

Literature Review: Analysis of Democratic Leadership Styles

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ABSTRACT

Human resources (HR), including teachers, staff, and employees, play a crucial role in determining the success of an organisation's vision, mission, and objectives. Optimal HR performance is greatly influenced by a positive work environment and leadership attitudes. Democratic leadership style, characterised by encouraging active participation of members, involvement in decision-making, and a focus on deliberation, is widely believed to be one of the most effective approaches to creating a conducive work environment. This literature review aims to synthesise the main findings from various studies exploring the influence of democratic leadership styles. The main focus is to analyse the impact of democratic leadership on performance (teachers, staff, and employees), organisational commitment, work motivation, and psychological empowerment in various contexts, including education, government, and business. The method used in this review is a synthesis of 20 scientific journal articles. The majority of these studies used a quantitative approach, in which data was collected through questionnaires and analysed using multiple regression techniques (T and F tests) to test the influence of variables. Most of the other studies used literature studies or *systematic literature reviews* (SLRs) to analyse, categorise, and verify findings from various existing research sources. There were also studies with a descriptive qualitative approach that used in-depth interviews and observations to describe the implementation of democratic leadership in the field. The findings from the majority of studies consistently show that democratic leadership styles have a positive and significant effect on dependent variables. These positive effects include: Performance: Democratic leadership has a positive and significant effect on the performance of teachers and employees in both the government and business sectors. In a multicultural work environment, democratic leadership has been proven to be effective in improving team performance. Psychological Variables & Work Attitude: Democratic leadership is also found to have a significant effect on increasing organisational commitment and contributing to the psychological empowerment of employees. This is in line with its ability to create a conducive work environment and strengthen leader-subordinate relationships. Mediation/Moderation Variables: The influence of democratic leadership on performance is often reinforced or mediated by other variables such as work motivation and work ethic. Combining it with other styles, such as visionary leadership, is also recommended for maximum effectiveness, especially in the digital age. This literature review concludes that democratic leadership style is a strong determinant in improving organisational effectiveness and performance. Leaders who apply this approach, emphasising deliberation, active participation, and open communication, will succeed in fostering motivation, commitment, and psychological empowerment, which will ultimately have a significant impact on improving the performance of teachers, staff, and employees. The main recommendation is for organisations, including educational and government institutions, to implement and strengthen democratic leadership styles to achieve their strategic goals.

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INTRODUCTION

The quality of human resources (HR) is the most valuable asset and a fundamental factor in determining the success of an organisation, be it an educational institution, government agency, or private company. HR, such as teachers, civil servants, or employees, play a crucial role in implementing the organisation's vision, mission, and strategic objectives. Therefore, ensuring that HR performs at a high level is a key focus for

management.

One of the main determining factors that shape an organisation's performance and work climate is the leadership style applied by its leaders. The right leadership style is believed to be able to guide, motivate, and empower subordinates to reach their maximum potential. In this context, Democratic Leadership Style is often highlighted as the most ideal model.

Democratic leadership is characterised by encouraging participation, open communication, deliberation in decision-making, and a focus on developing the potential of team members. The application of democratic leadership is not only relevant in the context of formal organisations, but also in non-formal contexts such as the family environment, where it has been shown to increase engagement and harmonious relationships between members.

In an increasingly complex work environment, especially in the digital and multicultural era, democratic leadership needs to be examined in synergy with other styles, such as visionary leadership, to ensure continuous adaptation and effectiveness. Based on the importance of leadership style in shaping work performance and attitudes, this literature review was compiled to synthesise empirical evidence on the significant influence of democratic leadership style on various outcome variables in organisations.

METHOD

This literature review uses a Narrative Synthesis approach by thoroughly analysing 20 uploaded scientific journal articles. The purpose of this method is to integrate findings from various different studies to produce comprehensive conclusions regarding the relationship between democratic leadership styles and dependent variables.

The methodological approaches used by the 20 synthesised journals can be classified into three main categories:

1. Quantitative Approach (Dominant): Most studies used a quantitative approach with an explanatory design.
 - Data Collection Techniques: Data was collected through questionnaires distributed to respondents (teachers, staff, or employees) after testing for validity and reliability. Sampling techniques varied, such as random sampling or quota sampling.
 - Data Analysis: Commonly used statistical analysis techniques include Descriptive Statistical Tests, Classical Assumption Tests, Multiple Regression Analysis, t-tests (Partial), F-tests (Simultaneous), Coefficient of Determination Tests, and *Structural Equation Model - Partial Least Square* (SEM-PLS) to test the mediating role.
2. Descriptive Qualitative Approach: Several studies adopt a qualitative approach to analyse and describe the implementation of democratic leadership in the field in depth.
 - Data Collection Techniques: Data is obtained through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and literature studies of primary sources.
3. Literature/Conceptual Study (*Literature Review*): A number of articles use literature study, literature review, or *mini review* methods to examine phenomena conceptually, compare previous research results, and group and verify findings.

RESULTS

A systematic analysis of 20 journals published between 2023 and 2025 A synthesis of findings from 20 journals reveals a strong consensus regarding the positive role of democratic leadership styles in various organisational contexts.

Table 1. Characteristics of the Articles Analysed

No	Author Name. Year / title	Research Objective	Methods Used	Main Results/ Conclusion
1	Laila Ihza Masithah & Isnaini Rodiyah. 2024. "Gaya Kepemimpinan Demokratis Kepala Desa dalam Pelaksanaan Pembangunan di Desa Gempolsari"	Analysing the application of democratic leadership styles by village heads in village development	Descriptive qualitative (observation, interviews, documentation; Miles & Huberman analysis)	Village heads involve the community in deliberations, motivate employees, and maintain effective communication. Democratic leadership styles increase community participation and the effectiveness of village development

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2.	Zihori Maulida. 2023 “Menjadi Teladan Bagi Anggota Keluarga Melalui Gaya Kepemimpinan Demokratis”	Analysing the application of democratic leadership in families and its impact on relationships between family members	Descriptive qualitative (interviews and participatory observation)	Democratic leadership strengthens communication and mutual respect within families. Democratic leadership styles create harmonious and inclusive family relationships
3.	Dian Kusuma Rhosita, Dianawati Suryaningtyas & Adi Suroso. 2024. “Pengaruh Gaya Kepemimpinan Demokratis, Loyalitas dan Motivasi terhadap Komitmen Organisasi IGTKI PGRI”	Analysing the influence of democratic leadership style, loyalty, and motivation on the organisational commitment of nursery school teachers	Quantitative (survey, questionnaire, regression analysis)	Democratic leadership style has a significant influence on organisational commitment. Leaders need to apply a democratic style to increase teacher loyalty and commitment
4.	Agung Fahri dkk. 2024. “Tipe dan Gaya Kepemimpinan dalam Perspektif Pendidikan Islam”	Identifying leadership types and styles from an Islamic perspective	Library research	Four main leadership types: autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire, transformational. Democratic leadership style is in line with Islamic principles that emphasise deliberation and justice
5.	Lintang Laila Putri Sholikhah & Rz. Ricky Satria Wiranata. 2025. “Kepemimpinan Demokratis Perspektif Ibnu Katsir dan Relevansinya dalam Tata Kelola Kependidikan”	Examining the values of democratic leadership in Ibn Kathir's interpretation and its relevance in Islamic education	Qualitative (literature study and structured interviews)	Key values: gentleness, empathy, deliberation. Ibn Kathir's principles of democratic leadership are relevant to Islamic educational institutions
6.	Rosiana Natalia Djunaedi & Lenny Gunawan. 2018 “Pengaruh Gaya Kepemimpinan Demokratis terhadap Kinerja Karyawan”	Analysing the influence of democratic leadership style on the performance of student business employees	Quantitative (survey, simple random sampling, regression analysis)	Democratic leadership has a significant influence on employee performance. Democratic style increases employee motivation and productivity
7.	Muhammad Irfan Nasution dkk. 2023. “Peran Kepemimpinan Demokratis dan Dukungan Kerja terhadap Kinerja Karyawan Dimediasi Motivasi Kerja”	Analysing the relationship between democratic leadership, job support, motivation, and employee performance	Quantitative (SEM-PLS, quota sampling)	Democratic leadership has a significant effect on employee motivation and performance. Work motivation mediates the relationship between democratic leadership and performance
8.	Kurniati dkk. 2023. “Gaya Kepemimpinan Demokratis dan Visioner”	Examining the application of democratic and visionary leadership in primary school principals	Conceptual study (literature review and field observation)	The combination of democratic and visionary leadership increases teacher participation. Democratic-visionary leadership style effectively improves teacher performance
9.	Sofyan Jayadi, Muhammad, & Yudin	Assessing the influence of	Quantitative (quasi-experimental, F & T	Simultaneously, democratic leadership,

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	Citriadin. 2025. “Pengaruh Kepemimpinan Demokratis Kepala Sekolah, Kesejahteraan Guru dan Budaya Sekolah terhadap Kinerja Guru”	democratic leadership by school principals on teacher performance	tests with SPSS)	welfare, and school culture have a positive influence. Democratic style increases teacher participation and inclusive culture in schools
10.	Daniel So'arota Zebua dkk. 2024. “Analisis Gaya Kepemimpinan Visioner dan Demokratis pada Era Digital”	Analysing the application of democratic and visionary leadership styles in the digital age	Literature review	Democratic leadership encourages the participation of organisational members in the digital age. A combination of democratic and visionary styles is effective in addressing the challenges of digitalisation
11.	Riya Septi Ayana, Jasiah. 2025. “Gaya Kepemimpinan Demokratis Terhadap Kinerja Guru, Kepuasan Kerja Guru dan Kualitas Pembelajaran Guru”	Exploring the impact of democratic leadership styles on performance, job satisfaction, and the quality of teacher learning in schools.	Literature review/Literature study (research articles 2015-2021).	The democratic leadership of headteachers positively influences performance, job satisfaction, and the quality of teacher learning. Democratic leadership styles have a positive and significant impact on all three aspects.
12.	Rivan Ti Tomi, Jonfrid Siae, Olivia Winda Ony Panjaitan. 2021. “Pengaruh gaya kepemimpinan demokratis, motivasi dan disiplin kerja terhadap kinerja pegawai pada kantor bapelkes provinsi Kalimantan Tengah”	To determine the effect of democratic leadership style, motivation, and work discipline on employee performance at the Central Kalimantan Provincial BAPELKES Office.	Exploratory research with a quantitative approach (Multiple Regression Analysis, t-test, F-test)	Democratic leadership style has a positive and significant effect on employee performance, both partially and simultaneously. Democratic leadership style, motivation, and work discipline have a positive and significant effect on employee performance.
13.	Malik Ibrohim, Mohammad Isa Anshori. 2025. “Kepemimpinan Efektif dalam Lingkungan Kerja Multikultural untuk Meningkatkan Kinerja Tim: Systematic Literature Review”	Exploring the influence of leadership styles on team performance in multicultural work environments and identifying the most effective styles.	Systematic Literature Review (SLR)/Analysis of literature from various sources.	Transformational and democratic leadership styles have been shown to have a significant positive impact on multicultural team performance. Democratic leadership is effective because it focuses on open communication and active participation, which are crucial in multicultural teams.
14.	Antaiwan Bowo Pranogyo, Junaidi Hendro. 2022. “Gaya Kepemimpinan Dan Kinerja Karyawan: Tinjauan Literatur”	To determine the relationship between leadership style and overall employee performance.	Literature review/conceptual analysis of research conducted over the past ten years.	There is a broad and strong correlation between leadership style (in general) and employee performance, particularly in the Indonesian context. It is important for leaders to create a favourable

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				management style in order to inspire improved employee performance.
15.	Hanazka Syahla, Rolia Adelia, Siska Yulianti, Eman Sulaeman. 2024. "Study Literatur: Pengaruh Gaya Kepemimpinan Demokratis Terhadap Kinerja Karyawan"	Analysing the impact of democratic leadership styles on employee performance.	Literature study, analysing various previous studies.	Democratic leaders create a conducive working environment, encourage innovation, strengthen relationships, and make a significant contribution to performance. Democratic leadership styles are recommended for implementation in order to improve employee performance and satisfaction.
16.	Muawanah, Anjas Sasana Bahri. 2025. "Dampak Gaya Kepemimpinan Demokratis dan Komunikasi Internal terhadap Kinerja Karyawan"	To examine the influence of democratic leadership style and internal communication on employee performance at CV. Bee Jay Seafoods in Probolinggo.	A quantitative approach was used, involving 104 employees as respondents.	Democratic leadership style and internal communication had a significant positive impact on employee performance. Democratic leadership and effective communication contributed to improved employee performance.
17.	Jihan Mawaddah Pane, Dwi Syahputri Purba, Diani Sari Panggabean, Meutia Hafni Indah Triana, Wasiyem. 2024. "Pengaruh Gaya Kepemimpinan Demokratis Terhadap Kinerja Karyawan Dalam Organisasi Kesehatan: Studi Literatur"	Analysing the Influence of Democratic Leadership Style on Employee Performance in Healthcare Organisations.	Literature Study/Article Review.	Democratic leadership style has an influence on employee performance in healthcare organisations (based on the topic of the literature review).
18.	Imam Budiana, Silvia Erwindia, Ramson Daniel Silalahi. 2025. "Pengaruh Gaya Kepemimpinan Demokratis dan Etos Kerja Terhadap Kinerja Pegawai: Suatu Studi pada Dinas Pemuda dan Olahraga Kabupaten Bandung"	To examine the influence of democratic leadership style and work ethic on employee performance at the Bandung Regency Youth and Sports Office.	A descriptive-verificative approach, quantitative method (regression and path analysis), 53 employees as subjects.	Both variables had a simultaneous (94.80%) and partial (significant) effect on employee performance. Democratic leadership style and work ethic had a significant effect, both simultaneously and partially, on employee performance.
19.	Tarisa Aidil Alzahra, Yusuf Cahya Irawan, Kheisyah Aditya Yoesyifa, Rizky Amalia Ramadhani, Siti Rohaliani Putri. 2025. "Implementasi Gaya Kepemimpinan Demokratis Kepala Sekolah Dalam	To identify the implementation of democratic leadership styles by head teachers in improving teacher performance.	Qualitative approach, data collection techniques: participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and literature review.	Democratic leadership style contributes significantly to improving teacher performance through active involvement in decision-making. Democratic leadership style successfully creates a harmonious work environment, increases

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	Meningkatkan Kinerja Guru di SMK Muhammadiyah Majalaya”			motivation, and improves teachers' professional competence.
20.	Lubbi Atika Khumaira, Abdul Muhidh. 2022. “Pengaruh Gaya Kepemimpinan Demokratis Terhadap Pemberdayaan Psikologis Karyawan: Literature Review”	To determine the effect of democratic leadership style on the psychological empowerment of employees.	Literature review.	Democratic leadership style has an effect on the psychological empowerment of employees (based on the literature review topic).

DISCUSSION

Discussion interpreting these consistent findings:

1. Justification of Performance Through Participation

The consistency of the findings on performance improvement (Employee Performance and Teacher Performance) is explained by the core of the democratic style, namely participation and deliberation. When subordinates are included (for example, by the village head in village development), it fosters a sense of ownership and accountability, which directly encourages motivation and productivity.

2. Intrinsic Psychological Mechanisms

Democratic leadership is effective because it triggers psychological mechanisms:

- Intrinsic Motivation: The *participatory* nature stimulates employees' intrinsic motivation and *self-determination*, which then mediates a positive relationship with performance.
- Commitment and Well-being: The granting of autonomy by democratic leaders is key to fostering Psychological Empowerment. This empowerment, together with Loyalty, increases Organisational Commitment.

3. Contextual and Ethical Relevance

Contextually, this style is highly relevant:

- Digital Era: Democratic style needs to be synergised with Visionary style to face the challenges of digitalisation. Democratic style secures technology implementation through participation, while visionary style provides strategic direction.
- Multicultural Environment: Democratic leadership, together with transformational leadership, has proven to be most effective in improving Multicultural Team Performance due to its ability to facilitate communication and accommodate diversity of perspectives.

CONCLUSION

1. Democratic Leadership is Key to Performance Improvement: There is strong evidence from quantitative studies that democratic leadership styles have a significant and positive effect on improving the performance of teachers and staff.
2. Vital Mediating Variables: The effectiveness of this style is highly dependent on its success in increasing Work Motivation, Organisational Commitment, and Psychological Empowerment of subordinates.
3. Creation of a Positive Work Environment: The democratic style creates a harmonious, inclusive environment supported by consultative values, which are in line with ethical principles.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Practical Recommendations (For Leaders)

- Implementation of Formal Deliberation: Leaders must create formal channels for employee participation in strategic decision-making to strengthen a sense of ownership.
- Increased Empowerment: Managers are advised to provide autonomy and coaching focused on competency improvement (empowerment) to trigger intrinsic motivation.

2. Academic Recommendations (For Researchers)

- Test Advanced Mediation Models: Further research is recommended to test the role of moderating variables such as Organisational Culture or Cultural Intelligence in strengthening the relationship between democratic leadership and performance.
- In-depth Qualitative Approach: Research can use qualitative methods (in-depth interviews and observation) to analyse in detail the process of implementing a democratic style and its impact on more specific team dynamics.

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