

Teachers' Work Culture in an Islamic Junior High School in Lampung, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Islamic Junior High School also known as *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* was introduced to the Indonesian education system to produce quality education. But in reality, the quality of education is still low. One of the reasons for this phenomenon is the performance of teachers which is below standard. One of the factors to elevate these standards is to improve the ethics of work culture. Work culture is a set of behavioral patterns that are inherent in almost every individual in an organization. Building a culture also means improving and maintaining positive sides. This study was conducted with Focus Group Discussion and interviews with teachers, leaders, school committees, staff and students from three different schools to see how the cultural values such as integrity, professionalism, innovation, responsibility and exemplariness were utilized. Based on the results, it was observed that the results were far from satisfactory. The reasons for this were lack of communication, limited human resources in the field of technology, and poor understanding of rules and applicable laws. Therefore, it is pertinent for the Ministry of Religious Affairs and *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* to work closely to ensure a good working environment is achieved.

Keywords: Integrity, Islamic junior high school, Madrasah Tsanawiyah, professionalism, innovation, responsibility, exemplariness

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INTRODUCTION

According to the Director General of Islamic Education Ministry of Religion, the low quality of education in Indonesia, both education in Islamic schools (*madrasah*) and public schools, is due to the low quality

of teachers (“Kualitas guru”, 2015). As part of the government’s initiative, the Ministry of Religious Affairs has sought to overcome these problems by establishing quality madrasah.

In addition, *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* boots the existence of a quality and a positive work culture. Work culture is a system of disseminating trust and values that develop in an organization and directs the behaviour of all members of the organization. Organizational culture refers to a system of shared meanings adopted by members that distinguish the organization from other organizations. Budi Paramita (as cited in Ndraha, 2005) defined work culture as a group of basic thoughts or mental programmes that could be used to improve work efficiency and human cooperation shared by a group of people. Work culture is a combination of qualities in an organization and its employees that arise from what is generally regarded as appropriate ways to think and act (Manju, 2013).

Furthermore, work culture is generally a philosophical concept that brings people together in an organization and motivates them to deliver their level best. Such work culture binds students and teachers in *Madrasah Tsanawiyah*. By standardizing work culture, with certain applicable rules and regulations, the leaders and teachers will indirectly be bound so that they can form attitudes and behaviours in accordance with *Madrasah Tsanawiyah*’s mission and vision. The formation process will ultimately produce professional leaders and teachers who have high integrity.

Building teacher performance must be with emotional intelligence, motivation and professional leadership that will become part of the school culture (Patimah, 2018). It is defined as the basis of assumptions, norms and values, and the culture of artifacts distributed by school members, which can affect school functions (Maslowski, 2001). The values and goals of a school are held together through assistance and cooperation among school community, who together plan for the future, and jointly solve the problems faced (Germiston & Wellman, as cited in Zamroni, 2016).

Based on a previous survey of *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* in Lampung Province, it was found that the implementation of work culture did not run optimally, as evidenced by teachers who did not comply with work discipline, displayed tardiness and attitudes of non-compliance to uphold the school’s mandate to carry out their duties and obligations as a teacher, as well as behaviour that reflected non exemplary values and attitudes in teaching and learning activities. In terms of productivity, teachers only rely on textbooks provided by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Religious Affairs as learning resources, with limited use of audio-visual aids in their teaching. During this time, many teachers who were already civil servants were too late to apply for promotions because of difficulties in publishing scientific papers, a requirement for promotion.

Further research on the work culture of *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* teachers is necessary to provide a comprehensive description of the

application of values, rules, philosophy and behaviour habits of *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* teachers as stated in the five values of the work culture of the Ministry of Religion. Based on the research background above, this study aims to answer the following research question: How is the work culture (integrity, professionalism, innovation, responsibility and exemplariness) of *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* teachers in Lampung Province?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Indonesian word for culture is derived from the Sanskrit term, *budhayah* which means the power of the mind. In Widagdo's (2004) words, "culture is the power of the mind in the form of creativity, intention, and taste. Hence culture or the development of culture is the result of creativity, intention, and taste." According to Nurkholis (2006), culture is basic assumptions and beliefs among members of groups or organizations. Additionally, Fattah (2000) defined culture as a mental attitude and old habits that were inherent in every activity and work. Zamroni (2000) considered culture as a view of life that was shared by a community or group that included ways of thinking, behaving, attitudes, and values that were reflected both in physical and abstract forms. Likewise, according to Komariah and Triatna (2008) culture is a way of life that embodies values, norms, habits, work, experiences, and traditions rooted in a society and which influences the attitudes and behaviour of each person or community.

Thus there are several elements that

must be fulfilled so that they are referred to as culture; specifically, culture is the result of human thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about something; culture is a habit or belief that becomes a guideline or view of human life; and culture influences the behaviour of human life itself. In community life or organization, humans need a work culture as a set of behavioural patterns that are inherent in each and every individual in an organization. Building a culture also means improving and maintaining positive aspects, and trying to get used to (habituating process) certain behavioural patterns in order to create new and better ones. Nawawi (2003) explained that work culture was a habit that was repeatedly carried out by employees in an organization; violation of this habit was not strictly sanctioned but must be adhered to in order to carry out the work to achieve the goal.

Meanwhile, according to Osborn and Plastrik (2003): "Work culture is a set of behaviours and psychological frameworks that are deeply internalized and shared by members of the organization". Thus, work culture is a philosophy where values become the nature, habits, and driving force shared by each individual in the work environment of an organization. If it is associated with the organization, the work culture in the organization shows how organizational values are learned or imposed and declared with the frequent use of certain modes so that people can observe and feel it.

The scope of meaning of each value of the work culture is explained as follows:

1. Discipline: Behaviour that is always

based on applicable rules and norms inside and outside the company. Discipline includes adherence to legislation, procedures, traffic, work time, interacting with partners, and so on.

2. Openness: Readiness to give and receive correct information from and to fellow partners for the benefit of the company.

3. Mutual respect: showing respect for individuals, duties, and responsibilities of other fellow partners.

4. Cooperation: Willingness to give and receive contributions from and/or to partners in achieving company goals and targets (Moekijat, 2006).

The function of work culture aims to build human resource beliefs or instil certain values that underlie or influence consistent attitudes and behaviours, and familiarize staff with a way of working in their respective environments. The existence of a strong belief and commitment reflecting certain values, for example, getting used to quality work according to standards, or according to customer expectations (organization), are effective and productive. The fundamental purpose of work culture is to build human resources that everyone realizes are in a 'customer-supplier' relationship that demands communication with others effectively, efficiently and encouragingly. An individual with high work culture strives to transform traditional communication into the behaviour of modern management so that it implies trust and a spirit of high cooperation and discipline.

According to Ndraha (2005), work

culture can be divided into two elements, namely:

1. Attitudes toward work: the preference for work compared to other activities, such as relaxing, or simply obtaining satisfaction from the business of his own work, or feeling forced to do something only for his survival.

2. Behaviour at work: diligence, dedication, responsibility, caution, thoroughness, strong willingness to learn their duties and obligations, and tendency to help fellow employees.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs has a slogan citing sincere charity as the basis for the culture of existence which must be implemented in all institutions within the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, including *Madrasah Tsanawiyah*. The five basic cultural values are integrity, professionalism, innovation, responsibility, and exemplariness. These five values are then interpreted and elaborated in the form of positive and negative indications. By guiding the 5 values of work culture, all Ministry of Religion members are expected to carry out their duties and functions as well as possible through high-performance and to avoid all forms of violations and irregularities. By applying these values, the school culture will produce good performance and impact the competence of qualified graduates. According to Voronov et al. (2018), such steps must be undertaken through savings and budget financing of the educational function implementation in general and paying more attention to the education quality as well as the results, i.e., graduates' competence and their ability to work.

In 2015, the application of these five values of work culture was simultaneously introduced to the Ministry of Religion throughout Indonesia. The following are the five components of the Ministry of Religion's Work Culture Value (Ministry of Religion, 2017).

1. Integrity

Integrity is the balancing between heart, mind, words, and actions that are good and right. Integrity is defined as a concept that shows consistency between actions and values and principles. In ethics, integrity is defined as the honesty and truth of one's actions.

2. Professionalism

Professionalism means working in a disciplined, competent and timely manner with optimum results, with competence and expertise. Professional employees must be able to carry out the mandate well in order to obtain optimal processes and results. Managing the tasks and responsibilities to obtain mastery in their field of work, which means being professional in their field.

3. Innovation

It means perfecting existing systems and creating new and better ideas that benefit the community. One must innovate to create new ideas since innovations bring many benefits in accordance with the context.

4. Responsibilities

Responsibility means working thoroughly and consistently. Employees must have the awareness to fulfil their organizational obligations through dedication, hard work, and perseverance.

Ministry of Religion employees must be fully aware that their work must be accounted for. This will fortify their stance to always be on track when carrying out their respective duties. The task that lies ahead is to determine how to be able to improve the Ministry of Religion namely in terms of responsibility towards each other, superiors, the community, and above all, to God, as our creator.

5. Exemplariness

Exemplariness means being a good example for others. It reminds us that as members of the Ministry of Religion, we must be examples in our respective environments because we are in the institution of the Ministry of Religion, an institution that serves religion. Direct and indirect public perception is that we who understand religion must have in-depth knowledge of religion and disseminate this knowledge to those in search of it.

METHODS

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach. The data was collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and Focus Group Discussions (FGD). FGDs are capable of generating discussions that expand ideas on certain matters.

Research Location

This research was carried out in Lampung Province, Indonesia and focused on *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* teachers in Bandar Lampung, Way Kanan Regency and South Lampung Regency as the research subjects. Interviews and FGDs were conducted with

leaders, teachers, employees, *madrasah* committees and students who had information related to the teacher's work culture. This research began with sorting out secondary data obtained from the Lampung Ministry of Religion, and the results of field observations, from the information obtained by the researcher carrying out research in three schools in Lampung Province namely; *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* in Bandar Lampung (accreditation A), *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* in South Lampung (accreditation B), and *Madrasah Tsanawiyah Ma'arif I Bumi Mulya Way Kanan* (a representative of the private *madrasah*). The use of the data obtained was based on the belief that the data is valid and can be accounted for.

Data Analysis Method

Data analysis consisted of three steps that occurred simultaneously, namely: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification as discussed below:

a. Data reduction is an electoral process, continuously focusing on simplifying, abstracting and transforming rough data that comes from written records. Data reduction is a form of analysis that sharpens, classifies, directs, discards unnecessary data and organizes relevant data in such a way that conclusions can be drawn and verified.

b. Presentation of data involves the possibility of drawing conclusions and taking action based on the prepared data.

c. Efforts to verify conclusions were carried out continuously by the researcher through interviews while in the field. In

addition, data pertaining to work culture was also obtained via descriptive qualitative data from the triangulation of results of observation, documentation, and interviews related to the teachers in *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* in Lampung Province.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In general, the implementation of work culture in *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* in Lampung Province is guided by the five values of the work culture of the Ministry of Religious Affairs which include integrity, professionalism, innovation, responsibility and exemplariness. The five values in their implementation were reflected in the following aspects:

1. The integrity of the *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* teachers is high. The teachers desire to perform well. There is no indication of corruption of funds, but there are still teachers who commit time corruption; that is, they do not go to their classes on time and tend to return home early. Good habits and positive behaviour to form a professional organization culture must be fostered. This is because building a culture of an organization is very important. Khan (2016) in his research concluded that organizational culture was one of the critical components for any organization to attain competitive advantage. Organizational culture is born from the habits of the members of the organization which are measured in four dimensions, namely: involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission.

2. Professionalism was shown by the teachers' performance in accordance to their job and their competency, earnestness in carrying out their tasks, doing the work, measured in accordance with the specified target, and receiving applicable awards and penalties in accordance to the applicable rules. One of the weaknesses of *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* teachers is that they do not follow the changes that occur in the world of education. This can be observed in the way of their teaching - using conventional methods, and limited learning resources. Teachers must have an attitude of open-mindedness and they must be ready to accept changes. This can be a challenging task as results of research by Hongboontri and Jantayasakorn (2016) in Thailand showed that good teaching practice determined the development of teacher professionalism. Lack of cooperation between teachers, individualism attitudes, and unwillingness to share between teachers is a culture that does not support teacher professionalism.

3. The majority of *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* teachers have obtained Masters degrees in their education and have attended several years of training, but there are still some teachers who lack the motivation to increase their personal capacity. Cooperation between the Ministry of Religion and *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* is needed to create an atmosphere that supports good work culture.

4. Responsibility is indicated by the attitude of the teacher who is responsible to completing the task on time, preparing lessons in advance, and promptly resolving problems of students, parents, or fellow

teachers. However, there are still some teachers, especially senior teachers, who have no commitment to their duties and responsibilities.

5. Attitude-wise, the *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* teachers have shown a commendable attitude and are able to be examples for students and all school residents. Services provided to students and school residents are getting better.

The five cultural values of *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* in Lampung Province also had positive impacts, both internally (including educators and education personnel) and externally in the community. This was evidenced by the improvement in the performance of educators and community services. This is in line with the results of the study by Kadir et al. (2016) who reported that an organization had to be conducive in order to produce teachers who were motivated to enhance their performance to a higher level. In Khuzaenil et al.'s (2013) study, work culture affected employee performance; work stress had no effect on employee performance; and job satisfaction had no effect on performance. Khuzaenil et al. (2013) established that a strong working culture decreased work stress and increased job satisfaction, which ultimately improved employee performance.

Challenges that hampered the implementation of the five work culture values in *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* in Lampung Province were;

1. Lack of communication especially for private *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* in Waykanan

because the location is quite far from the provincial city so communication access is very limited. This condition is also experienced by other private *Madrasah Tsanawiyahs* in Lampung.

2. Limited human resources in the field of technology. Based on the results of the data analysis, most of the *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* teachers still lack knowledge in technology which leads to teachers using very basic teaching tools in their classroom.

3. Teachers' unawareness of the rules of the Ministry of Religion which include the criteria for promotion and violation of work ethics hinders good working culture.

Some of the solutions that can be recommended for the problems on work culture found in this study are; 1) improving professional communication between *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* and the Ministry of Religion; 2) training *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* educators in IT; and 3) disseminating information in regulations regarding promotions for teachers and also that of disciplinary violations.

This research theoretically had implications for the firm beliefs held by people regarding actions and goals that should be used as the basis in carrying out activities, setting organizational goals or choosing from several other alternatives when carrying out actions. In optimizing the internalization of the five values of the work culture in *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* which are Islamic education institutions, they must be able to show the outside world that *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* is able to compete with other educational

institutions. With the internalization of the five values by the teachers of *Madrasah Tsanawiyah*, it is expected to improve the quality and competence of Islamic education in *Madrasah Tsanawiyah*. According to Dewi (2008), the good work culture also provides benefits including; maintaining a harmonious work environment, creating regular working conditions, creating orderly and safe working conditions, ensuring the implementation of work rights and obligations, creating prosperous workers, and enhancing high and dynamic work ethics.

The practical implications of the research resulting from the internalization of the five cultural values of the Ministry of Religion for the development of *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* are:

1. Helping owners of educational institutions/foundations and other *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* residents to understand the concept of the five cultural values of the Ministry of Religion, and their application in the educational world from comprehensive management of input, learning processes and output;

2. Assisting teachers and *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* heads in understanding performance indicators for teachers and heads respectively, and the five values of the Ministry of Religion's work culture and higher quality *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* development strategies; and

3. Helping educators and education staff to understand the organizational paradigm, work culture and quality of *Madrasah*

Tsanawiyah, the values of which cannot be separated from one another. Various studies show the importance of work culture because it will affect other components of a school. To offer an example, Machwati and Wibowo's (2015) results of hypothesis testing showed that there were positive and significant effects of the teachers' work culture, commitment, and motivation on schools' organizational atmosphere (Adjusted $R^2=0.418$).

CONCLUSION

The five work culture values of *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* teachers in Lampung Province have a positive impact, both internally (including educators and educators) and externally (the community.) This is evidenced by the improvement in the performance of educators and community services. Challenges that hampered the implementation of the five cultural values of work in *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* are: (i) communication that is less than optimal; (ii) limited human resources in the field of technology; and (iii) poor understanding of the applicable rules set by the teachers.

The solutions to these problems are: (i) improving the professional development of communication of the teachers; (ii) conducting technology and informatics training for teachers, (iii) disseminating rules and regulations that apply to the teachers and civil service apparatus of the Ministry of Religion; and (iv) providing appropriate reward and punishment standards.

The most dominant work culture that must be possessed by the teachers

of *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* in Lampung Province is the aspect of professionalism and about being role models, because to become a teacher, one must be able to prioritize aspects of professionalism and become a role model for students and the community. In addition, students' character building is also influenced by a competent teacher.

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