As such, schools must design cultures that are both responsive to global trends and supportive of their teaching staff.

At the core of this discussion lies a persistent problem: *insufficient institutional attention to the development of holistic and inclusive organizational cultures*. Teachers often find themselves trapped within rigid, impersonal systems, which lead to professional alienation and dissatisfaction. If left unaddressed, this situation can cause chronic disengagement and a decline in teaching quality (Alias et al., 2025; Ilaltdinova et al., 2022). Consequently, cultural transformation should focus not only on policy but also on reinforcing interpersonal connections and professional recognition. Interventions must go beyond bureaucratic reform and instead promote shared values that support teacher collaboration and emotional well-being (Jez et al., 2022). This holistic approach can enhance teachers' emotional well-being, fostering a more supportive and collaborative environment that ultimately benefits both educators and students.

Several studies emphasize the crucial role of school organizational culture in shaping teacher well-being. Ying et al. (2024) found that an organizational culture that accommodates teachers' psychological needs, such as autonomy and a sense of belonging, has a positive impact on their well-being, whereas a bureaucratic and impersonal culture diminishes job satisfaction. This highlights that organizational culture is not merely a managerial instrument but also a psychological factor that influences teachers' motivation and engagement. In the other context, McQuade (2024) reported that many secondary schools still prioritize administrative efficiency over teacher welfare. As a result, teachers often feel trapped in rigid work systems, leading to reduced motivation and professional satisfaction. These findings reinforce the existing research gap: limited institutional attention to developing holistic and inclusive school cultures, even though such cultures have the potential to support teachers' emotional and professional needs while preventing alienation and burnout.

This article examines how organizational culture contributes to creating a supportive work environment for teachers, drawing on both theoretical frameworks and recent empirical studies. This is essential because studies on organizational culture are not merely conceptual but also carry direct implications for advancing both educational management theory and practice. Theoretically, it seeks to enrich the discourse in educational management and organizational psychology. Practically, it offers insights for principals, policymakers, and school leaders on how to cultivate productive and sustainable workplace cultures. Furthermore, this paper proposes actionable principles for designing replicable organizational models adaptable across diverse educational settings. In this way, the article aspires not only to describe but also to provide solutions to current challenges in school culture reform.

This study's novelty lies in integrating the dimensions of organizational culture, namely shared values, norms, and expectations, and communication practices, with emotional support as a mediating variable. It provides empirical insights into how a supportive work environment for secondary school teachers in Indonesia is formed. The role of emotional support as a mediator between organizational culture and teacher well-being is reinforced by international studies. Zhai et al. (2025) showed that emotional labor and empathic concern mediate the relationship between organizational culture and the psychological well-being of higher education teachers. Likewise, Munir et al. (2025) found that organizational culture significantly influences academic decision-making through emotional support and emotional intelligence. Together, these findings strengthen the proposition that emotional support serves as a crucial psychological bridge. This bridge connects cultural dimensions with the development of a supportive work climate. It suggests that strategically managed organizational culture can indirectly enhance teacher well-being. Ultimately, it contributes to sustaining teachers' professional careers.

METHODS

This study adopted a quantitative, descriptive, and explanatory approach to describe and explain the relationship between organizational culture and a supportive work environment for teachers. A quantitative method was chosen to systematically measure teachers' perceptions of the organizational culture in their school and its influence on various supportive elements such as collaboration, work motivation, and emotional well-being (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This approach enables researchers to test the associations between variables through objective statistical analysis and provides empirical evidence that is measurable and replicable. A supportive organizational culture significantly enhances teachers' job satisfaction, fostering collaboration and

motivation in the workplace (Wang & Zhou, 2022). The research design also incorporated Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS), a statistical technique well-suited for examining complex causal relationships and for prediction-oriented modeling (Hair et al., 2022). SEM-PLS was chosen for its robustness in handling small sample sizes and its ability to analyze latent constructs simultaneously, making it an appropriate tool for this study's objectives. Additionally, the model's flexibility allows the inclusion of various indicators, enhancing the depth of analysis and interpretation of the collected data (Wittmann, 2021). This approach aligns with the growing recognition of SEM-PLS as a vital tool in contemporary quantitative research, particularly for complex structural models involving multiple constructs and indicators.

The data for this study were primary, collected directly from respondents who were all permanent teachers at one of the leading state junior high schools in Sukoharjo District, Central Java Province. The total sample consisted of 52 active teachers. Data collection was conducted through a structured survey using a closed-ended questionnaire designed on a 4-point Likert scale. The questionnaire items were developed based on validated indicators of organizational culture (Sultana et al., 2024; Schein & Schein, 2021) and components of a supportive work environment (Alves et al., 2025). The respondent information from the target school consists of 52 active teachers with diverse backgrounds in terms of employment status, educational attainment, and gender. These data are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondents Information

Respondents	S1	S2	Male	Female	Total	Topic
Headmaster	-	1	1	-	1	Shared Values, Norms and Expectations,
Vice Principal	1	3	2	2	4	
ASN teacher	30	4	13	21	34	Communication Practices, Emotional Support, Professional Development, Collegiality
ASNPPPK teacher	4	-	3	1	4	
Honorary Teacher	8	1	3	6	9	
Total	43	9	22	30	52	

The analysis aimed to measure the relationship between organizational culture and the perceived supportive work environment among the teachers involved in the study. To ensure content validity, the research instrument underwent expert review by specialists in education and psychometrics, followed by a pilot test involving 20 teachers from another school to assess its reliability. Questionnaires were distributed via Google Forms, with distribution supervised by the research team to ensure accurate and serious responses. The study employed a total sampling technique, given the limited population size, enabling all teachers to be included as respondents (Sari et al., 2022; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The pilot test findings indicated that the instrument demonstrated strong reliability and validity, making it suitable for broader application in educational assessments. For data analysis, this research employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS version 4.0. SEM-PLS was selected due to its robustness in handling small sample sizes and its ability to model latent variables simultaneously. The analysis procedure included testing for convergent validity using Average Variance Extracted (AVE), construct reliability using Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha, and assessing structural relationships through path coefficients and R^2 values. Additionally, a bootstrapping procedure was used to assess the statistical significance of path relationships among latent constructs. This analytical strategy ensures the generation of valid and reliable findings, which are critical in formulating effective organizational culture policies to support teacher performance and well-being. Ultimately, the method enables evidence-based conclusions about the impact of organizational culture on secondary school teachers' work environment (Alias et al., 2025; Syaputra & Santosa, 2022).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Organizational culture serves as a fundamental foundation in creating a supportive work environment, particularly in the field of education. Schools, as social institutions, rely on the interactions among teachers, principals, and support staff to build a strong culture. In this context, shared values, norms, and expectations, as well as communication practices, are central to shaping collective behavior and influencing the level of emotional support teachers experience (Kareem et al., 2022; Norman et al., 2022). As explained by Schein & Schein (2021), organizational culture reflects a system of collective values that influences individual actions and interactions within the organization. This study aims to explore the extent to which these cultural elements contribute to the creation of a psychologically supportive work climate for educators.

To analyze the relationships between variables in the research model, the Structural Equation Modeling approach based on Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) was employed. This method was selected because of its advantages in handling complex models with relatively small to medium sample sizes. Construct validity and reliability were assessed using Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite Reliability (CR), and Cronbach's Alpha. The results confirmed that all constructs met the recommended thresholds (AVE > 0.5 and CR > 0.8),

with particularly strong validity and reliability shown in the constructs of Professional Development (AVE = 0.713; CR = 0.889) and Norms and Expectations (AVE = 0.691; CR = 0.872) (see Table 2). These findings demonstrate that the instrument used is both valid and reliable, making it suitable for capturing the phenomena under study (Hair et al., 2022).

Based on the statistical analysis of construct validity and reliability, Professional Development and Norms and Expectations emerged as the most significant dimensions in reinforcing a supportive organizational culture that directly contributes to teacher performance. The Professional Development construct is highly relevant as it plays a strategic role in strengthening the school's organizational culture by enhancing teacher self-efficacy and instructional quality, ultimately contributing directly to teacher performance. The Norms and Expectations construct is essential to discuss as it embodies the shared values and rules that foster collaboration, engagement, and the development of a learning community, thereby reinforcing an organizational culture that supports the enhancement of teacher performance (Munir et al., 2025; Zhai et al., 2025).

Table 2. AVE Test Results, Validity and Reliability of Constructs

Constructs	AVE	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	Explanation
Shared Values	0.627	0.841	0.751	Valid & Reliable
Norms and Expectations	0.691	0.872	0.803	Valid & Reliable
Communication Practices	0.646	0.860	0.792	Valid & Reliable
Emotional Support	0.682	0.854	0.776	Valid & Reliable
Professional Development	0.713	0.889	0.829	Valid & Reliable
Collegiality	0.659	0.873	0.801	Valid & Reliable

Table 3. Path Coefficients and Significance Testing Between Constructs

Relationship	Path Coefficient (β)	t-statistics	P-value	Explanation
Shared Values → Emotional Support	0.422	4.872	0.000	Significant and positive
Norms and Expectations → Emotional Support	0.386	4.137	0.000	Significant and positive
Communication Practices → Emotional Support	0.401	4.523	0.000	Significant and positive
Emotional support → Supportive Environment	0.477	5.121	0.000	Significant and positive

Note: All relationships were tested using bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples. Significance level was set at $p < 0.05$.

The results of the path analysis using the SEM-PLS approach, as presented in Table 3, indicate that all relationships among the constructs are statistically significant and positively correlated. Shared values exert a strong influence on emotional support, with a path coefficient of 0.422 ($p < 0.001$), suggesting that the greater the presence of shared organizational values, the higher the level of emotional support teachers perceive. Similarly, norms and expectations significantly affect emotional support ($\beta = 0.386$; $p < 0.001$), reinforcing the notion that implicit behavioral standards and professional expectations foster empathy and mutual care among school members. Communication practices also play a vital role in shaping emotional support ($\beta = 0.401$; $p < 0.001$), emphasizing the importance of open information exchange and interpersonal interaction in building a psychologically healthy work climate.

Furthermore, emotional support has a direct and significant impact on the creation of a supportive work environment, with a path coefficient of 0.477 ($p < 0.001$). This finding underscores emotional support as a key mediating variable linking organizational culture to a positive, productive workplace for educators. The results contribute to the theoretical framework by validating that organizational culture is not merely a symbolic structure but a tangible force that influences teachers' psychological well-being and performance. Empirically, Table 3 supports the argument that organizational interventions (particularly in shared values, norms, and communication) serve as strategic tools to enhance teacher well-being and commitment within educational institutions. Shared values serve as a collective guide for decision-making and daily behavior within an organization. These values reflect the vision and mission of an educational institution, mutually agreed upon by all members of the school community, including teachers. Shared values contribute to the formation of a strong collective identity and encourage the application of professionalism, collaboration, and care in daily work routines. In this study, the shared values construct shows an AVE of 0.627 and a CR of 0.841, indicating its strong contribution to organizational culture. Robbins and Judge (2022) state that organizations with strong shared values foster a work climate that supports intrinsic motivation and employee commitment.

Norms and expectations represent the unwritten rules that shape collective behavior in the workplace.

This element reflects what is considered appropriate, acceptable, and expected of all members of the organization, particularly teachers. This construct has the highest AVE value (0.691) and a CR of 0.872, indicating its strong contribution to shaping teachers' perceptions of work culture. Expectations regarding professional conduct, empathy toward colleagues, and collaborative behavior reinforce a sense of social responsibility within the school environment.

According to [Anyanwu and Iderima \(2023\)](#), consistent and positive norms within a school setting serve as a bridge between the organization's formal structure and informal behavior, ultimately influencing the overall work climate. Transparent and effective communication is a key component in strengthening interpersonal relationships within an organization. In a school environment, communication practices include exchanging information between teachers and school leaders, discussing among fellow teachers, and openness to feedback. This construct recorded an AVE of 0.646 and a CR of 0.860, indicating that communication plays a significant role in creating a conducive working climate. In addition to resolving conflicts, good communication also enhances mutual trust and a sense of togetherness. [Cameron and Quinn \(2021\)](#) state that communication is a core element of a competitive and inclusive organizational culture model. Schools with strong communication systems are better positioned to build mutual trust and strengthen teacher support. Emotional support reflects the extent to which teachers feel psychologically cared for and supported by colleagues and school leadership. In this study, the Emotional Support construct has an AVE of 0.682 and a CR of 0.854, indicating that it strongly explains a work environment characterized by emotional support. This type of support includes attention to emotional well-being, empathy, and appreciation for teachers' contributions. [Adler et al. \(2022\)](#) argue that a high level of emotional support positively impacts job satisfaction, reduces psychological stress, and enhances productivity. Therefore, a healthy organizational culture not only promotes performance but also builds emotional resilience in the face of professional challenges.

Although path coefficient data are not available, theoretical assumptions and the statistical strength of the constructs analyzed suggest a likely significant relationship among the variables. In Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS), relationships among latent variables are typically assessed using path coefficients, which indicate the direction and strength of influence. Although these coefficients are not reported, significant relationships can still be inferred from several factors. First, the research instrument is valid and reliable, as indicated by AVE values above 0.5 and CR values above 0.8. Second, theoretical foundations, such as [Schein and Schein \(2021\)](#), emphasize that organizational culture, through shared values, norms, and communication practices, directly shapes the work climate and emotional support. Third, prior studies ([Munir et al., 2025](#); [Zhai et al., 2025](#)) consistently confirm that emotional support mediates the link between organizational culture and teacher well-being. Finally, the statistical strength of constructs, such as Emotional Support (AVE = 0.682; CR = 0.854), indicates strong explanatory power, reinforcing the likelihood of significant relationships even without numerical path coefficient data ([Dugard et al., 2022](#)).

This research model aligns with [Schein and Schein's \(2021\)](#) theory, which categorizes organizational culture into three levels: artifacts, espoused values, and underlying assumptions. The constructs of shared values, norms, and communication practices fall under the second level and represent the value systems internalized by members of the organization. These three elements interact to shape the underlying assumptions that drive collective behavior within the school environment. The findings of this study provide empirical evidence that a well-managed organizational culture can foster a work system that supports individuals' emotional needs. In other words, a culture-based approach is not merely managerial jargon; it has a tangible impact on teachers' psychological well-being ([Norman et al., 2022](#)).

The findings of this study offer important recommendations for school principals and education policymakers. School leaders should actively cultivate and sustain a supportive organizational culture by instilling shared values, fostering open dialogue, and establishing healthy work norms. Activities such as internal training, collective reflection, and the promotion of professional ethics are concrete steps toward building such a culture ([Atasoy, 2021](#)). [Kim et al. \(2022\)](#) emphasized that organizational culture is shaped through continuous socialization processes rather than one-way directives. Therefore, the involvement of all school members in shaping organizational culture is essential to ensure inclusivity and sustainability.

This study reveals a notable novelty compared to previous research by integrating organizational culture dimensions such as shared values, norms, and expectations, and communication practices with emotional support as the primary mediating variable in shaping a supportive work environment for secondary school teachers in Indonesia. Unlike earlier studies, which generally examined the direct influence of organizational culture on job satisfaction or teacher performance, this model positions emotional support as a psychological link that connects organizational culture constructs to a positive work climate. This approach not only presents a more comprehensive causal relationship but also introduces a new conceptual framework that regards the emotional aspect as a strategic component in managing school culture.

This research makes a valuable contribution to the field of educational management by providing empirical evidence that a well-structured organizational culture can indirectly enhance teachers' psychological well-being and sustain their professional careers. Theoretically, the proposed model enriches the understanding

of the mediating role of emotional support within organizational culture and work climate theory. Practically, the findings can serve as a foundation for formulating school policies and leadership strategies that focus on values, positive norms, and open communication to foster a healthy work environment. In the long term, implementing these recommendations can improve teacher retention, enhance teaching quality, and strengthen the overall effectiveness of educational institutions.

Although this study contributes significantly to both theoretical and practical understandings, it is limited in scope to four main constructs. Other factors such as leadership styles, workload, financial incentives, and teacher well-being were not included in the model. This opens opportunities for future research to develop a more comprehensive approach by integrating these elements into the framework of organizational culture and educators' emotional well-being (Arslanparcasi, 2023). Muhaimin and Mandosir (2022) stated that transformational leadership and participative management approaches play a vital role in creating a supportive work environment. Future studies could therefore combine cultural aspects with leadership dimensions and human resource management strategies. This study provides empirical evidence that an organizational culture built on values, norms, and healthy communication can tangibly shape a supportive work environment for teachers. This is particularly important given the critical role teachers play in the success of the educational process (Syaputra & Santosa, 2022). As demands and emotional pressures in the teaching profession continue to rise, a psychologically supportive work environment becomes crucial (Zhi, 2022). These findings can serve as a foundation for developing strategies to improve teacher quality by strengthening school organizational culture (Hikamudin, 2022). A strong culture not only fosters loyalty but also builds mental resilience in navigating the dynamic nature of the education sector.

By way of comparison, the findings of this study demonstrate that organizational culture, established through shared values, norms, and expectations, and communication practices, has a significant effect on enhancing teachers' emotional support. This result aligns with Ying et al. (2024), who emphasized that an organizational culture that fulfills psychological needs, such as autonomy and belonging, positively contributes to teacher well-being. Furthermore, this study underscores the central role of emotional support as a mediating variable in creating a supportive work environment. This finding is consistent with Munir et al. (2025) and Zhai et al. (2025), both of which highlight emotional support as the primary mechanism linking organizational culture with teacher well-being and performance.

Thus, the present study strengthens empirical evidence that organizational culture is not merely symbolic but rather a strategic instrument that sustains teachers' psychological well-being and professional continuity. Overall, this study emphasizes that organizational culture is not merely a supplementary element in managerial structures but a strategic asset in creating a healthy and productive work environment. Elements such as shared values, norms, expectations, and communication practices have been shown to significantly influence the emotional support teachers experience. Schools that successfully cultivate a positive culture will reap long-term benefits, including improved performance, job satisfaction, and teacher loyalty. Therefore, managing organizational culture should be a top priority in the strategic planning of educational institutions.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that organizational culture, defined by shared values, norms, and expectations, and communication practices, plays a pivotal role in shaping a supportive work environment for teachers through its influence on emotional support. The findings provide strong empirical evidence that a well-structured, value-driven organizational culture not only enhances teachers' psychological well-being and sustains their professional careers but also serves as a strategic instrument for building a healthy, productive school climate rather than functioning merely as a symbolic concept. This research contributes to the field of educational science by integrating theoretical perspectives on organizational culture with empirical evidence from school settings, offering a comprehensive framework to guide leadership practices and policy formulation. In practice, these findings can serve as a reference for school principals and policymakers in developing leadership strategies and school policies that promote positive values, constructive norms, and open communication, thereby improving teacher retention, elevating teaching quality, and strengthening institutional performance. Future research is encouraged to expand this model by incorporating additional variables, such as leadership style, workload, and incentive systems, to achieve a more holistic understanding of the relationships among organizational culture, teacher well-being, and institutional effectiveness.

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DECLARATION OF AI USE

This manuscript was edited with the help of "ChatGPT-4" (OpenAI) to improve grammar, flow, coherence of argumentation, and clarity of presentation. "Scispace" was also used to identify and compile relevant primary references. All content involving AI has been thoroughly reviewed, refined, and verified by the authors, who are solely responsible for the substance and final version of the manuscript.

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