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# EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF HEADMASTER LEADERSHIP ON TEACHER PERFORMANCE AT MI AL-KARIM: MEDIATION BY WORK MOTIVATION AND WORK CLIMATE

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**Abstract:** This study aims to examine the influence of democratic leadership style, work motivation, and work climate on teacher performance at MI Al-Karim Surabaya. The research method used is Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with Partial Least Squares (PLS) as the data analysis tool. Data collection was conducted through questionnaires distributed to 42 teachers at MI Al-Karim Surabaya. The results of the analysis show that democratic leadership style has a positive effect on teachers' work motivation and work climate. However, democratic leadership style does not have a direct effect on teacher performance. Work motivation also does not have a direct effect on teacher performance, but work climate has a positive effect on teacher performance. Additionally, work climate mediates the relationship between democratic leadership style and teacher performance.

**Keywords:** *Democratic Leadership Style, Work Motivation, Work Climate, Teacher Performance, Teacher*

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## 1. Introduction

The success of educational institutions, including Madrasas, is measured by the quality of the education produced (UU no. 20 of 2003). Quality education is the basic capital for human resource development, making a positive contribution to the development of the nation and state. The quality of education is influenced by various factors, one of which is teacher performance. Teacher performance plays a crucial role in determining the quality of education, impacting learning, student learning outcomes and personal development. According to Huberman (1993), teacher performance is defined as the teacher's ability to carry out their duties and functions effectively and efficiently. Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 15 of 2015 explains that teacher performance includes the quality of the learning process, student learning outcomes, activeness in training, and involvement in extracurricular activities. Internal factors such as ability, competence, work motivation and personality influence teacher performance. Apart from internal factors, external factors such as the leadership style of the madrasa head and work climate also play an important role.

Leadership style is the way or pattern that a leader uses to influence and direct the behavior of other people (Yukl, 2017). Schein (2004) differentiates leadership styles into autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire, with democratic leadership considered capable of creating a conducive work environment. The democratic leadership style emphasizes collaboration, transparency, and collective involvement in decision making, which can increase teacher motivation and involvement in school activities (Luthans, 2011). Work motivation is an internal or external drive that encourages individuals to work optimally and achieve certain goals in the work context (Henzberg, 1959). Motivation theories such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1954) emphasize the role of needs in motivating teacher performance. These needs include physiological, safety, social, self-esteem and self-actualization needs, which influence teacher motivation and performance. Work climate, according to Robbins and Judge (2017), is the overall condition within

an organization that is felt by its members, including cultural norms, expectations, and psychological and social atmosphere. A positive work climate can create a conducive environment, support creativity, and encourage teamwork, while a negative work climate can hinder individual motivation and performance.

MI Al-Karim, a private madrasah ibtidaiyah in Surabaya, was founded in 2000 and has 300 students and 41 teachers. MI Al-Karim's vision is "To become a madrasa that excels in achievement and has noble morals". To achieve this mission, improving teacher performance is very important. Therefore, it is important to know the factors that influence teacher performance, including the leadership style of madrasah heads, work motivation, and work climate.

Previous research shows that factors such as organizational climate, work environment, teacher satisfaction, madrasa head leadership, and teacher motivation have a significant effect on teacher performance (Luthfi & Iba, 2023; Imaduddin, 2023; Idrus et al., 2022; Guntur et al., 2023). Work motivation theory as proposed by Maslow (1943), Herzberg (1959), and Vroom (1964) also supports that work motivation can be the main driver of individual performance. Therefore, this research focuses on the influence of the madrasa head's leadership style, teacher work motivation, and work climate on teacher performance at MI Al-Karim.

### **Teacher Performance**

Teacher Performance Theory includes an understanding of the abilities and contributions of teachers in carrying out their duties and functions. Various management figures such as Abraham Maslow with the Hierarchy of Needs Theory (1943), Herzberg with the Two Factor Theory (1959), Vroom with the Expectancy Theory (1964), and Adams with the Theory of Justice (1965) made significant contributions in explaining these aspects. Maslow stated that teacher performance is influenced by the fulfillment of five levels of human needs, ranging from physiological needs to self-actualization, which include security, social relationships, and esteem. Herzberg differentiated performance factors into intrinsic, such as internal motivation and achievement, and extrinsic, such as working conditions and organizational relationships. Vroom emphasizes that teacher performance is influenced by expectations regarding work results and the value of these results. Adams suggests that teacher performance is based on perceptions of the fairness of the rewards received. Thus, teacher performance is the result of the interaction of various factors and complex needs.

### **Democratic Leadership Style**

Democratic leadership style is a leader's way of leading and influencing others by involving active participation in decision making (Yukl, 2006). Kurt Lewin (in Yukl, 2006) emphasizes the importance of subordinate participation in the decision-making process, where the madrasa head as the leader gives teachers the freedom to participate. Rensis Likert emphasized the collaborative relationship between leaders and subordinates as a strong foundation in a democratic leadership style. Victor Vroom and Philip Yetton (1973) also see the importance of involving subordinates to achieve effective results. Yukl (2006) groups democratic leadership style indicators into four categories: openness, participation, delegation, and fairness. Democratic leaders are open to ideas and feedback, encourage subordinate participation, provide trust to carry out tasks, and treat subordinates fairly.

### **Work motivation**

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (1943) defines work motivation as the result of the level of fulfillment of human needs which can be grouped into five hierarchies, from physiological needs to self-actualization. Herzberg (1959) divided motivation factors into intrinsic, such as the need for achievement, and extrinsic, such as salary. Vroom (1964) emphasized that work motivation is influenced by expectations of business results, the instrumental value of good performance, and the value of desired results. Adams (1965) linked work motivation to perceptions of justice, where a person will be motivated if he feels the rewards received are commensurate with his efforts.

Locke (1968) added that clear goals can increase work motivation. McClelland (1961) showed that individuals with a high need for achievement will be motivated to achieve high standards. In this context, teacher work motivation includes fulfilling basic human needs that promote a productive and effective work environment.

### **Work Climate**

Work climate reflects organizational members' perceptions of their work environment and influences individual performance (Robbins & Judge, 2018). Litwin & Stringer (1968) described work climate as members' general perception of the organization and its work environment, which includes dimensions such as responsibility and support. Schneider (1975) emphasized that work climate is the result of interactions between individual and organizational characteristics. Payne & Huffman (1997) stated that work climate is influenced by factors such as organizational culture and interactions between members. Work climate indicators include clear policies and procedures, clear goals, meeting teacher needs and expectations, organizational values and norms, and positive perceptions of colleagues and superiors. These indicators help assess and understand the work climate in an organization, which ultimately increases teacher motivation, productivity and job satisfaction.

### **Relationship between variables and Research Hypothesis**

Several leadership theories, including those put forward by Lewin, Likert, and Vroom, emphasize the importance of participation and interaction between leaders and organizational members, which in this context are madrasa heads and teachers. The madrasa head as a leader can motivate and guide teachers to achieve optimal performance (Muhammad Luthfi, Zainuddin Iba, 2023; A. Idrus, Tukiyo, et al., 2022). A good leadership style has been proven to improve teacher performance. In addition, motivation theories such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Herzberg's two factors, and Vroom's expectancy theory underscore that work motivation is the main driver of individual performance (Maslow, 1943; Herzberg, 1959; Vroom, 1964). Research shows that a leadership style that is effective in motivating teachers also has a positive impact on their performance (Suci Emilia Fitri and Syamsir, 2014). Work climate theory indicates that a good work environment supports individual performance (Robbins & Judge, 2018). If leadership creates a positive work climate, this will improve teacher performance (Carmen Novac, 2011). Previous research also supports that leadership style has a positive effect on work climate (Suci Emilia Fitri and Syamsir, 2014). Thus, the hypothesis proposed in this research is:

H1: Leadership style has a positive effect on teacher performance

H1a: Leadership style through work motivation has a positive effect on teacher performance

H1b: Leadership style through work climate has a positive effect on teacher performance

H2: Work motivation has a positive effect on teacher performance

H3: Work climate has a positive effect on teacher performance.

## **2. Research Methods**

The research approach used in this research is quantitative research. According to Robbins and Judge (2017), quantitative research uses scientific methods to collect and analyze data systematically and objectively. The method used in this research is a survey method. The survey method is a data collection method by distributing questionnaires to respondents. A questionnaire is a list of questions given to respondents to answer. The survey method was chosen because it is suitable for quantitative research which aims to test hypotheses and can collect data from many respondents in a short time.

This research was carried out at MI Al-Karim Surabaya. MI Al-Karim was chosen because it is representative in the context of private madrasah ibtidaiyah in Surabaya, with good accessibility and ease of communicating with related parties. Population is all research objects that have the same characteristics (Sugiyono, 2018). The population in this study consisted of 41



teachers who taught at MI Al-Karim Surabaya. In this research, the entire population was taken as a sample, namely 41 active teachers at MI Al-Karim Surabaya. Taking the entire population ensures that every teacher has the opportunity to be part of the analysis and increases the internal validity of the study. The sampling method used is the saturated sample method, where all members of the population become part of the research sample. This method was chosen to produce data that is comprehensive and representative of the entire population, with the belief that each member of the population has an equal contribution to the research objectives.

The data used in this research is quantitative data, obtained from various sources such as questionnaires, interviews and observations. The data sources in this research are primary and secondary data. Primary data comes from the results of questionnaires from MI Al-Karim Surabaya teachers, while secondary data comes from MI Al-Karim documentation regarding the school profile.

The variables in this research are divided into independent, dependent and mediating variables. The dependent variable in this research is teacher performance. Teacher performance is measured by indicators such as achievement of learning objectives, student activity in learning, student understanding of learning material, and improvement in student learning outcomes. The main independent variable is leadership style. Leadership style indicators include Openness, Participation, Delegation, and Fairness (Yukl, 2017). The mediating variables in this research are work motivation and work climate. Indicators of work motivation include satisfaction of physiological, security, social, esteem and self-actualization needs (Maslow, 1943). Work climate indicators include perceptions of policies and procedures, goals and objectives, teacher needs and expectations, values, and norms, as well as perceptions of colleagues and superiors (Schneider & Rentsch, 1982). The dependent variable in this research is teacher performance. Teacher performance is measured by indicators such as achievement of learning objectives, student activity in learning, student understanding of learning material, and improvement in student learning outcomes (Robbins & Judge, 2017).

Data analysis in this research was carried out in two stages: descriptive analysis and Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). Descriptive analysis is used to describe the characteristics of respondents and general research results. Statistical techniques such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation are used in this analysis. SEM-PLS is a causal and predictive data analysis method, used to analyze the relationship between latent variables and manifest variables.

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### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1. Results

The Al Karim Islamic Education Foundation is an educational institution that focuses on the social and educational fields, which is the result of a transition from the Al Hidayah Surabaya Foundation in 2006. This foundation combines the national education curriculum with the Islamic boarding school curriculum, with the main foundation on the Al Quran and Hadith. One of the unique things about the Al Karim Islamic Education Foundation compared to other educational foundations in Surabaya and its surroundings is the application of Al Qur'an subjects using the Tilawati method and memorizing Juz Amma. Apart from that, this foundation also provides module classes tailored to students' abilities in science and English, with the aim of deepening student abilities in these two subjects.

The characteristics of the respondents in this study include gender, age, and years of teaching. Of the 41 respondents, the majority were women, 26 people or 81%, while 6 people were men or 19%. Based on age, 56% of respondents were under 35 years old, 31% were between 35 and 45 years old, and 13% were over 45 years old. In terms of years of teaching, 34% of

respondents had less than 5 years of teaching experience, 53% had taught between 5 and 15 years, and 13% had taught for more than 15 years.

#### Description of Research Variables

The variables in this research include democratic leadership style, work motivation, work climate, and teacher performance at the Al Karim Islamic Education Foundation.

Table 1. Description of research variables

Variable	Indicator	Average	Total average	St Dev	Min	Max
Democratic leadership style	X1.1 Openness	4.367	4.341	0.077	4.217	4.378
	X1.2 Participation	4.367				
	X1.3 Delegation	4.378				
	X1.4 Justice	4.217				
Work motivation	Z1.1 Motivation towards physiological needs	4.089	4.363	0.221	4.089	4.533
	Z1.2 Motivation towards security needs	4.533				
	Z1.3 Motivation towards social needs	4.517				
	Z1.4 Motivation towards esteem needs	4.156				
	Z1.5 Motivation towards the need for self-actualization	4.522				
Work Climate	Z2.1 Perceptions of policies and procedures	4.067	4.189	0.157	4.033	4.378
	Z2.2 Perception of goals and objectives	4.033				
	Z2.3 Perceptions of teacher needs and expectations	4.133				
	Z2.4 Perception of values and norms	4.333				
	Z2.5 Perceptions of coworkers and superiors	4.378				
Teacher Performance (Y)	Y1.1 Achievement of learning objectives	4.478	4.442	0.042	4.4	4.478
	Y1.2 Student activity in learning	4.411				
	Y1.3 Students' understanding of learning material	4.478				
	Y1.4 Improved student learning outcomes	4.400				

Table 1 depicts a description of the research variables which include democratic leadership style, work motivation, work climate, and teacher performance at the Al Karim Islamic Education Foundation. In the democratic leadership style variable, indicators such as openness, participation, delegation and fairness have a fairly high average, namely around 4.341 with a low standard deviation (0.077), indicating that teachers' perceptions of the democratic leadership style at this foundation are very positive and consistent. The delegation indicator has the highest average value (4.378), indicating that task delegation is the most dominant aspect of the leadership style at this foundation.

The work motivation variable also shows positive results with a total mean of 4.363 and a standard deviation of 0.221, indicating high work motivation among teachers. Motivation towards security needs had the highest average (4.533), indicating that job security is highly valued. In the work climate variable, the indicator of perceptions about coworkers and superiors has the highest average (4.378), indicating that interpersonal relations in the workplace are very good. Finally, teacher performance is measured through achievement of learning objectives, student activity, student understanding of the material, and improvement in student learning outcomes, with a total average of 4.442 and a standard deviation of 0.042, indicating that overall teacher performance is very good, with indicators of achievement of learning objectives and students' understanding of the most prominent material.

### Structural Equation Modeling Partial Least Square

The next stage is to test the hypothesis using Structural Equation Modeling Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS). At this stage, the variables and indicators in the research are formed into a structural equation model that is in accordance with the research conceptual framework, then an evaluation of the research model is carried out. The following are the results of the structural equation model of this research.

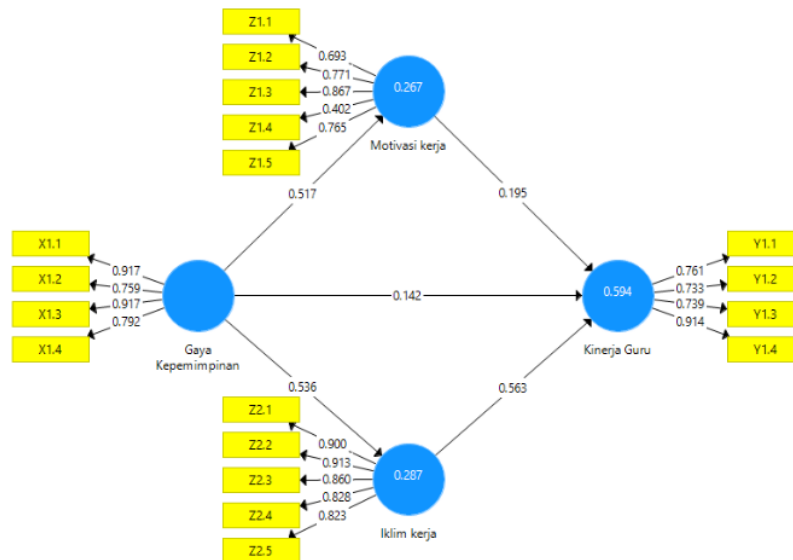


Figure 2. Structural equation model results

The results of the structural equation model in Figure 2 show that almost all variable indicators have a loading factor value of more than 0.50 (valid) except for the Z1.4 indicator where the indicator has a loading value of 0.405 so the indicator is declared invalid. Based on this, the Z1.4 indicator is eliminated from the equation model so that the structural equation model is obtained as follows

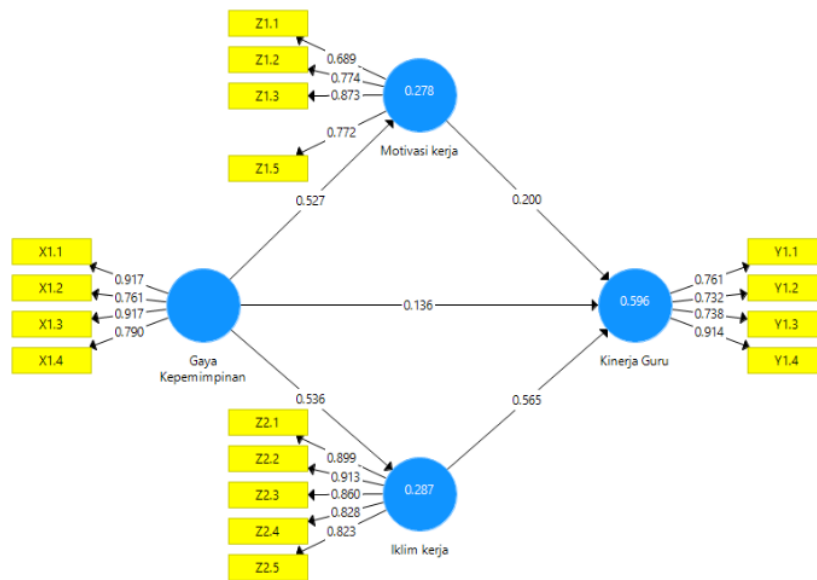


Figure 3. Results of the revised structural equation model

#### Outer model inspection

The initial stage in SEM-PLS is examining the outer model, which aims to ensure that the indicators used to measure each latent variable are valid and reliable.

Table 2. Examination of Outer model and AVE

Indicator	Outer loading	AVE
X1.1	0.917	0.721
X1.2	0.761	
X1.3	0.917	
X1.4	0.790	
Y1.1	0.761	0.749
Y1.2	0.741	
Y1.3	0.738	
Y1.4	0.914	
Z1.1	0.689	0.624
Z1.2	0.774	
Z1.3	0.873	
Z1.5	0.772	
Z2.1	0.889	0.608
Z2.2	0.913	
Z2.3	0.860	
Z2.4	0.828	
Z2.5	0.823	

Based on Table 2, the outer loading values for all variable indicators are above the minimum threshold of 0.50, which shows that these indicators have a strong contribution in measuring each latent variable. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value also shows adequate



results, with all variables having an AVE value above 0.50, which indicates good convergent consistency.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity Evaluation (Fornell Lacker Criterion)

	X1	Z2	Y	Z1
<b>Leadership Style (X1)</b>	0.849			
<b>Working climate (Z2)</b>	0.536	0.866		
<b>Teacher Performance (Y)</b>	0.544	0.733	0.790	
<b>Work motivation (Z1)</b>	0.527	0.475	0.540	0.780

Table 3 displays the results of checking discriminant validity using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion. Based on these results, all variables have a square root AVE value (diagonal value) that is greater than the correlation between other variables (off-diagonal value), which shows that each latent variable is more correlated with its own indicators than with the variable indicators. other latent. This confirms that discriminant validity for this model has been met.

Table 4. Reliability Check

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Information
Leadership Style (X1)	0.868	0.911	Reliable
Working climate (Z2)	0.916	0.937	Reliable
Teacher Performance (Y)	0.795	0.868	Reliable
Work motivation (Z1)	0.784	0.861	Reliable

Next, Table 4 shows the results of the reliability check. All variables show Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values that exceed the threshold of 0.70, which indicates that all variables have high internal reliability. Overall, the results of the outer model examination show that the measurement model in this study has good validity and reliability, making it possible to proceed to the structural model testing stage.

#### Inner Model Evaluation

After examining the outer model which shows adequate validity and reliability, the next step in the Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) analysis is examining the inner model. This examination involves evaluating the R Square, Q Square, and Goodness of Fit (GoF) values to assess the quality of the structural model as well as the predictive ability of endogenous latent variables.

Table 5. Inner model

Variable	R Square	Q Square	GoF
Work climate	0.287	0.792	0.561
Teacher Performance	0.596		
Work motivation	0.278		

Table 5 shows the results of examining the inner model. The R Square values for the variables Work Climate, Teacher Performance, and Work Motivation are 0.287, 0.596, and 0.278 respectively. This value shows that the exogenous variables in the model can explain 28.7% of the variability in work climate, 59.6% of the variability in teacher performance, a 27.8% of the variability in work motivation. Based on Chin's (1998) criteria, an R Square value of 0.19 is considered weak, 0.33 moderate, and 0.67 strong. Therefore, the R Square value for these variables

shows that the model has moderate to strong explanatory power. Furthermore, the Q Square value for work climate is 0.792, indicating that the model has very good predictive ability for this variable, because a Q Square value greater than 0.5 indicates relevant prediction. A Goodness of Fit (GoF) of 0.561 indicates that the overall model has a good fit, because a <sup>13</sup>F above 0.36 is considered large according to the criteria of Tenenhaus et al. (2004). Thus, the results of the inner model examination show that the structural model used in this research is of good quality and is able to explain and predict the variability of endogenous latent variables effectively.

#### Hypothesis test

The final step in SEM-PLS analysis is hypothesis testing to evaluate the direct effect and indirect effect between variables in the research model. This test was carried out to test the hypothesis that had been previously formulated and to understand the causal relationship between the variables studied. This hypothesis testing is carried out to test the direct and indirect influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Table 6 presents the results of the direct effect test involving the hypothesized relationship between democratic leadership style (X1), work motivation (Z1), work climate (Z2), and teacher performance (Y).

Table 6. Direct effect test results

Hypothesis	Path	Coefficient	St. Dev	T Stat	P Values	Information
H1	X1 → Z1	0.527	0.106	4,951	0,000	Ha accepted
H2	X1 → Z2	0.536	0.109	4,913	0,000	Ha accepted
H3	X1 → Y	0.136	0.164	0.827	0.409	Ha rejected
H4	Z1 → Y	0.2 00	0.134	1,494	0.136	Ha rejected
H5	Z2 → Y	<sup>4</sup> 0.565	0.120	4,706	0,000	Ha accepted

Description: X1: Democratic leadership style; Z1: Work motivation; Z2: Work climate; Y: Teacher performance <sup>4</sup>

Table 6 shows the results of the direct effect test. The interpretation of the direct effect test results is as follows: <sup>5</sup>

- Hypothesis H1 which tests the influence of democratic leadership style (X1) on work motivation (Z1) shows a path coefficient of 0.527 with a T value of 4.951 and a P value of 0.000. This value shows that H1 is accepted, which means that democratic leadership style has a significant positive effect on work motivation.
- Hypothesis H2 which tests the influence of democratic leadership style (X1) on work climate (Z2) shows a path coefficient of 0.536 with a T value of 4.913 and a P value of 0.000. This indicates that H2 is accepted, so that democratic leadership style has a significant positive effect on work climate.
- Hypothesis H3 which tests the influence of democratic leadership style (X1) on teacher performance (Y) shows a path coefficient of 0.136 with a T value of 0.827 and <sup>6</sup>a P value of 0.409. Based on these results, H3 is rejected, which means that democratic leadership style has no significant effect on teacher <sup>7</sup>performance.
- Hypothesis H4 which tests the influence of work motivation (Z1) on teacher performance (Y) shows a path coefficient of 0.200 with a T value of 1.494 and a P value of 0.136. This shows that H4 is rejected, which means work motivation has no significant effect on teacher performance.
- Hypothesis H5 which tests the influence of work climate (Z2) on teacher performance (Y) shows a path coefficient of 0.565 with a T value of 4.706 and <sup>7</sup>a P value of 0.000. These results indicate that H5 is accepted, so that work climate has a significant positive effect on teacher performance.

Thus, from the results of direct effect testing, it can be concluded that the democratic leadership style has a significant influence on work motivation and work climate, while the work

climate has a significant influence on teacher performance. However, the influence of democratic leadership style and work motivation on teacher performance is not significant.

Table 6. Indirect effect test results

Hypothesis	Path	coefficient	St. Dev	T Stat	P Values	Information
H6	X1 → Z1 → Y	0.106	0.086	1,229	0.220	Ha rejected
H7	X1 → Z2 → Y	0.302	0.096	3,150	0.002	Ha accepted

Description: X1: Democratic leadership style; Z1: Work motivation; Z2: Work climate; Y: Teacher performance

Hypothesis testing in SEM-PLS includes not only direct effects but also indirect effects to understand the mediating influence between variables. Table 6 presents the results of the indirect effect test which includes coefficient values, standard deviation, T value and P value to identify whether the hypothesis is accepted or rejected.

The interpretation of the indirect effect test results is as follows:

- Hypothesis H6 which tests the indirect influence of democratic leadership style (X1) on teacher performance (Y) through work motivation (Z1) shows a path coefficient of 0.106 with a T value of 1.229 and a P value of 0.220. This value indicates that H6 is rejected, which means work motivation does not significantly mediate the influence of democratic leadership style on teacher performance.
- Hypothesis H7 which tests the indirect influence of democratic leadership style (X1) on teacher performance (Y) through work climate (Z2) shows a path coefficient of 0.302 with a T value of 3.150 and a P value of 0.002. This indicates that H7 is accepted, so that work climate significantly mediates the influence of democratic leadership style on teacher performance.

Thus, from the results of indirect effect testing, it can be concluded that work climate significantly mediates the influence of democratic leadership style on teacher performance, while work motivation does not mediate this influence. These results indicate that work climate plays an important role in bridging the relationship between democratic leadership style and teacher performance.

### 3.2. Discussion

The results of the H1 hypothesis test show that democratic leadership style (X1) has a significant effect on work motivation (Z1). Based on these results, hypothesis H1 is accepted, which means that the application of a democratic leadership style significantly increases teacher work motivation. These results indicate that when leaders provide opportunities for teachers to participate in decision making, show openness, delegate tasks well, and act fairly, teachers' work motivation increases. This is consistent with the leadership theory put forward by Yukl (2013), which states that democratic leadership can increase employee commitment and motivation through participation and openness in decision making.

Support for the results of this research can also be found in previous research. Research by (Sukiyanto & Maulidah, 2020) (Hadromi, 2017) and (Caksana, 2019) who found that democratic leadership style positively influences work motivation and employee performance in the educational context. This is in line with the results of this research which show that a democratic leadership style contributes significantly to increasing teacher work motivation at the Al Karim Islamic Education Foundation. Apart from that, Robbins & Judge (2017) also stated that the involvement of members in decision making and recognition of their contributions are key factors in increasing work motivation. Therefore, the results of this study support existing literature and



strengthen the importance of implementing a democratic leadership style in an educational context to increase teacher work motivation.

The results of the H2 hypothesis test show that the democratic leadership style (X1) has a significant effect on the work climate (Z2) with the results of the H2 hypothesis being accepted, which means that the application of a democratic leadership style significantly improves the work climate. These results show that when leaders act democratically by providing opportunities for teachers to participate in decision making, openness, good delegation of tasks, and acting fairly, the work climate in the educational environment becomes more positive. This is in line with the leadership theory put forward by Yukl (2013), which states that democratic leadership can create a conducive work climate through participation and openness. These results are in line with previous research which states that democratic leadership style positively influences the work climate of an organization (Enny Trisnayanti & Rahyuda, 2017; Fitri & Syamsir, 2011). In addition, Robbins and Judge (2017) stated that a positive work climate can be formed through employee involvement in decision making and recognition of their contributions, which are characteristics of democratic leadership. Therefore, the results of this study support existing literature and strengthen the importance of implementing a democratic leadership style in an educational context to create a conducive work climate.

The results of the H3 hypothesis test show that democratic leadership style (X1) does not have a significant effect on teacher performance (Y) so that hypothesis H3 is rejected, which means that the application of a democratic leadership style directly does not improve teacher performance at the Al Karim Islamic Education Foundation. This indicates that although democratic leadership provides freedom and participation to teachers, other factors may have a more direct influence on teacher performance. According to Bass and Avolio (1994), individual performance in organizations is not only influenced by leadership style but also by motivation, organizational support, and work environment (Bass & Avolio, 1994). A study by (House & Aditya, 1997) also found that a democratic leadership style was more effective in influencing intermediate variables such as motivation and job satisfaction than direct performance. Therefore, the results of this study are consistent with the literature which states that the influence of democratic leadership style on performance may be more complex and indirect, requiring the mediation of other variables such as work motivation and work climate to be able to have a significant impact on teacher performance.

The results of the H4 hypothesis test show that there is no significant influence between work motivation (Z1) on teacher performance (Y). The resulting path coefficient is 0.200, with a T value of 1.494 and a P value of 0.136. Therefore, hypothesis H4 is rejected, which indicates that work motivation does not have a significant influence on teacher performance at the Al Karim Islamic Education Foundation. These results indicate that although work motivation is important, in this context, work motivation is not enough to directly improve teacher performance without the support of other factors that may be more influential. These results contradict research by (Siska, 2017) and (Riyadi & Mulyapradana, 2017) which found that work motivation can improve teacher performance. This finding is in line with management theories which state that work motivation is one of many factors that influence individual performance. According to Maslow (1943), work motivation that only focuses on fulfilling basic needs may not be sufficient to improve performance if higher level needs are not met. Meanwhile, Robbins and Judge (2017) stated that work performance is not only influenced by motivation, but also by individual abilities and the work environment. Therefore, the results of this study emphasize the importance of a holistic approach in understanding the factors that influence teacher performance.

The results of the H5 hypothesis test show that there is a significant influence between work climate (Z2) on teacher performance (Y) at the Al Karim Islamic Education Foundation. The resulting path coefficient is 0.565, with a T value of 4.706 and a P value of 0.000. This indicates

that a conducive work climate has an important role in improving teacher performance. A good work climate creates a supportive environment, where teachers feel valued, supported, and have good working relationships with colleagues and superiors. This finding is supported by management theory which states that a positive work climate can improve an individual's performance. According to Schein (2004) a conducive work climate can increase motivation and commitment, which ultimately improves their performance. Previous research also shows that a good work climate is related to increased teacher (Hamsah et al., 2019; Khomarunizar et al., 2022; Utami, 2023). Robbins and Judge (2017) added that a supportive work climate can reduce stress and increase job satisfaction, which directly contributes to increased performance. Therefore, the results of this study emphasize the importance of creating and maintaining a positive work climate to improve teacher performance.

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The results of hypothesis testing H6 show that there is an insignificant effect of democratic leadership style (X1) on teacher performance (Y) through work motivation (Z1). The resulting path coefficient is 0.106, with a T value of 1.229 and a P value of 0.220. Therefore, hypothesis H6 is rejected, which indicates that work motivation is not a significant mediator between democratic leadership style and teacher performance at the Al Karim Islamic Education Foundation. These findings illustrate that other factors may be more dominant in influencing teacher performance in these institutions, apart from work motivation induced by a democratic leadership style. Support for these findings can be found in management theories which emphasize that work motivation is not the only variable that influences the relationship between leadership style and performance. According to Herzberg et al. (1959), motivational factors such as achievement, recognition, and responsibility can influence an individual's intrinsic motivation, which in turn can influence performance. Research by Deci et al. (1999) also showed that intrinsic motivation arising from an individual's need for autonomy, competence, and social relationships has a significant impact on performance. Therefore, the results of this study are consistent with the view that work motivation is not always a strong mediator between leadership style and performance, especially if other intrinsic motivational factors also play a role.

The results of hypothesis testing H7 show that there is a significant mediating influence between democratic leadership style (X1) and teacher performance (Y) through work climate (Z2). The resulting path coefficient is 0.302, with a T value of 3.150 and a P value of 0.002. This shows that a democratic leadership style contributes to improving teacher performance indirectly through creating a positive work climate. This means that leaders who apply a democratic leadership style are able to create a conducive work environment, which then improves teacher performance. These findings are consistent with management theory which emphasizes the importance of leadership style in creating a positive work climate. According to Yukl (2017), a democratic leadership style can increase participation, trust, and communication in an organization, all of which contribute to a better work climate. Additionally, research by Schneider et al. (2013) also show that a positive work climate can mediate the relationship between leadership style and employee performance. This is also in line with Robbins and Judge (2017) who state that democratic leaders are able to increase work satisfaction and motivation through creating a supportive work environment, which ultimately has a positive impact on employee performance.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the analysis that has been carried out, it can be concluded that several main findings from this research examine the influence of democratic leadership style, work motivation and work climate on teacher performance at MI Al-Karim Surabaya. First, hypothesis H1 shows that democratic leadership style has a significant effect on teacher work motivation, which indicates that openness, participation, delegation and fairness in leadership can increase teacher motivation. Second, the results of hypothesis testing H2 confirm that democratic



leadership style also has a significant effect on work climate, indicating that inclusive and fair leadership creates a conducive work environment. However, hypothesis H3 which states that democratic leadership style has a direct effect on teacher performance is rejected, indicating that leadership style does not directly improve performance without the intermediary of motivation or work climate. This is in line with the results of hypothesis H4, where work motivation has no direct significant effect on teacher performance, indicating that work motivation alone is not enough to directly improve teacher performance. In contrast, hypothesis H5 shows that work climate has a significant effect on teacher performance, showing the importance of a supportive work environment in improving performance. Furthermore, the results of hypotheses H6 and H7 show the mediating influence of work climate in the relationship between democratic leadership style and teacher performance. Hypothesis H6 is rejected, indicating that work motivation does not mediate the relationship between democratic leadership style and teacher performance. However, hypothesis H7 is accepted, indicating that work climate mediates this relationship. This strengthens the finding that good leadership creates a positive work climate, which in turn improves teacher performance.

Overall, this research emphasizes the importance of a democratic leadership style in creating work motivation and a positive work climate, which ultimately contributes to improving teacher performance. These findings are in line with management theories and previous research which highlight the important role of leaders in creating a supportive work environment to achieve better performance.

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