

The Influence of Participative Leadership Style on Teachers' Work Ethic and School Climate as an Intervening Variable

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ABSTRACT. The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of a participative leadership style on teachers' work ethic and school climate, using school climate as an intervening variable. This quantitative research, guided by the research problems and objectives, employs an explanatory research approach and a survey method. The questionnaire was developed based on the research variables, namely participative leadership style, teachers' work ethic, and school climate. Data were collected from 100 teachers who served as the sample of this study. Data collection was conducted using a random sampling technique at SMAN 1 Boyolangu, Tulungagung. The data analysis was performed using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method in SmartPLS. The results indicate that the participative leadership style has a significant effect on teachers' work ethic. The higher the level of participative leadership, the higher the teachers' work ethic, suggesting that participative leadership can enhance teachers' motivation and performance. The study found that school climate significantly affects teachers' work ethic; a positive school climate fosters a conducive work environment, thereby improving teachers' motivation and performance. There is also an indirect effect of participative leadership style on teachers' work ethic through school climate. Participative leadership can indirectly influence teachers' work ethic by creating a more positive school climate, suggesting that it enhances it by fostering a supportive school environment. Participative leadership style and school climate are crucial factors that influence teachers' work ethic. Therefore, schools need to implement participative leadership and cultivate a positive school climate to improve teachers' work ethic and, ultimately, the quality of education.

Keywords: *Participative Leadership Style, Teachers' Work Ethic, School Climate*

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INTRODUCTION

Teachers, as human resources, are the primary determinants of an organization's success (Khardi et al., 2020; Silviani et al., 2022; Syahid et al., 2022; Suryapermana et al., 2025). Ghavifekr and Pillai (2016) stated that teachers also serve as key supporters of the effectiveness of educational institution management in achieving high productivity. Teacher productivity can be assessed based on their duties as outlined in their main responsibilities and functions (Ndugu, 2014; Soim et al., 2022; Suroto et al., 2022). Teachers play a highly strategic role as the primary actors who directly influence the effectiveness of the learning process and the overall performance of educational institutions (Kennedy & Haydon, 2021; Li et al., 2022; Bahiyah & Juhji, 2023). Therefore, teacher work ethic has become an increasingly important issue in global educational discourse. A strong teacher work ethic is regarded as one of the key factors in enhancing teacher professionalism,

improving the quality of learning, and strengthening the credibility of educational institutions. Teachers who demonstrate high levels of discipline, commitment, and responsibility are better able to create effective learning processes and achieve optimal educational outcomes.

Ghavifekr and Pillai (2016) stated that teachers also serve as key supporters of the effectiveness of educational institution management in achieving high productivity. Teacher productivity can be assessed based on their duties as outlined in their main responsibilities and functions (Sinaulan, 2016; Budiman et al., 2025). Teachers are required to perform well in order to meet the expectations and needs of all stakeholders, especially the community that entrusts schools and teachers with the development of students. The development of more complex management processes can also support the identification of teachers' characteristics and promote substantial improvement in their performance (Boies & Fiset, 2019; Mukaromah et al., 2024). However, implementing organizational management faces serious challenges related to the available human resources, especially in a nation currently experiencing moral decline (Rosyid, 2021).

Globally, educational reforms increasingly emphasize strengthening teachers' work ethic as part of efforts to improve the quality of human resources in education (Toharudin et al., 2019; Purwantiningsih & Suharso, 2019; Salim et al., 2021; Ji, 2022; Dacholfany et al., 2024). Work ethic not only reflects an individual's ability to complete professional tasks but also represents internal values such as dedication, integrity, perseverance, and moral responsibility toward both students and educational institutions (Chanzanagh & Nejat, 2010; Suyatno et al., 2019; Park & Hill, 2021; Sugeng et al., 2024). Internal problems that hinder teachers' work ethic include negative conflicts among teachers, feelings of injustice, lack of career advancement opportunities, monotonous work life, insecurity within the organization, insufficient management attention to teachers, and teachers' inability to adapt to technological changes. These issues arise because the environment is dynamic and constantly changing (Kumar & Wiseman, 2021). This can also disrupt the teaching and learning process, making it ineffective and resulting in teachers' work quality not meeting the standards set by the educational institution. Based on these phenomena, both external and internal factors act as obstacles to teachers' work ethic. These issues require greater attention to inform instructional planning and design effective interventions.

Teachers' work ethic is crucial to monitor and evaluate because they perform professional duties that can only be carried out with specialized competencies acquired through educational programs (Syaputra & Santosa, 2022; Mbabazi et al., 2025). Beyond these specialized competencies, many factors influence a teacher's performance. Factors such as salary, rewards and incentives, work motivation, organizational culture, turnover intentions, leadership style, work ethic, job satisfaction, interpersonal relationships among colleagues, and relationships with supervisors all affect performance (Oktaviani & Saragih, 2017). Based on the phenomena discussed above, it can be stated that teachers' work ethic often hinders the teaching and learning process, as they tend not to perform optimally in their instruction. Therefore, efforts to improve teacher performance need to begin within the organization itself.

It should be recognized that school climate also significantly impacts teachers' work ethic. The school climate comprises several key components, including structure, rewards, warmth, support, conflict, and identity. If these components are poorly managed within the organization, teachers' motivation and performance will decline. A healthy school climate fosters a sense of comfort among organizational members, enabling them to perform at their best (Ruslan, 2017). A conducive environment provides teachers with comfort. As research by Berberoglu (2018) indicates, Perceptions of organizational climate develop based on the significance of the environment to individual values. Relevant previous studies include Hidayat and Narulita (2019); their findings reveal that organizational climate has a very strong influence on organizational performance.

Lauda et al. (2019) also found that a positively developed organizational climate enhances employees' attitudes and leads to superior organizational performance. In line with these findings,

the study. Burhanuddin et al. (2021) and Saputra (2018) studies indicated a significant positive effect of organizational climate on teachers' performance. In contrast, Ariyanti et al. (2025) found that organizational climate did not significantly affect employee performance. These differing findings require further examination to establish their validity both conceptually and empirically.

This study introduces the school climate variable as an organizational construct that reflects organizational members' shared perceptions of the policies, practices, procedures, and social interaction patterns supported and expected by educational institutions. In the educational context, organizational climate refers to the psychological and social environment that shapes individuals' work experiences and influences their professional behavior (Schneider et al., 2013; Collie et al., 2012). In a school environment, a positive climate is characterized by leadership support, healthy interpersonal relationships, clarity of organizational goals, and a sense of fairness and trust among school members (Wang & Degol, 2016). Previous research has shown that teachers' perceptions of school climate play a significant role in shaping work motivation, organizational commitment, and the quality of teaching performance (Aldridge & McChesney, 2018; Thapa et al., 2013).

To date, studies that explicitly position school climate as a mediating variable in the relationship between participatory leadership style and teacher work ethic are relatively limited. Most studies examine only the direct influence of leadership on teacher performance or commitment, without explaining the psychological and organizational mechanisms that mediate this relationship (Leithwood & Sun, 2012; Liu et al., 2021). However, organizational theory perspectives emphasize that leadership influences individual work behavior by shaping the collective work environment or organizational climate perceived by organizational members (Schneider et al., 2017).

Previous research on organizational climate was conducted by Li et al. (2020), who argue that organizational climate is the overall atmosphere of the school environment, encompassing both the physical and social work environment, perceived by those involved in the learning process, directly or indirectly, as a result of the school's organizational culture. This study supports the research conducted by Burhanuddin et al. (2021), Hidayat and Narulita (2019), and Lauda et al. (2019). In his conclusion, he stated that organizational climate affects work ethic. According to Razack and Vetrivel (2023), organizational climate arises from employees' perceptions and understanding, shaping the character, behavior, and effectiveness in the workplace. These perceptions relate to how the organization is managed, including its policies, routines, practices, and rewards. Organizational climate is shaped by the attitudes, values, and beliefs held within a work unit. Li et al. (2020) argue that school organizational climate is the overall atmosphere of the school environment, encompassing both the physical and social environments, as perceived by those involved in the learning process, directly or indirectly, and shaped by the school's organizational culture.

Participative leadership style in schools is characterized by high relationship orientation and low task orientation, in which leaders and subordinates share ideas and make decisions collaboratively (Banjarnahor et al. 2018; Toufighi et al. 2024). This means that the participative leadership style emphasizes strong support in decision-making and policy formulation but provides minimal direction. Leaders who exhibit high support and low directive behavior are referred to as "participative" because control over problem-solving and decision-making is shared alternately, according to the theory (Banjarnahor et al., 2018; Damanik et al., 2021)

Positive participative leadership can enhance teachers' work ethic. This study is supported by Shahab et al., (2018), Amundsen and Martinsen (2015), Bharadwaja and Tripathi (2021), Ghamrawi and Al-Thani (2023) that the implementation of participative leadership style and the creation of a conducive school climate can serve as an effective strategy to enhance teachers' work ethic and, ultimately, improve the quality of education. Theoretically, contradictions in previous research regarding the influence of participative leadership style on teachers' work ethic have prompted the introduction of a new variable to examine the role of school climate. This study aims to examine the influence of a participative leadership style on teachers' work ethic, with school climate as an

intervening variable, at SMAN 1 Boyolangu, Tulungagung. Specifically, the study investigates the direct effect of participative leadership style on teachers' work ethic, the effect of participative leadership style on school climate, and the influence of school climate on teachers' work ethic. In addition, this study analyzes the mediating role of school climate in the relationship between participative leadership style and teachers' work ethic.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research design with a survey approach to obtain empirical evidence regarding the relationships among participative leadership style, teachers' work ethic, and school climate. Quantitative research is appropriate for examining causal relationships among variables and testing theoretical models using statistical analysis (Haryanti, 2019). This research can be classified as explanatory and associative causal research, which aims to analyze the influence of one variable on another and to explain the causal relationships among research variables (Arikunto, 2017). This study was conducted to examine the role of school climate in the effect of participative leadership style on teachers' work ethic. Quantitative research is a type of study that typically uses structured questions to collect data, usually through questionnaires. This type of quantitative research also implies that the outcomes can be measured (Creswell, 2018). Specifically, this study examines the role of school climate as an intervening variable in the relationship between participative leadership style and teachers' work ethic. Considering the research problems and objectives, this study employs an explanatory research approach using a survey method (Haryanti, 2019). The questionnaire was developed based on the research variables, namely participative leadership style, teachers' work ethic, and school climate.

The study population consisted of all teachers at SMAN 1 Boyolangu, Tulungagung, totaling 100. Given the relatively small population, this study employed a total sampling technique, including all members of the population as research respondents. Total sampling is appropriate when the population size is limited, and allows the researcher to obtain comprehensive data from all members of the population. Therefore, the total sample in this study consisted of 100 teachers. The sample size is considered adequate for analysis using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). According to Ghazali (2008), the minimum sample size in PLS-SEM can follow the 10-times rule, which states that the sample size should be at least 10 times the maximum number of structural paths directed at any construct in the model. Since the research model in this study contains fewer than ten indicators per construct and limited structural paths, the sample size of 100 respondents meets the recommended criteria for PLS analysis.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed based on established theoretical frameworks and previous empirical studies. The questionnaire consisted of three main constructs: participative leadership style, school climate, and teachers' work ethic. The measurement indicators for participative leadership style were adapted from leadership theory emphasizing employee participation in decision-making and collaborative leadership practices. Indicators for school climate were derived from the educational organizational climate literature, which emphasizes the institutional environment, interpersonal relationships, and organizational support. Meanwhile, indicators for teachers' work ethic were developed based on Ghazali's (2008) concept of work ethic, which emphasizes values such as discipline, responsibility, dedication, and commitment to work. All questionnaire items were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The Likert scale was used to measure respondents' perceptions regarding the degree to which they agreed with each statement related to the research variables. Ethical considerations were carefully addressed in this study. Prior to data collection, respondents were informed of the research's purpose and assured that their participation was voluntary. Respondents were also informed that the collected data would be used solely for academic research and that their identities would remain confidential. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before they completed the questionnaire.

The data in this study were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS. This method was chosen because it is suitable for analyzing complex research models involving multiple latent variables and mediation relationships. The analysis process consisted of two main stages: evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) and evaluation of the structural model (inner model)—the measurement model evaluation aimed to assess the validity and reliability of the research constructs. Convergent validity was evaluated by examining factor loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), with recommended values of 0.70 or higher for factor loadings and 0.50 or higher for AVE. Discriminant validity was also assessed to ensure that each construct in the model was empirically distinct from other constructs. In addition, the reliability of the constructs was assessed using composite reliability, with a recommended threshold of 0.70 or higher (Ghozali, 2008).

After the measurement model met the required validity and reliability criteria, the next step was to evaluate the structural model to examine the relationships among the latent variables and test the proposed research hypotheses. This evaluation included analyzing the path coefficients, t-statistics, and R-square values for the endogenous variables. The R-squared value indicates the extent to which the independent variables explain the variance in the dependent variable in the research model. To test the statistical significance of the structural relationships, a bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS was used to generate repeated subsamples to estimate standard errors and obtain t-statistics and p-values for each path coefficient. Furthermore, the mediating role of school climate in the relationship between participative leadership style and teachers' work ethic was examined using indirect effect analysis within the PLS-SEM framework. The mediation effect was determined by evaluating the significance of the indirect path from participative leadership style to teachers' work ethic via school climate, using bootstrapping. If the indirect effect was found to be statistically significant, it indicated that school climate functioned as a mediating variable in the relationship between participative leadership style and teachers' work ethic.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

1. Results of Data Quality Testing (Outer Model)

There are three criteria for using SmartPLS data analysis techniques to assess the outer model: Convergent Validity, Discriminant Validity, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

a. Convergent Validity

Convergent validity of the measurement model with reflective indicators is assessed by correlating the estimated item and component scores using PLS software. An individual reflective measure is considered high if it correlates more than 0.70 with the construct being measured. In this study, a loading factor threshold of 0.70 is applied. Based on the table below, all outer loadings are greater than 0.60, indicating that all research items meet the criteria. The outer loadings results are presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1 Outer Loadings

Participative Leadership Style (X)	<i>r</i>	School Climate (Z)	<i>r</i>	Teachers' Work Ethic (Y)	<i>r</i>
X1	0,733	Z21	0,667	Y1	0,630
X10	0,576	Z210	0,746	Y2	0,584
X11	0,707	Z22	0,651	Y3	0,693
X12	0,682	Z23	0,684	Y4	0,806
X2	0,786	Z24	0,758	Y5	0,736
X3	0,745	Z25	0,788	Y6	0,746
X4	0,717	Z26	0,700		
X5	0,667	Z27	0,669		

X6	0,692	Z28	0,662
X7	0,668	Z29	0,731
X8	0,643		
X9	0,663		

Source of Data: Processed Primary Data (2025)

Based on the SmartPLS results, Table 1 shows that the outer model values, or the correlations between constructs and variables, meet the criteria for convergent validity, as estimated through the outer loading test in PLS. From the output, it can be seen that all items are valid because all factor loadings are greater than 0.6. Therefore, it can be concluded that each indicator item used in this study is considered valid.

b. Evaluating Reliability and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

The criteria for validity and reliability can also be assessed from a construct's reliability and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct. A construct is considered to have high reliability if its reliability value is 0.70 or higher and its AVE is above 0.50 (Ghozali 2011). Table 2 presents the Composite Reliability and AVE values for all variables as follows:

Table 2. Outer Model, AVE, Composite Reliability

Variable	AVE	Composite Reliability	Description
Teachers' Work Ethic (Y)	0.615	0,853	Reliable
Participative Leadership Style (X)	0.513	0,916	Reliable
School Climate (Z)	0.644	0,909	Reliable

Source of Data: Processed Primary Data (2025)

Based on Table 2, all constructs meet the reliability criteria, as indicated by composite reliabilities above 0.70 and AVEs above 0.50. Therefore, the measurement model evaluation demonstrates good validity based on the AVE.

2. Model Feasibility Testing Results (Inner Model)

Testing of the inner model, or structural model, is conducted to examine the relationships between constructs, their significance values, and the R-square of the research model. The structural model is evaluated using R-squared for the dependent constructs, t-tests, and the significance of the structural path coefficient parameters. In assessing the PLS model, the process begins by examining the R-squared for each dependent latent variable. Table 3 presents the R-square estimates from SmartPLS.

Table 3. R-Square Score

Variable	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Teachers' Work Ethic (Y)	0,566	0,557
School Climate (Z)	0,852	0,851

Source of Data: Processed Primary Data (2025)

Table 3 shows that the R-square for the variable Teachers' Work Ethic (Y) is 0.566, indicating that 56.6% of the variability in Teachers' Work Ethic (Y) is explained by school climate and participative leadership style. In comparison, the remaining 43.4% is explained by other variables outside the studied model. A higher R-squared value indicates that the independent variables better explain the dependent variable, thus reflecting a stronger structural equation. For the variable School Climate (Z), the R-square value is 0.852, indicating that 85.2% of the variability in school climate is explained by the variability in participative leadership style and teachers' work ethic, with the remaining 14.8% explained by variables outside the model. Similarly, a higher R-squared value indicates a greater explanatory power of the independent variables on the dependent variable, reflecting a stronger structural equation.

3. Hypothesis Testing

The significance of the estimated parameters provides valuable information about the relationships among the research variables. The basis for testing the hypotheses is the values presented in the output for inner weights. Table 4 provides the estimation output for the structural model testing. In SmartPLS, each hypothesized relationship is statistically tested using simulation, specifically through the bootstrap method on the sample. Bootstrapping is also intended to minimize issues related to the non-normality of the research data. The results of the bootstrapping analysis in SmartPLS are as follows:

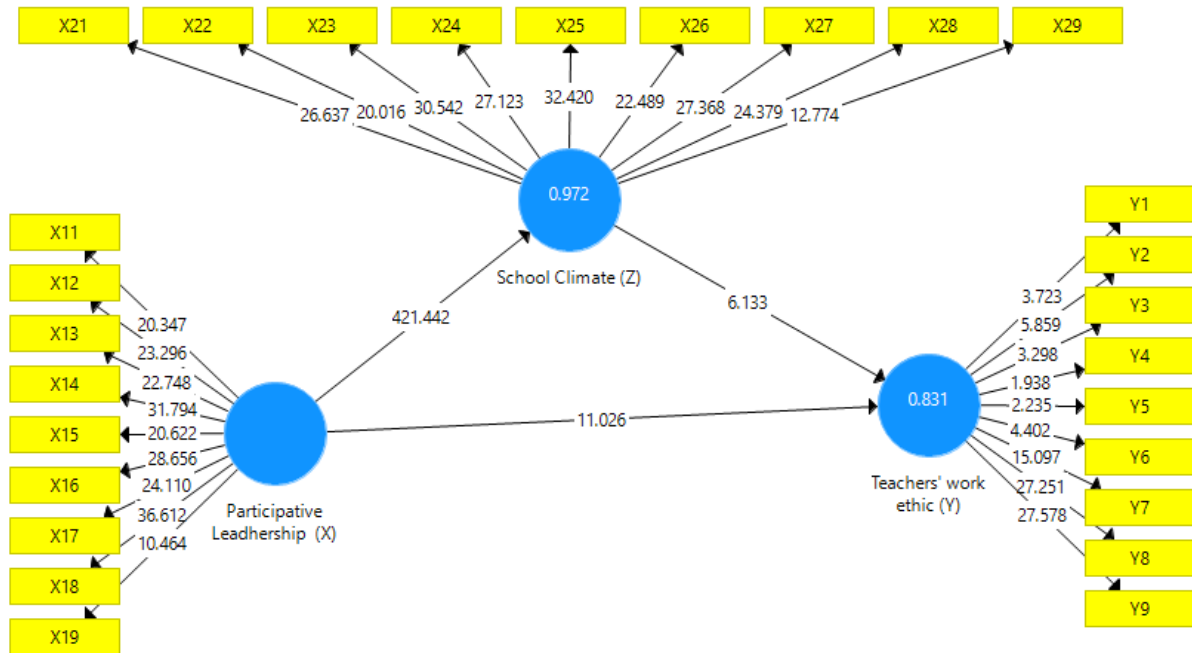


Figure 1. Bootstrapping Result

The significance level in hypothesis testing is measured using the path coefficient parameter (Abdillah & Hartono, 2015). This test examines the estimated path coefficients and t-statistic values at a significance level of $\alpha = 5\%$. If the t-statistic value exceeds the t-table value of 1.984 for a one-tailed hypothesis, the hypothesis is accepted. The following are the path coefficient values for testing the main hypotheses of this study.

Table 4. Path Coefficient Result

	Direct and Indirect Effect	Parameter Coefficient	T-Statistics	P-Values	Result
H ₁	Participative Leadership Style (X) -> Teachers' Work Ethic (Y)	0,360	2,195	0,029	Received
H ₂	Participative Leadership Style (X) -> School Climate (Z)	0,923	79,674	0,000	Received
H ₃	School Climate (Z) -> Teachers. Work Ethic (Y)	0,407	2,502	0,013	Received

Source of Data: Processed Primary Data (2025)

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that the participative leadership style significantly affects teachers' work ethic. The test of the participative leadership style produced a t-statistic value of 2.195 with a p-value of 0.029, which is less than the significance level of 0.05. These results indicate that the hypothesis proposed in this study is supported: the higher the participative leadership style, the higher the teachers' work ethic. Furthermore, another test of the participative leadership style yielded a t-statistic of 79.674 with a p-value of 0.000, which is also

below the 0.05 significance level, confirming that the participative leadership style positively influences teachers' work ethic. This implies that as participative leadership increases, teachers' work ethic correspondingly increases. In addition, school climate was found to significantly affect teachers' work ethic, with a t-statistic of 2.502 and a p-value of 0.013, which is below 0.05. These results support the hypothesis that school climate positively influences teachers' work ethic, indicating that a higher-quality school climate is associated with a higher work ethic among teachers.

4. Mediation Testing Result

The influence analysis examined the strength of relationships among variables, including direct, indirect, and total effects. The direct effect refers to the coefficient for each single-headed path arrow.

Table 5. Indirect Effects

	Direct and Indirect Effect	Parameter Coefficient	T-Statistics	P-Values	Result
H ₄	Participative Leadership Style (X) -> School Climate (Z) -> Teachers' Work Ethic (Y)	0,376	2,490	0,013	Received

Source of Data: Processed Primary Data (2025)

From Table 5 above, the results indicate an indirect effect of participative leadership style on teachers' work ethic through school climate, with a p-value of 0.013 < 0.05, indicating significance. This means that a participative leadership style can indirectly influence teachers' work ethic by fostering a more positive school climate. Participative leadership contributes to creating a better school climate, which in turn enhances teachers' work ethic. These results highlight the importance of considering school climate when implementing strategies to improve teachers' work ethic through participative leadership.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that participative leadership and school climate play an important role in shaping teachers' work ethic. Schools characterized by higher levels of participative leadership and a more supportive organizational climate tend to demonstrate stronger teacher commitment, responsibility, and professional dedication. When teachers are involved in decision-making, they are more likely to feel valued and trusted, which encourages a deeper sense of ownership of their work and the institution's goals. This condition strengthens teachers' willingness to contribute beyond formal responsibilities, reflecting a stronger work ethic. These results resonate with previous studies suggesting that inclusive leadership practices and positive organizational environments foster motivation and professional engagement among teachers (Jedaman et al., 2019; Suyono et al., 2022; Toufighi et al., 2024).

From an organizational perspective, school climate can be understood as the shared meaning teachers attach to everyday organizational practices, policies, and interpersonal interactions. Rather than being merely a structural condition, organizational climate represents how members collectively experience their workplace and interpret what behaviors are expected and appreciated within the institution (Schneider et al., 2013). In educational contexts, this climate is reflected in the quality of professional relationships, institutional support, communication patterns, and the broader social atmosphere that surrounds teaching and learning activities (Wang & Degol, 2016; Collie et al., 2012). The dimensions examined in this study, including organizational structure, rewards, interpersonal warmth, institutional support, conflict management, and organizational identity, illustrate how daily organizational experiences shape teachers' attitudes toward their work.

The results further confirm that a positive school climate strengthens teachers' work ethic by fostering conditions in which they feel supported professionally and socially. Teachers do not work solely to fulfill formal obligations; their motivation is also influenced by how meaningful and supportive their work environment feels. When schools provide recognition, opportunities for collaboration, and constructive relationships, teachers are more likely to develop enthusiasm and sustained professional commitment. This finding supports earlier research highlighting the importance of organizational climate in influencing teachers' work attitudes and performance (Burhanuddin et al., 2021; Hidayat & Narulita, 2019; Lauda et al., 2019). However, differences from studies such as Ghavifekr and Pillai (2016) and Berberoglu (2018) suggest that the influence of school climate may vary across institutional contexts, indicating that organizational culture and leadership implementation shape how school climate translates into behavioral outcomes.

A notable contribution of this study is demonstrating that participative leadership affects teachers' work ethic indirectly by fostering a positive school climate. Participative leadership appears to function less as a direct driver of behavior and more as a catalyst that shapes the organizational environment in which teachers work. By encouraging dialogue, shared responsibility, and mutual trust, leaders help create a climate that nurtures motivation and professional engagement. In this sense, school climate acts as a connecting mechanism that translates leadership practices into teachers' daily experiences and work attitudes (Liu et al., 2021; Schneider et al., 2017). Taken together, these findings underline the importance of viewing leadership and organizational climate as interconnected processes rather than isolated factors. Efforts to strengthen teachers' work ethic should therefore move beyond leadership style alone and focus on cultivating a supportive and collaborative school environment. Such an approach not only enhances teacher professionalism but also contributes to sustainable improvements in educational quality.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study contributes to the growing body of leadership and organizational behavior research by clarifying the mechanism through which participative leadership influences teachers' work ethic. While previous studies have often examined leadership and work ethic as directly related constructs, the present findings highlight school climate as a critical mediating pathway. This suggests that leadership effectiveness in educational settings operates primarily through social and psychological processes embedded in organizational environments rather than through direct managerial influence alone. By positioning school climate as an intervening variable, this study extends organizational climate theory to the educational context and provides empirical support for the argument that collectively experienced workplace conditions shape teachers' professional attitudes. In doing so, the findings offer a more integrative understanding of how leadership practices translate into behavioral outcomes through shared organizational perceptions.

From a practical perspective, the results imply that improving teachers' work ethic requires a systemic approach that goes beyond individual-level leadership behavior. School leaders should not only adopt participative decision-making practices but also intentionally cultivate organizational conditions that promote trust, collaboration, and professional support. Policies that encourage open communication, fair recognition systems, collegial interaction, and constructive conflict management may strengthen the overall school climate and, in turn, enhance teachers' motivation and commitment. Educational stakeholders and policymakers may therefore consider leadership development programs that emphasize relational and climate-building competencies alongside managerial skills. Such efforts are likely to foster sustainable improvements in teacher professionalism and contribute to long-term improvements in educational quality.

Taken together, the findings of this study emphasize that teachers' work ethic cannot be understood solely as an individual attribute but rather as a product of ongoing interactions between leadership practices and organizational environments. Participative leadership creates opportunities for dialogue and shared responsibility, yet its impact becomes meaningful when it is translated into

a positive school climate that teachers experience in their daily professional lives. This highlights the importance of considering schools as social organizations in which leadership, relationships, and institutional conditions continuously shape professional attitudes and behaviors. By demonstrating how school climate connects leadership practices with teachers' work ethic, this study offers a more nuanced understanding of organizational dynamics in educational settings. It underscores the need for leadership approaches that prioritize collaboration, trust, and collective engagement as foundations for sustainable educational improvement.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that participative leadership and school climate play an important role in shaping teachers' work ethic, with participative leadership influencing teachers primarily through the creation of a positive organizational environment. The findings suggest that leadership effectiveness in educational settings is realized not only through leaders' direct actions but also through the shared experiences and perceptions that develop within the school climate, where collaboration, trust, institutional support, and constructive professional relationships encourage stronger commitment and responsibility among teachers. By highlighting school climate as a mediating mechanism, this study provides a more integrated understanding of how leadership practices translate into professional attitudes and work behavior in schools. In practice, the results imply that strengthening teachers' work ethic requires simultaneous attention to participative leadership practices and to the cultivation of a supportive and inclusive school environment. Although the study is limited by its contextual scope and cross-sectional design, it offers important insights for school leaders and policymakers seeking sustainable strategies to enhance teacher professionalism and educational quality, while opening opportunities for future research to explore longitudinal dynamics and additional organizational factors influencing teacher work attitudes.

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