

The relationship between school culture and school quality: The mediating role of teacher integrity

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – Post-pandemic evidence indicates a decline in educational quality across many developing countries. Reports from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the Indonesian Ministry of Education have documented learning losses and quality deterioration following Covid-19. While previous studies have identified school culture as an important determinant of school quality, limited attention has been given to the behavioral mechanisms through which this influence operates. This study examines the relationship between school culture and school quality, with teacher integrity as a mediating variable.

Method – A quantitative research design was employed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Data were collected from 232 teachers of Muhammadiyah junior high schools in the Solo Raya region, Indonesia, through purposive sampling.

Findings – The results revealed that school culture significantly influenced teacher integrity ($\beta = 0.621$, $p < 0.001$), and teacher integrity significantly influenced school quality ($\beta = 0.830$, $p < 0.001$). However, the direct effect of school culture on school quality was not significant ($\beta = 0.055$, $p = 0.316$). Teacher integrity fully mediated the relationship between school culture and school quality ($\beta = 0.516$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the effectiveness of school culture in enhancing institutional quality depends on the extent to which organizational values are translated into teachers' ethical and professional conduct.

Keywords: School Culture; Teacher Integrity; School Quality; Educational Management; Organizational Culture

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INTRODUCTION

School quality is one of the main indicators in measuring the success rate of education management in creating effective, competitive, and sustainable educational services (Prima et al., 2025). The determination of quality schools is not only shown through students' academic achievements, but is also reflected in organizational effectiveness, human resource professionalism, institutional discipline, and the school's ability to build public trust (Suherman et al., 2025). A report from the OECD's International Student Assessment Programme (PISA) after the Covid-19 period showed that at least

60% of schools in developing countries experienced a significant performance gap between institutional minimum targets and student achievement (AlAli & Wardat, 2024).

A similar phenomenon also occurred in Indonesia. The 2018 PISA results showed that student performance in Indonesia is still below the OECD average, with a tendency to stagnate in literacy, mathematics, and science scores (Ismawati et al., 2023). The Indonesian Ministry of Education report also states that most education units have not reached optimal performance standards, especially in the dimensions of teacher leadership and professionalism (Imaniyati et al., 2025). In this context, school culture is seen as a strategic element that determines how values, norms, and organizational orientation are applied in daily educational activities (Adiguzel & Cakir, 2025). Denison's organizational culture perspective explains that organizational culture is a strategic factor that affects the effectiveness and performance of institutions through values, involvement, consistency, and organizational orientation to common goals (Denison, 1996). Therefore, schools with a theoretically strong organizational culture tend to have better institutional quality.

Various previous studies generally place school culture as a direct determinant of school quality. There is a view that schools with a strong organizational culture are assumed to have better institutional quality, both in terms of organizational effectiveness, quality of educational services, and institutional performance (Yuni et al., 2024). Previous findings consistently show a positive relationship between school culture and school quality, so organizational culture is often seen as a strategic factor in improving the effectiveness of educational institutions (Bogale & Debela, 2024; Gebretsadik, 2022). Nevertheless, most previous research has still focused on the direct relationship between school culture and school quality. In fact, in the perspective of Edgar Schein's organizational culture, organizational culture basically works through the formation of shared values and behavioral norms that influence the way members of the organization act and carry out their professional responsibilities (Schein, 2014). This approach leads to gaps regarding internal mechanisms that explain how school culture translates into the quality of educational institutions. Thus, the influence of organizational culture on the quality of the institution may not take place automatically, but through the process of internalizing organizational values into the behavior of organizational members.

In this context, the integrity of teachers is an important aspect to pay attention to. Teacher integrity is not only related to personal honesty, but also reflects moral consistency, professional responsibility, ethical commitment, and exemplary in carrying out educational tasks (Iskandar, 2025). Teachers with high integrity tend to be able to maintain the quality of learning, build organizational trust, and strengthen the effectiveness of school institutions (Lleo et al., 2023). Based on the theory and findings, the findings above show that teacher integrity has the potential to be an important mechanism that explains the relationship between school culture and school quality.

Although numerous studies have been conducted on school culture and teacher integrity, such as Ismail et al.'s study on school culture (Ismail et al., 2022) and Iskandar et al.'s study on the influence of teacher integrity (Iskandar et al., 2025), both studies still position teacher integrity and school culture as independent variables and have not yet

developed a complex model that positions teacher integrity as a mediating variable in the relationship between school culture and school quality. As a result, explanations of factors influencing school performance remain linear. The notion of school organizational culture translating into school quality remains prevalent, and teacher professional behavior has not been empirically explained.

Based on this description, this study aims to analyze the influence of school culture on school quality through teacher integrity as a mediation variable. The hypotheses of this study include: First, school culture has a significant impact on teacher integrity and school quality directly. Second, teacher integrity has a significant impact on the quality of schools directly. And finally, teacher integrity plays a mediator in the relationship between school culture and school quality. Using exponential quantitative analysis based on Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis, this study offers a novelty in the form of the development of a mediation role that explains the internal mechanism of school cultural relations and school quality through teacher integrity in the perspective of education management. In addition, this study expands the study of organizational behavior in the field of education by placing teacher integrity as a strategic mechanism that connects the culture of school organizations with the quality of educational institutions.

METHOD

This study uses an explanatory quantitative approach with a cross-sectional survey design to test the mediation model between school culture, teacher integrity, and school quality. The research was conducted on school teachers throughout Solo Raya, Indonesia. The analysis technique used in this study is the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique which is based on two considerations, including: First, SEM analysis has the advantage of analyzing more complex relationships, including indirect relationships (mediator pathways). Second, SEM analysis allows simultaneous testing of measurement and structural models, resulting in a more comprehensive validation of the developed theoretical model (Yulastri et al., 2021).

The research participants were selected using the purposive sampling technique. This technique was chosen because the research requires respondents who have an adequate understanding of the school organizational culture, teachers' professional behavior, and the quality of educational institutions (Friday & Leah, 2024). Therefore, respondents were determined based on several criteria, namely: (1) status as active teachers in schools in the Solo Raya area, (2) having a minimum working period of two years, and (3) being involved in academic activities and school organizations. These criteria are applied to ensure that respondents have sufficient exposure to the culture and organizational system of the school so that they are able to provide relevant assessments of the research construct. A total of 232 teachers participated in this study. Respondents were teachers at Muhammadiyah junior high schools (SMP/MTs) and equivalent schools in Solo Raya, and were collected online via Google Form. The sample size meets the minimum recommendations of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis, which generally

requires a minimum sample ranging from 150 to 200 respondents depending on the complexity of the model (Piriyakul, 2021).

Data were collected using a closed-ended questionnaire adapted from indicators and theoretical dimensions identified from existing theories. The school culture variable consisted of 12 items adapted from Edgar Schein's organizational culture perspective, encompassing organizational values, social interaction norms, and the school's organizational system (Schein, 2014). Teacher integrity was measured through 11 items with indicators of moral consistency, professional responsibility, and ethical commitment adapted from the perspective of ethical professionalism and integrity theory (Campbell, 2003; Schlenker, 2008). Meanwhile, school quality was measured through 16 items with indicators of educational service quality, school management effectiveness, and institutional performance. These items were adapted from school effectiveness theory (Javornik & Mirazchyski, 2023; Polishchuk & Horbatiuk, 2023; Scheerens, 2013). All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The data that has been collected will go through several stages of analysis, including: first, evaluation of the measurement model through the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) technique to ensure the validity and reliability of each construction. Validity was evaluated through standard factor load values (≥ 0.50) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values (≥ 0.50), while construct reliability was assessed by paying attention to Composite Reliability (CR) values (≥ 0.70) (Baharum et al., 2023; Goretzko et al., 2024). After the analysis of the measurement model is declared valid and reliable, the analysis is continued with structural model testing to evaluate the model's feasibility index. According to Hu & Bentler, (1999) the model can be said to be feasible if the Chi-square/df, CFI, GFI TLI, and RMSEA values correspond to the recommended minimum limits.

The final test is a hypothesis test, both direct and indirect relationships. Direct hypothesis testing was carried out by analyzing the path coefficient and its significance value (Afthanorhan et al., 2020). As for indirect relationship testing (through mediation), researchers used bootstrapping with 5,000 re-samples at a 95% confidence level. The goal is to obtain a confidence interval estimate for the indirect effect. The mediation effect was declared significant when the confidence interval did not exceed zero (0), and the P value (two-sided significance) was less than 0.05 (Dash & Paul, 2021; A. Zhang et al., 2022).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

A total of 232 teachers participated in this study. The respondents were drawn from several Muhammadiyah junior high schools across the Solo Raya region, Indonesia. The distribution of respondents is presented in Table 1. Based on the distribution, the largest proportion of respondents came from SMP Darul Ihsan Muhammadiyah Sragen with 46 teachers (19.8%), followed by SMP Muhammadiyah Darul Arqom Karanganyar with 44 teachers (19.0%). Meanwhile, the smallest proportion came from SMPI PK Muhammadiyah Delanggu Klaten with 17 teachers (7.3%). Respondents represented schools from several

areas in the Solo Raya region, including Surakarta, Karanganyar, Kartasura, Gemolong, Klaten, Sukoharjo, and Sragen. The distribution of the data above indicates that this study involved participants from diverse organizational and educational environments, thus strengthening the contextual representation of school culture, teacher integrity, and school quality across Muhammadiyah schools in Solo Raya.

Tabel 1

Distribution of Respondents by School

No.	School	Frequency	Percentage
1.	SMP Muhammadiyah Program Khusus Kottabarat Surakarta	29	12.5
2.	SMP Muhammadiyah Darul Arqom Karanganyar	44	19.0
3.	SMP Muhammadiyah Al-Kautsar Kartasura	27	11.6
4.	SMP Muhammadiyah Al-Qolam Gemolong	29	12.5
5.	SMPI PK Muhammadiyah Delanggu Klaten	17	7.3
6.	SMP Muhammadiyah Plus Klaten Utara	20	8.6
7.	SMP Ahmad Dahlan Sukoharjo	20	8.6
8.	SMP Darul Ihsan Muhammadiyah Sragen	46	19.8
Total		232	100.0

The next stage is the validity and reliability testing stage using the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) technique. This analysis aims to ensure the validity and reliability of each construct. The results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) analysis are presented in detail in Table 2 below.

Tabel 2

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) Measurement Model of School Culture, Teacher Integrity, and School Quality Variables

<i>School Culture</i>					
Variabel	Items	Internal Reliability (Cronbach Alpha)	Factor Loading	AVE	CR
Organizational Values (KB)	BS1	0.839	0.644	0.485	0.738
	BS2		0.740		
	BS8		0.701		
Social Interaction	BS3	0.811	0.695	0.477	0.785
Norms (NB)	BS5		0.703		

	BS10		0.662		
	BS7		0.702		
School Organizational System (KM)	BS4	0.828	0.646	0.419	0.714
	BS6		0.657		
	BS11		0.639		
Teacher Integrity					
Variabel	Items	Internal Reliability (Cronbach Alpha)	Factor Loading	AVE	CR
Moral Consistency (M)	IG1	0.839	0.813	0.637	0.839
	IG2		0.868		
	IG3		0.705		
Professional (PR)	IG5	0.811	0.708	0.609	0.823
	IG6		0.763		
	IG7		0.863		
Ethical Commitment (PK)	IG9	0.828	0.707	0.622	0.831
	IG10		0.813		
	IG11		0.839		
School Quality					
Variabel	Items	Internal Reliability (Cronbach Alpha)	Factor Loading	AVE	CR
Quality of Service (H)	KSM1	0.842	0.662	0.529	0.817
	KSM2		0.657		
	KSM3		0.765		
	KSM4		0.814		
School Management Effectiveness (PRS)	KSM7	0.835	0.819	0.626	0.833
	KSM8		0.699		

	KSM11		0.848		
Institutional	KSM13	0.816	0.847	0.604	0.819
Performance (MTV)	KSM14		0.797		
	KSM16		0.677		

Evaluation of the measurement model showed that all constructs met the recommended criteria of validity and reliability (Baharum et al., 2023). The construct of teacher integrity and school quality demonstrate convergent validity and satisfactory reliability of constructs. Meanwhile, the school's cultural construct produced an AVE score of 0.485, slightly below the recommended threshold of 0.50. According to Fornell & Larcker (1981), convergent validity can still be considered adequate when the AVE is below 0.50 provided that the composite reliability value exceeds 0.60. Therefore, the construct is maintained even though the AVE value is slightly below the threshold. In addition, the consideration is based on each indicator in the construct showing an acceptable loading factor, which means that the construct is still sufficiently representative of the latent variable.

After each variable is declared valid and reliable, the analysis is continued to the Goodness of Fit analysis stage. This analysis was conducted to assess the extent to which the proposed conceptual model is able to adequately represent empirical data (Sathyanarayana & Mohanasundaram, 2024). The model suitability assessment is carried out taking into account several commonly used suitability indices, including absolute suitability indices, incremental suitability indices, and parsimonious suitability indices, such as χ^2/df , GFI, CFI, TLI, RMSEA with reference to recognized thresholds (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Lu et al., 2025). The results of the measurement model matching test and structural model are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Goodness of Fit

GOF Index	Acceptable Value	CFA Model	Result
χ^2 (Chi-square)		90.974	Good Fit
Df (degree of freedom)		32	
χ^2/df	< 3	2.84	Good Fit
GFI	> 0.8	0.946	Good Fit
CFI	> 0.9	0.968	Good Fit
TLI	> 0.9	0.954	Good Fit
RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.077	Good Fit

Figure 1
Structural Model.

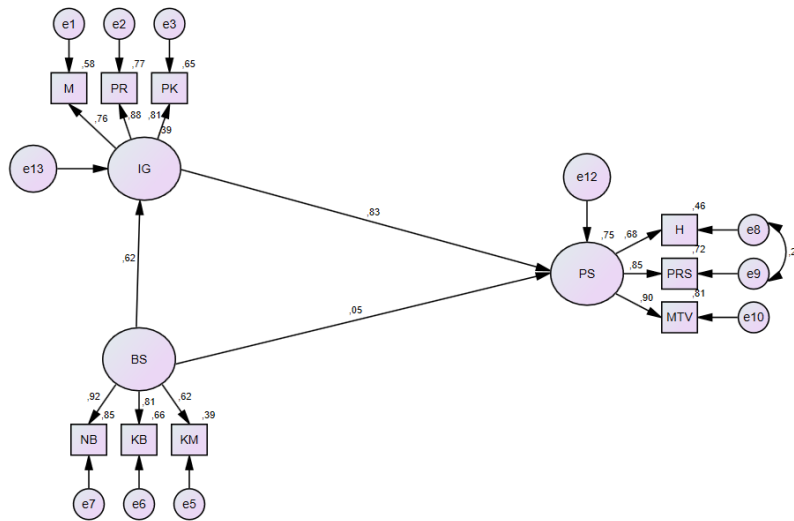


Table 3 regarding the results of the fit model fit evaluation shows that the model in this study has an adequate level of conformity with the following empirical data: Chi-square value 90.974 with $df=193$ which produces a ratio of $X^2/df=2.84$. This value is below the < 3 recommendation limit, so it shows good model suitability. The absolute feasibility index also shows similar results, with a GFI value = 0.946 that has exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.80. Meanwhile, the comparative feasibility index showed strong results, indicated by CFI = 0.968 and TLI = 0.954 that met the criteria ≥ 0.90 . In addition, the RMSEA value of 0.077 is below the maximum limit of 0.08. These results indicate that the proposed model is acceptable, Overall, The Combination of absolute fit, incremental fit, and parsimonious fit indices confirms that the proposed CFA model has met the goodness of fit criteria and can be used for hypothesis testing (Dash & Paul, 2021).

With the fulfillment of the goodness of fit criteria, the model is considered feasible to continue structural hypothesis testing. The evaluation of the relationship between variables was directly carried out by looking at the estimated path coefficient and its significance, while the indirect relationship was tested using a bootstrapping technique based on a 95% confidence interval and 5000 resampling. The results of the analysis are summarized in Table 4.

The results of the analysis of direct or indirect influence are shown in table 4, and most of the hypotheses are accepted. First, School Culture has been shown to have a significant impact on teacher integrity with a standard coefficient ($\beta = 0.621$, $p < 0.001$). However, on the other hand, school culture has been shown to have no significant direct impact on school quality with a standard coefficient value ($\beta = 0.055$, $p = 0.316$), so it can be concluded that the first hypothesis is accepted, while the second hypothesis is rejected. Furthermore, the results of the analysis show that teacher integrity directly has a significant impact on school quality with a coefficient ($\beta = 0.830$, $p < 0.001$), which indicates that the third hypothesis is accepted. The

influence of school culture on improving school quality occurs through an indirect pathway. Mediator analysis shows that teacher integrity acts as a full mediator in the relationship between school culture and school quality ($\beta = 0.516$, $p = 0.000$; 95% BCa CI [0.411, 0.631]) (H4a). Therefore, Hypothesis 4a in this study is equally accepted.

Tabel 4

Hypothesis test results using SEM and Bootstrapping analysis

Hypothesis	Path	b	CR	P-Value	Result	
H1	BS → IG	0.621	8.110	***	Supported	
H2	BS → PS	0.055	0.914	0.316	No Supported	
H3	IG → PS	0.830	9.139	***	Supported	
Hypothesis	Path	Indirect Effect	P-value	Lower Bound BC (95%)	Upper Bound BC (95%)	Remarks
H4a	BS → IG → PS	0.516	0.000	0.411	0.631	Mediated

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Discussion

The Direct Relationship of School Culture to Teacher Integrity

The results of this study show that school culture has a significant direct influence on teacher integrity with a score ($\beta = 0.621$, $p < 0.001$). These findings show that values, norms, interaction patterns, and organizational practices embedded in the school environment contribute to shaping teachers' professional and moral behavior. In other words, teacher integrity is not solely an individual attribute that is shaped or influenced by personal morality but is also influenced by the organizational environment in which teachers work (Nurlathifah & Hidayat, 2025). Schools with strong organizational values, disciplined work systems, collaborative norms, and positive interaction patterns tend to encourage teachers to show greater responsibility, professionalism, ethical consistency, and commitment in carrying out their educational duties (Hermanto & Srimulyani, 2022; Kartiko & Manik, 2026).

These findings are consistent with the theory of organizational culture put forward by Edgar Schein, who explains that organizational culture functions as a system of shared assumptions and values that guide the behavior of organizational members (Schein, 2014). Schein further explains that organizational culture operates through the internalization of collective values into everyday behavior patterns, thereby influencing how individuals perceive responsibility, respond to organizational expectations, and regulate professional behavior (Obeng et al., 2025). In the context of education, school culture creates a gradual standard of behavior, which ultimately shapes the ethical orientation and professional integrity of teachers through

continuous organizational interaction (Bujang et al., 2025). Thus, integrity arises not only from personal disposition, but also from sustained exposure to organizational norms and institutional expectations.

Previous findings also support the results of this study. Many of them report that a positive school culture contributes to the development of teacher professionalism, ethical behavior, organizational commitment, and work discipline (Dumopoy, 2025). Schools that have collaborative relationships, clear organizational values, and a professional environment tend to produce teachers with greater integrity, accountability, and ethical consistency (Andriyati et al., 2025). Thus, these findings reinforce the previous argument that organizational culture is an important contextual factor that influences teacher behavior in educational institutions.

In practical terms, this study implies that strengthening the integrity of teachers cannot depend solely on individual moral training or professional supervision. Educational institutions must also develop a positive school culture through organizational values, consistent institutional norms, collaborative professional relationships, and ethical leadership practices. A strong organizational culture allows schools to create an environment that continuously reinforces integrity-based professional behavior among teachers, ultimately contributing to the improvement of institutional quality and educational effectiveness.

The Direct Relationship of School Culture to School Quality

The results showed that school culture did not have a significant effect on school quality ($\beta = 0.055$, $p = 0.316$). These findings indicate that the existence of organizational values, interaction norms, and cultural systems owned by schools has not been directly able to produce an improvement in the quality of educational institutions. In other words, a good school culture is not always followed by improving school performance, organizational effectiveness, and the quality of educational services. In the context of this study, this insignificance does not mean that school culture is not important, but rather shows that organizational culture is not necessarily implemented in real terms in the professional and operational practices of schools.

In the perspective of Edgar Schein's organizational culture, organizational culture is not only related to the values that the institution formally has, but also related to the level of consistency in the application of those values in the organizational system (Schein, 2014). Furthermore, Schein explains that many organizations have espoused values, which are values that are formally recognized and promoted by the institution, but these values are not necessarily consistently implemented in daily organizational practices (Marco & Cagliano, 2026; Mishra, 2026). In the context of schools, this condition allows schools to have an organizational culture that appears strong at the normative and symbolic levels, but is not yet sufficiently capable of directly producing institutional quality (Supianto et al., 2026). Thus, the existence of school culture alone does not necessarily automatically improve the quality of the school if the implementation of

organizational values has not been carried out effectively in the school institutional system.

The findings of this study are also in line with several previous studies that showed that organizational culture does not always have a direct impact on institutional performance (Putri & Yusuf, 2022; W. Zhang et al., 2023). Several studies have found that organizational culture tends to function as a normative and symbolic system that requires the support of other factors, such as professionalism, leadership, work commitment, and behavior of organizational members in order to produce institutional effectiveness (Kane-Urrabazo, 2006; Kondra & Hurst, 2009). So it can be concluded that the quality of schools is not only determined by the existence of organizational cultural values, but also by how these values are translated into real work practices in the process of education and school management.

Practically, these findings show that strengthening school culture is not enough to be done through the formation of organizational slogans, formal values, and institutional rules alone. Schools need to ensure that organizational culture is truly implemented in professional behavior, work systems, organizational discipline, and the responsibilities of all school residents. Without consistent implementation, school culture has the potential to become just a symbolic identity of the organization without having a real impact on improving the quality of the school.

The direct influence of teacher integrity on school quality

The results showed that teacher integrity had a significant effect on school quality ($\beta = 0.830$, $p < 0.001$). These findings indicate that improving the quality of schools is closely related to the moral and professional quality of teachers in carrying out educational tasks. In the context of this study, significant influence shows that teacher integrity is not just a personal attribute, but a real factor that contributes to the effectiveness of educational institutions. Teachers who have moral consistency, professional responsibility, ethical commitment, and exemplary tend to be able to create a more disciplined, professional, and reliable learning process, thus having an impact on improving the quality of educational services and overall school performance (Dumopoy, 2025).

These findings are in line with the perspective of organizational behavior which places individual behavior as the main determinant of organizational effectiveness (Schein, 2014). According to Edgar Schein, the effectiveness of an organization (school) is not only determined by the organizational system and structure, but also by the extent to which the organization's members internalize professional values into real work behavior (Srimulyani & Hermanto, 2022; Wuletua et al., 2024). In the context of education, teacher integrity is an important mechanism that connects professional values with institutional quality (Iskandar et al., 2025). Teachers who have high integrity tend to show consistency between values and actions, maintain academic responsibility, build student and community trust, and create a more effective learning environment (Bujang et al., 2025). Through this mechanism, the integrity of teachers contributes directly to improving the quality of schools.

The results of this study are also supported by various previous studies that show that teacher integrity affects school effectiveness, learning quality, and the performance of educational institutions (Janna et al., 2024). Teachers with high integrity tend to have stronger work commitments, better professional discipline, and the ability to maintain consistent quality of educational services (Qudus et al., 2024). On the contrary, low teacher integrity is often associated with a decline in the quality of educational institutions characterized by declining learning quality, weak professional responsibility, and low trust in schools (Hughes & Eaton, 2022). Thus, these findings strengthen the argument that the quality of schools is basically greatly influenced by the quality of the professional behavior of teachers as the main implementers of the educational process.

Practically, these findings show that efforts to improve the quality of schools need to be directed not only at administrative and structural aspects, but also at strengthening the integrity of teachers as the main human resources in educational organizations. Schools need to build a system that encourages professional responsibility, ethical consistency, work discipline, and teacher exemplarity through strengthening professional culture, performance evaluation, work ethics coaching, and school leadership that supports integrity behavior. Thus, improving the quality of schools can be built through strengthening the moral and professional quality of teachers on an ongoing basis.

The Influence of Teacher Integrity as a Mediator in the Relationship between School Culture and School Quality

The results showed that school culture had a significant effect on school quality through the integrity of teachers as full mediators ($\beta = 0.516$, $p = 0.000$; 95% BCa CI [0.411, 0.631]). These findings suggest that school culture is not directly able to improve the quality of the school, but that influence works entirely through the integrity of the teacher. In other words, school culture can only improve the quality of educational institutions if values, norms, and school organizational systems are successfully internalized into teachers' professional behavior. In this context, teacher integrity is the main mechanism that bridges the relationship between school culture and school quality. This confirms that the existence of organizational culture alone is not enough to produce institutional quality without being manifested in the professional behavior of organizational members.

According to Becker's Human Capital Theory, the values, skills, and motivations embedded within an individual are the primary assets driving an organization's driving force. Internalization of these values directs individual behavior toward achieving the organization's collective goals (Becker, 1992). This aligns with Schein's argument, which emphasizes that organizational values do not automatically result in institutional effectiveness but rather influence how organizational members shape behavioral patterns, responsibilities, and professional commitments (Lase et al., 2025; Turyahikayo et al., 2024). In the realm of education, school culture creates norms, ethical expectations, and proportional systems that then shape the integrity of

teachers (Ramedlon et al., 2023). This integrity is then a factor that directly affects the quality of learning, organizational discipline, work effectiveness, and quality of educational services (Qudus et al., 2024). Thus, the quality of a school is basically more determined by how organizational culture is embodied in the professional behavior of teachers than by the culture of the organization itself.

In practical terms, these findings show that improving the quality of schools is not enough to be done through strengthening organizational culture at the symbolic and normative level alone. Schools need to ensure that organizational cultural values are truly internalized into the professional integrity of teachers through fostering work ethics, strengthening professional responsibility, exemplary systems, and school leadership that supports a culture of integrity. Thus, school culture does not stop as a formal organizational identity but is able to produce a real impact on the quality of schools through the formation of professional behavior of teachers with integrity.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that school culture does not directly determine the quality of the school, but provides its influence through the integrity of teachers as a full mediating variable. These findings show that organizational values and norms within schools are only effective when internalized into teachers' professional and ethical behavior. Therefore, teacher integrity serves as a central mechanism that connects school culture with institutional quality. These findings contribute to the education management literature by expanding the perspective of organizational culture beyond direct institutional effects and emphasizing the behavioral mechanisms by which school culture influences school quality. Practically, these findings suggest that efforts to improve school quality need to be accompanied by institutional mechanisms that explicitly support the development of teacher integrity. School principals and educational policymakers can integrate professional integrity indicators into performance evaluation systems, academic supervision, and teacher professional development programs. These indicators include responsibility, behavioral consistency, adherence to the code of ethics, and pedagogical accountability. Thus, school culture not only functions as a set of normative values but also translates into professional behavior that can be measured and evaluated on an ongoing basis. Further studies are recommended to examine additional mediating or moderation variables, such as leadership, organizational commitment, or teacher professionalism, and to engage a broader educational context to reinforce the generalization of findings.

DECLARATIONS

Author Contribution

Ihsan, M.Z.N., Conceptualization, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Writing – Original Draft, Visualization. **Sumardjoko, B.**: Supervision, Validation, Writing – Review & Editing, Methodology; **Mawardi, F.**, Validation, Writing – Review & Editing, Investigation. **Syahril**: Data Curation, Investigation, Validation; **Istanto.**,

Formal Analysis, Validation, Writing – Review & Editing. **Luthfi, S.**, Supervision, Validation, Writing – Review & Editing.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Declaration of AI Use

During the preparation of this scientific paper, the author used an AI tool (Chat GPT) with the excuse of improving the clarity of language, grammar, and readability of manuscripts. After using the AI tool, the author reviews and re-edits the content as needed, so that the author takes full responsibility for the content of the publication.

Additional Information

Participation in this study was voluntary, and respondents' confidentiality was maintained throughout the research process. The authors also express their sincere appreciation to the teachers and Muhammadiyah junior high schools in the Solo Raya region who participated in this study.

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