

Strategies for Strengthening Organisational Culture to Enhance Institutional Competitiveness

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ABSTRACT. Organisational culture is one of the strategic factors that plays a role in improving the quality and competitiveness of educational institutions. However, research on strengthening organisational culture remains largely fragmented and has not yet systematically integrated the dimension of values with the mechanisms for their implementation. This study aims to analyse and synthesise various pieces of literature on organisational culture and to formulate a strategic model for strengthening organisational culture within the context of educational institutions. This study employs a literature review approach, analysing various relevant academic sources, including books and articles from national and international journals. The findings indicate that organisational culture does not directly influence the performance and competitiveness of educational institutions, but rather through mediating variables such as instructional practices, school climate and professional commitment. Furthermore, the effectiveness of organisational culture is also influenced by contextual factors such as environmental demands and institutional characteristics. Based on a synthesis of these findings, this study formulates an alignment-based model for strengthening organisational culture, comprising four key dimensions: the articulation of core values, the internalisation of values, the institutionalisation of systems, and organisational adaptation and learning, with leadership as the primary driving factor. This research makes a conceptual contribution by integrating the dimensions of values, practices and organisational systems into a single, comprehensive strategic framework. It is hoped that the resulting model will serve as a guide for educational institution managers in developing an organisational culture that is effective, adaptive and competitive in the face of the dynamic changes in the educational environment.

Keyword: Organisational culture, institutional competitiveness

Abstrak Budaya organisasi merupakan salah satu faktor strategis yang berperan dalam meningkatkan mutu dan daya saing lembaga pendidikan. Namun, kajian mengenai penguatan budaya organisasi masih cenderung parsial dan belum mengintegrasikan dimensi nilai dengan mekanisme implementasinya secara sistematis. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis dan mensintesis berbagai literatur terkait budaya organisasi serta merumuskan model strategis penguatan budaya organisasi dalam konteks lembaga pendidikan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kajian literatur (*literature review*) dengan menganalisis berbagai sumber ilmiah yang relevan, baik berupa buku maupun artikel jurnal nasional dan internasional. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa budaya organisasi tidak secara langsung memengaruhi kinerja dan daya saing lembaga pendidikan, melainkan melalui variabel mediasi seperti praktik instruksional, iklim sekolah, dan komitmen profesional. Selain itu, efektivitas budaya organisasi juga dipengaruhi oleh faktor kontekstual seperti tuntutan lingkungan dan karakteristik institusi. Berdasarkan sintesis temuan tersebut, penelitian ini merumuskan model strategi penguatan budaya organisasi berbasis keselarasan (*alignment-based model*) yang mencakup empat dimensi utama, yaitu artikulasi nilai inti, internalisasi nilai, institusionalisasi sistem, serta

adaptasi dan pembelajaran organisasi, dengan kepemimpinan sebagai faktor penggerak utama. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi konseptual dalam mengintegrasikan dimensi nilai, praktik, dan sistem organisasi ke dalam satu kerangka strategis yang utuh. Model yang dihasilkan diharapkan dapat menjadi acuan bagi pengelola lembaga pendidikan dalam mengembangkan budaya organisasi yang efektif, adaptif, dan berdaya saing dalam menghadapi dinamika perubahan lingkungan pendidikan.

Kata Kunci: *Budaya organisasi, daya saing institusi*

Introduction

In an era of globalisation and disruption characterised by rapid change across various sectors, institutions are required to be highly competitive and adaptable (Ambarwati dkk., 2025; Sunardi, 2025). An institution's competitiveness is determined not only by physical and financial resources, but also by intangible internal factors, one of which is organisational culture. Organisational culture plays a strategic role in influencing the way individuals think, act and interact in pursuit of the organisation's objectives (Amalia & Subiyantoro, 2025). Therefore, strengthening organisational culture is regarded as one of the key strategies for enhancing an institution's competitive advantage.

Organisational culture reflects the system of values, norms, beliefs and underlying assumptions that are developed and shared by the organisation's members. These values not only shape the organisation's identity, but also play a role in fostering commitment, improving performance and strengthening internal cohesion (Rismawati & Nugraha, 2025). In an increasingly complex competitive environment, organisations with a strong organisational culture tend to be better able to adapt to changes in their environment and ensure their survival. This is consistent with the findings (Anggitasari & Utami, 2026; Pamuji & Aditya, 2026) which shows that organisations with a strong culture that is aligned with their strategy achieve superior long-term performance.

In line with that view, (Hasanah dkk., 2023; Masrufa & Qomaria, 2023) argues that the effectiveness of organisational culture is closely linked to performance through the dimensions of engagement, consistency, adaptability and mission. In the same context, (Lu & Chen, 2025) concludes that an organisational culture that encourages innovation, collaboration and a results-oriented approach will strengthen the organisation's ability to respond proactively to change. These findings are further supported by more recent studies, such as research (Baharun dkk., 2025) which indicates a significant relationship between organisational culture type and performance effectiveness, as well as studies (Sharma, 2024) which highlights that an adaptive organisational culture is a key determinant in enhancing an institution's resilience and competitiveness amidst dynamic change.

However, not all organisations are able to manage and strengthen their organisational culture effectively. Various challenges, such as resistance to change, weak internalisation of values, and a

mismatch between espoused values and organisational practices, are still frequently encountered. This situation indicates that strengthening organisational culture requires a systematic and sustainable strategy, involving visionary leadership, effective organisational communication, and the integration of cultural values into managerial systems and practices (Muntaha & Asyhari, 2025; Zohriah dkk., 2025).

Based on the above, strengthening organisational culture is not merely a normative requirement, but also a managerial strategy with direct implications for enhancing an institution's competitiveness. Therefore, this article aims to comprehensively examine various concepts, approaches, and strategies for strengthening organisational culture through a literature review. It is hoped that this approach will provide a deeper understanding whilst identifying relevant best practices for application across various institutional contexts.

Method

This study employs a narrative review approach, which aims to identify, analyse and synthesise various concepts and research findings relating to organisational culture within the context of educational institutions and its implications for institutional competitiveness. This approach was chosen as it enables the researcher to develop a comprehensive and integrative understanding of various theoretical and empirical perspectives in the field of educational management and leadership (Snyder, 2024).

The data used is secondary data sourced from academic books and scientific journal articles relevant to educational organisational culture, school culture, and the effectiveness of educational institutions. The literature review was conducted using databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science, employing the keywords 'school culture', 'educational leadership', 'school effectiveness', and 'institutional competitiveness'. The literature was restricted to publications from the past 10-20 years to ensure the study's relevance, whilst still including foundational works such as (Schein, 2010) as well as a study of school culture by (Deal & Peterson, 2009).

The literature selection process was carried out systematically using inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria comprised: (1) articles discussing organisational culture in an educational context, (2) those published in credible scientific journals or academic books, and (3) those relevant to improving the quality, performance, or competitiveness of educational institutions. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria encompassed literature that was not directly relevant to the topic or lacked a clear scientific basis. Through this process, a body of literature was identified, which was then analysed in depth to produce a conceptual synthesis.

Data analysis was conducted using content analysis techniques, involving the stages of data reduction, categorisation and synthesis. The selected literature was grouped into key themes such as the characteristics of educational organisational culture, the role of leadership in building culture,

and strategies for strengthening organisational culture. Subsequently, a synthesis was carried out to identify patterns of relationships between concepts and their implications for enhancing the competitiveness of educational institutions (Miles dkk., 2018). To ensure the reliability of the data, this study employed source triangulation by comparing various relevant and credible references, thereby ensuring that the findings are academically sound.

Research Findings and Discussion

Research Findings

Following a literature review, a number of reputable academic articles were identified and subsequently analysed thematically. In general, the findings indicate that organisational culture is a key determinant in enhancing the effectiveness and competitiveness of educational institutions, although there are variations in the emphasis placed on its dimensions and mechanisms of influence across different studies. Organisational culture in an educational context is understood as a system of values, beliefs and practices that are internalised within school life and shape the collective behaviour of the institution's members (Deal & Peterson, 2009; Schein, 2010).

The first theme that emerged was the characteristics of the organisational culture in educational institutions. Most studies indicate that an effective organisational culture is characterised by collaborative values, a commitment to quality, and a focus on continuous learning. Such a culture creates a conducive learning environment and strengthens the institution's identity. However, some research also indicates that not all educational institutions succeed in consistently internalising these values, resulting in a gap between formal values and actual practice on the ground. This suggests that the strength of culture lies not only in the formulation of values, but in the degree to which they are internalised and consistently applied in organisational practice.

The second theme concerns the role of leadership in shaping and strengthening organisational culture. The majority of the literature emphasises that leadership has a significant influence on the direction and strength of organisational culture. Leaders act as cultural agents who instil, maintain and transform organisational values through policies, setting an example and communication. Study (Leithwood dkk., 2006) shows that effective leadership contributes indirectly to learning outcomes by fostering a positive school culture. In line with this, other research also suggests that transformational leadership tends to be more effective in strengthening organisational culture than transactional leadership, particularly in promoting innovation and collective commitment.

The third theme is the relationship between organisational culture and the performance and competitiveness of educational institutions. Most of the research findings indicate a positive correlation between a strong organisational culture and improved institutional performance, in both academic and non-academic aspects. An adaptive and results-oriented culture has been shown

to improve the quality of educational services, stakeholder satisfaction, and public trust. However, some studies have also found that the influence of organisational culture on performance is not always direct, but is mediated by other factors such as leadership, work motivation, and organisational climate. This suggests that organisational culture is a strategic variable that operates systemically in enhancing the competitiveness of educational institutions.

The fourth theme concerns strategies for strengthening organisational culture within educational institutions. The literature indicates that organisational culture is strengthened through various approaches, including the internalisation of values through routine and symbolic activities, the reinforcement of leadership roles, the establishment of value-based working practices, and the integration of culture into the institution's management systems and policies (Solechan dkk., 2024). Furthermore, the involvement of the entire school community and effective organisational communication are also key factors in maintaining cultural sustainability. Several studies emphasise that participatory and context-specific strategies for cultural reinforcement are more effective than top-down approaches.

Overall, the results of the literature review reveal a relatively consistent pattern indicating that organisational culture makes a significant contribution to improving the quality and competitiveness of educational institutions. Nevertheless, there are variations in the mechanisms of influence and implementation strategies, suggesting that the effectiveness of organisational culture is highly dependent on the institutional context, the quality of leadership, and the degree to which values are internalised within the organisation.

Discussion

A review of various studies indicates that organisational culture in educational institutions cannot be regarded as a single variable that directly influences performance, but rather as a steering mechanism that shapes the effectiveness of organisational and learning practices. Referring to the view (Schein, 2010), Organisational culture operates through the interplay between observable aspects, held values and underlying assumptions. In an educational context, this interplay is reflected in the consistency between the institution's values and its teaching practices, as well as the professional interactions of the school community (Afif dkk., 2025).

Empirically, the relationship between organisational culture and the performance of educational institutions is indirect and conditional. Findings (Juliawati dkk., 2024; Muthi'ah dkk., 2025) indicates that organisational effectiveness is influenced by cultural type; however, in the

context of education, this influence is mediated by instructional practices, school climate and professional commitment. Furthermore, the alignment between organisational culture and environmental demands (culture-strategy fit) is a key factor in determining an institution’s competitiveness (Campbell dkk., 2026).

However, most of the literature still distinguishes between the value dimension and the implementation mechanisms, and thus has not yet provided a comprehensive operational framework for how organisational culture can be systematically strengthened within educational institutions. Another limitation lies in the dominance of studies within the context of general education, meaning they do not yet fully represent the diversity of institutions, including value-based institutions such as madrasahs and pesantren. Therefore, an integrative model is required that not only explains ‘what culture is’, but also ‘how culture is operationalised and developed sustainably’. Based on this synthesis and critique, this article formulates an alignment-based model for strengthening the organisational culture in education, as illustrated in the following figure:

Model for Strengthening Organizational Culture in Education

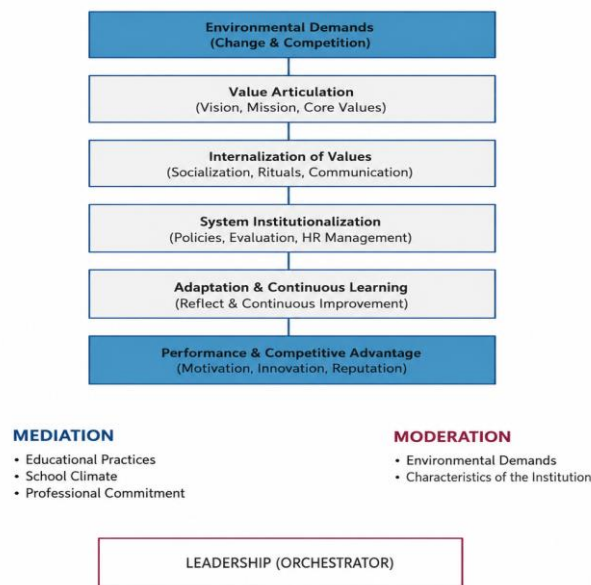


Figure 1. A Strategic Model for Strengthening the Organisational Culture of Education Based on Alignment

Once this model has been presented, it can be explained that the strengthening of organisational culture begins with the articulation of core values that serve as the institution’s strategic foundation. These values are then internalised through social practices such as leadership by example, organisational rituals, and the normalisation of collective behaviour. The

internalisation process is key as it determines the extent to which values can be translated into concrete actions within the life of the educational institution.

The next stage is the institutionalisation of culture, namely the integration of values into managerial systems such as policies, performance evaluations, and professional development. At this stage, organisational culture is no longer merely symbolic, but becomes an operational mechanism that guides organisational behaviour. Furthermore, through organisational learning, the institution engages in data-driven reflection and continuous adaptation to ensure that the culture remains relevant to changes in the environment (Humaira dkk., 2026; Ubaidillah & Hresnawanza, 2025).

This model also emphasises that the influence of culture on performance and competitiveness is not direct, but is mediated by instructional practices, school climate, and professional commitment. Meanwhile, contextual factors such as environmental demands and institutional characteristics act as moderating variables that influence the strength of these relationships. Throughout the process, leadership functions as a strategic orchestrator, ensuring alignment between the organisation's values, practices, and systems.

Conceptually, this model makes a conceptual contribution by integrating the dimensions of values, implementation mechanisms, and organisational context into a single, coherent framework. Organisational culture is understood not merely as the institution's identity, but as a dynamic strategy that can be operationalised to enhance the quality and competitiveness of educational institutions on a sustainable basis.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the literature review and conceptual synthesis, it can be concluded that organisational culture is a strategic element that plays a vital role in improving the quality and competitiveness of educational institutions. However, the influence of organisational culture on institutional performance is not direct, but is mediated by instructional practices, school climate, and professional commitment. Furthermore, the effectiveness of organisational culture is also influenced by contextual factors such as environmental demands and institutional characteristics, thereby emphasising that culture must be adaptive and contextual.

This article offers a conceptual contribution through the formulation of an alignment-based model for strengthening organisational culture, which integrates four main dimensions: the articulation of core values, the internalisation of values, the institutionalisation of systems, and organisational adaptation and learning. This model emphasises that the success of organisational culture strengthening lies in the alignment between values, practices, and organisational systems, with leadership as a key factor acting as an orchestrator in maintaining consistency and the direction of cultural implementation.

The implications of these findings suggest that educational institutions need to develop strategies for strengthening organisational culture that are not only focused on establishing values, but also on systematic and sustainable implementation. An organisational culture that is strongly internalised and integrated into the management system will become a source of competitive advantage capable of improving the quality of educational services, strengthening public trust, and addressing the dynamics of change in the educational environment.

This article emphasises that the strengthening of organisational culture is not merely a normative process, but a planned and sustainable managerial strategy. It is hoped that the model presented here can serve as both a conceptual framework and a practical reference for educational institution managers in developing an organisational culture that is effective, adaptive, and competitive.

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