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The Interplay of Organizational Culture, Knowledge Management System, and Learning Evaluation in Improving English Language Skills: A Mixed-Method Study in Indonesian Pesantrens

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the interaction among organizational culture, knowledge management, and learning evaluation in improving English language competence in pesantrens in East Java, using a sequential exploratory mixed-methods design. Qualitative data were collected through interviews, observations, and focus group discussions with pesantren leaders, teachers, and students to identify context-specific dimensions of organizational culture, knowledge management practices, and evaluation systems, which subsequently informed the development of a quantitative instrument administered to 306 respondents across three pesantren. Quantitative analysis using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) indicates that learning evaluation exerts the strongest positive influence on English language competence, underscoring the role of continuous assessment, feedback, and follow-up actions in shaping learning outcomes. Organizational culture also shows a positive contribution by fostering discipline, language habituation, and collective responsibility. In contrast, knowledge management demonstrates a negative relationship with English language competence, reflecting partial implementation, limited technological integration, and fragmented knowledge-sharing practices, as corroborated by qualitative findings. These results highlight the importance of aligning organizational culture, evaluation practices, and context-sensitive knowledge management to enhance English language learning in pesantren while maintaining their core educational values.

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INTRODUCTION

Organizational culture, knowledge management, and learning evaluation have long been recognized as key determinants of educational effectiveness, particularly in shaping learning processes and student outcomes (Adeinat & Abdulfatah, 2019; Akbarian, 2023; Zheng et al., 2010). In language education, these three elements play a strategic role in influencing how knowledge is created, shared, assessed, and internalized by learners. Within the context of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), this interaction becomes especially important due to the distinctive institutional characteristics of pesantren, which combine strong religious traditions, hierarchical leadership, and communal learning practices. As faith-based educational institutions, pesantren are not only responsible for preserving Islamic values and moral education but are increasingly expected to equip santri with global competencies, including English language proficiency, to respond to globalization and the demands of the 21st century (Rahman et al., 2023; Yuzar & Rahman, 2024).

Previous studies consistently demonstrate that organizational culture significantly influences the success of knowledge management practices and learning outcomes (Akbarian, 2023; Al Saifi, 2015; Zheng et al., 2010). A culture that promotes collaboration, openness, and continuous learning supports effective knowledge sharing and innovation, whereas cultures characterized by rigidity and resistance to change tend to hinder pedagogical transformation (Adeinat & Abdulfatah, 2019; Prabowo, 2022). In the pesantren context, resistance to change often manifests in concrete forms, such as the strong centrality of kyai authority in decision-making, the prioritization of traditional instructional methods (e.g., bandongan and sorogan), limited integration of educational technology, and cautious attitudes toward foreign language learning perceived as secondary to religious studies (Aisyah et al., 2022; Budiono et al., 2019; Musaddad, 2021). These forms of resistance can constrain innovation in English language instruction, limiting exposure to communicative practices, digital learning resources, and systematic language development programs.

Knowledge Management Systems (KMS) offer a potential solution to these challenges by enabling institutions to systematically organize, distribute, and utilize knowledge resources (Fernandez & Sabherwal, 2015; Hislop et al., 2018). Empirical studies indicate that well-implemented KMS can enhance access to learning materials, support collaborative learning, and improve language acquisition outcomes (Bin, 2024; Ghosh et al., 2024). However, the effectiveness of KMS is highly dependent on the surrounding organizational culture. Learning-oriented cultures that encourage sharing, experimentation, and reflective practice tend to maximize the benefits of KMS, whereas conservative cultures may limit their impact (Abdelrahman et al., 2025; Mufidah & Tania, 2024; Wanjala, 2024). In pesantren, where technological adoption is often uneven, the interaction between organizational culture and knowledge management becomes a critical factor in determining the success of English language learning initiatives.

In addition to organizational culture and knowledge management, learning evaluation plays a decisive role in improving English language competence. Research in language education emphasizes that systematic and context-sensitive evaluation—particularly formative assessment—enhances learner motivation, provides meaningful feedback, and supports sustained language development (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Jiang & Qu, 2024). In pesantren settings, learning evaluation is traditionally oriented toward religious mastery and character formation, often leaving academic competencies such as English language skills under-assessed (Nuraeni & Irawan, 2021; Saepurrohman, 2023). Recent empirical studies, however, demonstrate that integrating structured language evaluation within religious educational environments can significantly improve students' linguistic achievement without undermining core Islamic values (Saputra et al., 2024; Wasehudin et al.,

2023). This highlights the need for more holistic evaluation models that balance religious objectives with academic and global competencies.

Despite the growing body of literature on organizational culture, knowledge management, and learning evaluation, most existing studies examine these variables in isolation or within secular educational contexts (Dhamdhere, 2015; Fauzi, 2020; Masa'deh et al., 2017; Ponnuswamy & Manohar, 2016). Comprehensive studies that investigate the integrated interaction of these three elements in improving English language skills within pesantren remain limited. This gap is particularly evident in empirical research that explores how traditional religious institutions negotiate organizational culture, manage knowledge resources, and design evaluation systems to support foreign language learning.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the interaction between organizational culture, knowledge management, and learning evaluation in improving English language skills among santri in pesantren in East Java. The unit of analysis in this study includes organizational practices, knowledge management mechanisms, evaluation systems, and students' English language competence. Specifically, this research hypothesizes that (1) a supportive organizational culture positively influences English language competence; (2) effective knowledge management systems enhance English language learning outcomes; and (3) systematic learning evaluation has a significant effect on improving English language skills, both directly and through its interaction with organizational culture and knowledge management. By addressing these relationships, this study is expected to contribute theoretically to the literature on educational management in faith-based institutions and practically to the development of more effective English language learning frameworks in pesantren.

METHODS

This study employed a mixed-methods sequential exploratory design to examine the interaction between organizational culture, knowledge management, and learning evaluation in English language learning within pesantren (Berman, 2017; Creswell, 2014). This design was selected because the pesantren context is characterized by distinctive cultural, religious, and organizational features that are not sufficiently captured by standardized quantitative instruments. Therefore, an initial qualitative exploration was necessary to generate contextually grounded constructs before conducting statistical testing.The qualitative phase utilized a descriptive phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of key pesantren stakeholders, including kyai, administrators, and English language teachers. This approach was appropriate for capturing how organizational culture, knowledge-sharing practices, and evaluation norms are understood and enacted in daily educational practices (Berman, 2017; Creswell, 2014; Othman et al., 2020). Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis, and were analyzed thematically to identify essential dimensions relevant to English language learning (Fadli, 2021; Taherdoost, 2021).

Findings from the qualitative phase informed the development of the quantitative instrument, ensuring contextual validity (Mohamad et al., 2015; Taherdoost, 2021). The quantitative phase employed a cross-sectional survey design and analyzed the data using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to test the relationships among organizational culture, knowledge management, learning evaluation, and English language competence (Bido & Silva, 2019; Hair et al., 2017). Integration of qualitative and quantitative findings was achieved through triangulation, providing both contextual depth and empirical rigor (Santos et al., 2020; Waller et al., 2020).

The population of this study consisted of approximately 1,500 members from three pesantren in East Java: Pondok Pesantren Walisongo Ngabar Ponorogo, Pondok Pesantren Al Islam Joresan Ponorogo, and Pondok Pesantren Mazroatul Lughah Pare Kediri. A combination of purposive sampling and cluster sampling was employed. Purposive sampling was used to select information-rich

participants who were directly involved in pesantren management and English language learning (Creswell, 2014; Putri & Rati, 2022). The selection criteria included: (1) pesantren leaders or senior administrators responsible for institutional policy and organizational culture; (2) administrators involved in curriculum and evaluation systems; (3) English language teachers with a minimum of two years of teaching experience; and (4) students who had participated in structured English language programs for at least one academic year. For the quantitative phase, cluster sampling was applied by treating each pesantren as a cluster (Parker et al., 2021; Zhan et al., 2021). The sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula, resulting in 306 respondents, which was sufficient to represent the population and support multivariate analysis (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970).

The research instrument was developed using a two-stage process aligned with the sequential exploratory mixed-method design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018) . In the first stage, indicators were derived from qualitative findings obtained through descriptive phenomenological analysis of interviews, observations, and document analysis, resulting in context-specific dimensions of organizational culture, knowledge management, and learning evaluation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). In the second stage, these dimensions were operationalized into measurable items by adapting established theoretical frameworks and validated instruments from previous studies, while maintaining relevance to the pesantren context (Fernandez & Sabherwal, 2015; Hislop et al., 2018). All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale.

Organizational culture, knowledge management, learning evaluation, and English language competence were measured using theoretically grounded indicators (Fernandez & Sabherwal, 2015; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Hislop et al., 2018). Measurement quality was assessed through convergent validity (outer loadings and Average Variance Extracted) and internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability), following established guidelines for PLS-SEM analysis (Hair et al., 2017). This study employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS software to analyze the relationships among organizational culture, knowledge management, learning evaluation, and English language competence. PLS-SEM was selected for several reasons. First, it is well-suited for theory development and prediction-oriented research, particularly in contexts where theoretical models are still evolving, such as organizational and educational studies in pesantren. Second, PLS-SEM is appropriate for complex models involving multiple latent constructs and indicators. Third, it is robust for research with moderate sample sizes and does not require strict assumptions of multivariate normality (Hair et al., 2017).

Model evaluation followed a two-step procedure: measurement model assessment and structural model assessment. The measurement model was evaluated by examining indicator reliability, convergent validity, and internal consistency reliability. Indicators with outer loading values above the acceptable threshold were retained, and all constructs demonstrated satisfactory AVE, Cronbach's Alpha, and Composite Reliability values. The structural model was assessed using path coefficients, coefficient of determination (R^2), and predictive relevance. The R^2 values indicated a substantial explanatory power of organizational culture, knowledge management, and learning evaluation on English language competence. Hypothesis testing was conducted by evaluating the significance and direction of path coefficients, providing empirical evidence for the proposed relationships among variables.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Basic Values of Organizational Culture as a Driver of English Language Traditions in Pesantrens.

The three pesantren Pondok Pesantren Walisongo Ngabar Ponorogo, Pondok Pesantren Al Islam Joresan Ponorogo, and Pondok Pesantren Mazroatul Lughah Pare Kediri demonstrate how organizational culture functions as a foundational driver of English language traditions. Although each pesantren exhibits distinctive institutional characteristics, all share core cultural values such as discipline, language habituation, leadership authority, and collective responsibility, which shape their approaches to English language learning. At Pondok Pesantren Walisongo Ngabar, organizational culture is strongly influenced by the legacy of Pondok Modern Gontor, emphasizing discipline, habituation, and direct language use. English is positioned not merely as an academic subject but as part of daily life within the pesantren environment. This was reflected in an interview with a senior administrator, who stated:

> "*English here is not taught only in the classroom. From morning until night, students are encouraged even required to use English in daily communication. This habit is part of our pesantren discipline." (Interview, Administrator, PP Walisongo Ngabar).*

The role of muharrikul lughah (language motivators) further reinforces this culture. A teacher explained that peer-based supervision strengthens students' confidence and consistency in language practice:

> "*Senior students act as language motivators. They remind, correct, and motivate their juniors to keep using English. This creates a learning culture that feels natural, not forced." (Interview, English Teacher, PP Walisongo Ngabar)*

In Pondok Pesantren Al Islam Joresan, organizational culture reflects a synthesis of modern educational values and traditional salaf pesantren principles, guided by the panca jiwa (simplicity, sincerity, independence, brotherhood, and freedom). English learning is embedded within these values rather than positioned as a separate modern agenda. A kyai highlighted this balance during an FGD: "*We do not separate language learning from character education. English is important, but it must grow together with sincerity and discipline, not replace our pesantren values."* (FGD, Kyai, PP Al Islam Joresan)

This cultural orientation influences instructional practices, where English learning is combined with traditional activities such as muhadharah (speech practice) and structured language routines. Teachers emphasized that cultural alignment ensures student acceptance and participation: *"Students are more receptive to English learning when it is connected to pesantren traditions they already respect." (Interview, Teacher, PP Al Islam Joresan)*

Meanwhile, Pondok Pesantren Mazroatul Lughah Pare demonstrates a more flexible and motivational organizational culture, shaped by its origins as an English language course institution. Discipline is maintained through target-based achievement rather than punitive measures. One administrator explained: *"We emphasize responsibility. Students are given freedom, but only after they meet language and academic targets. This motivates them to take English learning seriously." (Interview, Administrator, PP Mazroatul Lughah Pare)*

Students' autonomy in choosing learning spaces and the application of reward-based systems contribute to a supportive learning environment. A student participating in an FGD expressed: *"We feel comfortable learning English here because the environment is supportive. We are motivated, not pressured." (FGD, Student, PP Mazroatul Lughah Pare)*

Despite their differences, all three pesantren demonstrate that organizational culture plays a central role in sustaining English language traditions. Discipline, habituation, leadership support, and

value alignment emerge as shared cultural mechanisms that facilitate consistent language practice. These findings indicate that English language competence in pesantren is not solely shaped by instructional methods but is deeply embedded within broader organizational and cultural systems.

The Role of Knowledge Management in Supporting English Language Literacy

Knowledge management plays a strategic role in shaping the sustainability and effectiveness of English language learning in pesantren. Consistent with the theoretical perspective that views knowledge management as a systematic process of knowledge creation, storage, sharing, and application (Fernandez & Sabherwal, 2015; Hislop et al., 2018), the findings of this study reveal that each pesantren implements knowledge management practices in distinct ways, reflecting differences in organizational priorities, technological readiness, and cultural orientation.

At Pondok Pesantren Mazroatul Lughah Pare, knowledge management is primarily manifested through structured documentation and continuous monitoring of students' language development. Daily learning activities, student progress, and language achievements are systematically recorded and used as the basis for instructional decisions and parental reporting. From a theoretical standpoint, this practice reflects strong knowledge storage and application, as learning data are actively utilized to guide interventions. An administrator explained: *"All student progress is recorded daily. When targets are not achieved, we immediately evaluate and provide guidance so the problem does not continue*." (Interview, Administrator, PP Mazroatul Lughah Pare)

This approach aligns with the notion that effective knowledge application enhances organizational learning and instructional responsiveness. However, the reliance on predominantly manual systems also limits scalability and inter-unit knowledge sharing, indicating a partial implementation of knowledge management processes.

In Pondok Pesantren Walisongo Ngabar, knowledge management is institutionalized through the establishment of the Language Information Center (LIC), which functions as a central unit for coordinating language programs, developing instructional guidelines, and monitoring student progress. This structure supports knowledge creation and standardization, ensuring consistency in English language instruction across the institution. A senior teacher noted: *"LIC prepares the language guidelines and monitors how English learning is implemented, so teachers follow the same standards.*" (Interview, Teacher, PP Walisongo Ngabar)

While this centralized system strengthens coordination, the findings indicate that knowledge sharing and storage remain largely manual, which constrains the broader dissemination of best practices. According to knowledge management theory, limited technological integration can reduce the efficiency of knowledge transfer and organizational learning (Hislop et al., 2018).

Meanwhile, Pondok Pesantren Al Islam Joresan demonstrates a hybrid approach to knowledge management. Administrative and academic data such as student records, assessments, and financial management are managed through digital systems, reflecting progress in knowledge storage and accessibility. However, English language learning practices remain primarily traditional, relying on direct interaction and routine activities. One administrator described this balance: *"For administration, we already use digital systems, but for language learning, direct practice is still considered more effective for students*." (Interview, Administrator, PP Al Islam Joresan)

From a theoretical perspective, this illustrates a selective adoption of knowledge management practices, where technological tools are applied for efficiency but not yet fully integrated into pedagogical knowledge sharing and application.

Across the three pesantren, the findings suggest that knowledge management practices are present but unevenly developed. While mechanisms for knowledge creation and application exist particularly through structured language programs and routine evaluations limitations in technology integration and systematic knowledge sharing reduce their overall effectiveness. This helps explain the empirical finding in the quantitative phase that knowledge management shows a weaker, and in some cases negative, relationship with English language competence. As emphasized in knowledge management theory, ineffective or partial implementation can constrain learning outcomes rather than enhance them.

Overall, these findings reinforce the theoretical argument that knowledge management contributes positively to learning only when its processes creation, storage, sharing, and application are implemented in an integrated and balanced manner. In the pesantren context, strengthening technological support and fostering a culture of systematic knowledge sharing are essential steps to optimize the role of knowledge management in improving English language literacy.

Evaluation as a Measuring Tool and Motivation for the Success of English Learning in Pesantrens

Learning evaluation functions not only as a mechanism for measuring students' achievement but also as a strategic tool for motivating continuous improvement in English language learning within pesantren. In line with educational evaluation theory, effective evaluation provides feedback, reinforces learning objectives, and guides instructional decision-making (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Hattie & Timperley, 2007). The findings of this study indicate that the three pesantren implement evaluation systems that reflect their organizational culture and knowledge management capacities, while sharing a common emphasis on discipline, habituation, and gradual competency development.

At Pondok Pesantren Mazroatul Lughah Pare, learning evaluation is conducted through a combination of written tests and direct oral practice. Written evaluations are used to assess students' understanding of grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure, while oral evaluations focus on spontaneous English conversations between students and instructors. This dual approach enables evaluators to capture both cognitive and communicative aspects of language competence. An administrator explained: *"Evaluation is not only about passing or failing. It helps us see where students struggle so we can immediately guide them."* (Interview, Administrator, PP Mazroatul Lughah Pare)

From an evaluative perspective, this practice reflects formative assessment principles, where continuous feedback is used to support learning progress rather than merely to judge outcomes. Evaluation results are systematically recorded and used as a basis for instructional intervention, reinforcing students' motivation to improve.

In Pondok Pesantren Walisongo Ngabar, evaluation practices are embedded within daily language routines and periodic formal assessments. Daily evaluations focus on vocabulary acquisition and language use, monitored by muharrikul lughah, while periodic written and oral examinations assess students' cumulative progress. A teacher described the role of routine evaluation as follows: *"Daily evaluation keeps students disciplined. They know they are monitored every day, so English becomes a habit, not just a subject*." (Interview, English Teacher, PP Walisongo Ngabar)

This approach aligns with the concept of continuous assessment, where frequent low-stakes evaluations foster sustained engagement and language habituation. The integration of computer-based testing in formal examinations further indicates gradual adaptation to technology-enhanced evaluation, even as traditional methods remain dominant.

Meanwhile, Pondok Pesantren Al Islam Joresan applies a blended evaluation system that combines conventional written tests, oral performance through muhadharah and muhadasah, and technology-based assessments for formal examinations. This layered evaluation structure supports

multiple dimensions of language competence while maintaining alignment with pesantren traditions. One teacher noted: *"Students are evaluated not only on written tests but also on how confidently they speak in front of others."* (Interview, Teacher, PP Al Islam Joresan)

The emphasis on public speaking and oral performance serves both evaluative and motivational functions, encouraging students to actively practice English in meaningful contexts.

Across the three pesantren, evaluation practices serve a dual role: as measurement tools for tracking English language competence and as motivational mechanisms that shape students' learning behavior. Consistent with evaluation theory, timely feedback and clear performance targets increase learners' engagement and accountability. Moreover, the findings suggest that evaluation is most effective when it is integrated with organizational culture and supported by systematic follow-up actions.

These results help explain the strong influence of learning evaluation observed in the quantitative analysis. When evaluation is conducted continuously, aligned with institutional values, and used as a basis for instructional improvement, it becomes a powerful driver of English language learning success. Thus, evaluation in pesantren is not merely an administrative requirement but a central component of an integrated learning ecosystem that supports sustained language development.

Relation between Organizational Culture, Knowledge Management, Learning Evaluation, and English Language Competence

This section presents the results of the quantitative analysis examining the relationships among organizational culture, knowledge management, learning evaluation, and English language competence using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Prior to analyzing the structural relationships, the measurement model was assessed to ensure the validity and reliability of the constructs.

Measurement Model Assessment

All indicators demonstrated satisfactory outer loading values, exceeding the recommended threshold, indicating adequate indicator reliability. Table 1 presents the outer loading values for each construct.

Table 1. Outer Loadings of Measurement Indicators

Indicator	Organizational Culture	Knowledge Management	Learning Evaluation	English Language Competence
X1.2	0.960	–	–	–
X1.3	0.961	–	–	–
X1.4	0.807	–	–	–
X1.5	0.918	–	–	–
X1.6	0.858	–	–	–
X2.1	–	0.853	–	–
X2.3	–	0.906	–	–
X2.4	–	0.932	–	–
X2.6	–	0.814	–	–
X2.7	–	0.931	–	–
X3.1	–	–	0.937	–
X3.2	–	–	0.847	–
X3.4	–	–	0.939	–
Y1	–	–	–	0.802
Y2	–	–	–	0.967

Y3	–	–	–	0.938
Y4	–	–	–	0.958

Construct reliability and convergent validity were further confirmed through Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Construct Reliability and Validity

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Organizational Culture	0.942	0.956	0.815
Knowledge Management	0.937	0.956	0.844
Learning Evaluation	0.894	0.934	0.826
English Language Competence	0.933	0.949	0.789

Structural Model Assessment and Path Relationships

The structural model was evaluated using path coefficients and coefficients of determination (R^2). Table 3 presents the R^2 values for each endogenous construct.

Table 3. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Endogenous Construct	R^2
Learning Evaluation	0.913
Knowledge Management	0.970
English Language Competence	0.988

The high R^2 value for English language competence indicates that organizational culture, knowledge management, and learning evaluation collectively explain a substantial proportion of variance in students' English language competence.

Figure 1 illustrates the structural model and path coefficients obtained from the PLS algorithm

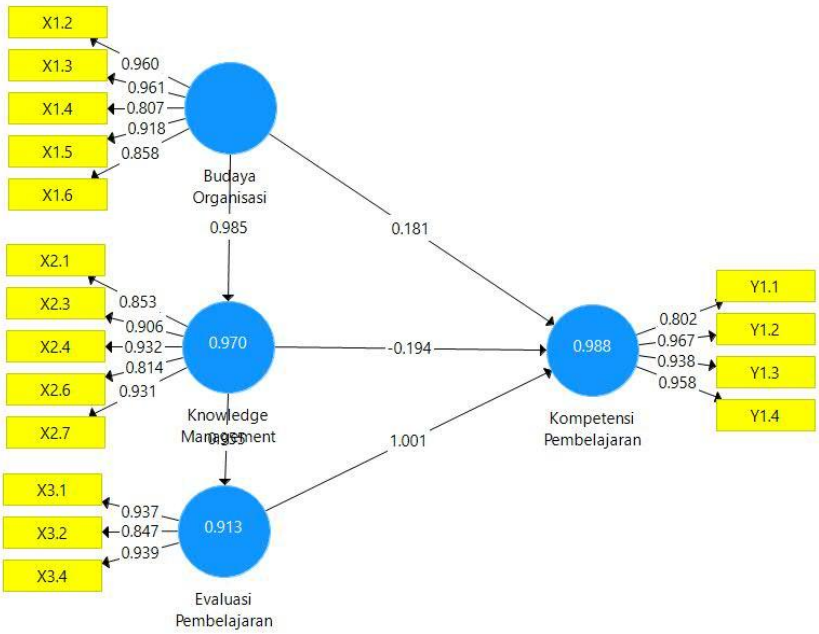


Figure 1. PLS-SEM Structural Model and Path Coefficients

The results show that organizational culture has a positive effect on English language competence (path coefficient = 0.181), suggesting that shared values, discipline, and language habituation practices contribute to improved language outcomes. This finding aligns with previous studies emphasizing the role of learning-oriented organizational culture in supporting educational achievement.

Learning evaluation exhibits the strongest positive influence on English language competence (path coefficient = 1.001). This result indicates that systematic and continuous evaluation plays a critical role in monitoring progress, providing feedback, and motivating students to improve their language skills. The dominance of this variable is consistent with both formative assessment theory and the qualitative findings of this study, which highlight evaluation as a central driver of language learning in pesantren.

In contrast, knowledge management shows a negative relationship with English language competence (path coefficient = –0.194). Although this finding may appear counterintuitive, it can be understood in light of the qualitative evidence. The negative coefficient does not indicate that knowledge management is inherently detrimental; rather, it reflects partial and uneven implementation of knowledge management practices across the pesantren. As revealed in the qualitative findings, limitations such as minimal technological integration, manual data management, and fragmented knowledge-sharing mechanisms reduce the effectiveness of knowledge management in supporting English language learning. In line with knowledge management theory, ineffective or poorly integrated systems may constrain learning outcomes rather than enhance them. Thus, the negative relationship highlights the importance of improving the quality and integration of knowledge management practices rather than rejecting their role altogether.

Overall, the structural model confirms that learning evaluation is the most influential factor in improving English language competence, followed by organizational culture, while knowledge management requires strategic improvement to function effectively as a supportive mechanism. These findings reinforce the importance of an integrated approach in which organizational culture, knowledge management, and evaluation systems are aligned to support sustainable English language learning in pesantren

Discussion

This study aimed to examine the interaction between organizational culture, knowledge management, and learning evaluation in improving English language competence in pesantren using a mixed-method approach. Therefore, this discussion integrates quantitative findings with qualitative evidence from interviews and FGDs to provide a more comprehensive interpretation of the results.

The quantitative analysis indicates that organizational culture has a positive, albeit moderate, effect on English language competence (path coefficient = 0.181). This finding is consistent with organizational culture theory, which emphasizes shared values, norms, and habitual practices as key drivers of learning behavior (Schein & Schein, 2017). Although Schein's framework is relatively foundational, it remains relevant when interpreted alongside more recent studies that highlight the role of learning-oriented culture in educational innovation (Akbarian, 2023; Zhang & Guo, 2023). Qualitative findings from this study reinforce this relationship. For instance, interviews conducted at Pondok Pesantren Walisongo Ngabar and Al Islam Joresan demonstrate that discipline, daily language habituation, and leadership support—particularly from kyai—create an environment that normalizes English language use. Thus, organizational culture functions as an enabling context that sustains language learning practices rather than as a direct instructional intervention.

Learning evaluation emerged as the most influential factor affecting English language competence (path coefficient = 1.001). This strong statistical effect is supported by qualitative evidence showing that continuous evaluation, daily monitoring, and immediate feedback are central components of English language learning in all three pesantren. At Mazroatul Lughah Pare, for example, evaluation data are recorded daily and used to guide rapid instructional intervention, while at Walisongo Ngabar and Al Islam Joresan, routine oral and written evaluations reinforce discipline and learning accountability. These findings align with contemporary evaluation theory, which emphasizes formative assessment as a powerful tool for enhancing motivation and learning outcomes (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Jiang & Qu, 2024). In this context, evaluation serves not only as a measurement instrument but also as a motivational mechanism that shapes students' learning behavior.

In contrast, knowledge management shows a negative relationship with English language competence (path coefficient = –0.194), which appears contradictory to recent studies suggesting that effective knowledge management enhances learning performance. Rather than indicating a theoretical inconsistency, this finding reflects contextual differences in implementation quality. Wu et al, emphasize that knowledge management positively influences learning when supported by integrated digital systems and a strong culture of knowledge sharing (Wu et al., 2024). However, qualitative evidence from this study reveals that knowledge management practices in the three pesantren are partial and uneven. For example, Mazroatul Lughah Pare demonstrates strong knowledge application through daily progress monitoring but relies largely on manual systems. Walisongo Ngabar institutionalizes knowledge creation through the Language Information Center (LIC) but lacks technological integration for broader knowledge sharing. Meanwhile, Al Islam Joresan adopts digital systems for administration but has not fully integrated them into pedagogical knowledge sharing for English language learning. These findings suggest that when knowledge management is fragmented or underdeveloped, it may constrain rather than support learning outcomes.

Further analysis of the qualitative data identifies three key factors influencing the effectiveness of knowledge management in pesantren. First, systematic management of learning data determines whether evaluation results are translated into instructional improvement, as observed at Mazroatul Lughah Pare. Second, technology integration affects the scalability and accessibility of knowledge resources, which remains limited across the three pesantren. Third, organizational culture shapes willingness to share and utilize knowledge, as seen in pesantren where traditional authority structures limit horizontal knowledge exchange. These factors manifest differently across the three institutions, explaining the varied impact of knowledge management observed in the quantitative results.

Practical and Policy Implications

The findings of this study offer several concrete and implementable recommendations for pesantren managers and policymakers. First, pesantren leaders should institutionalize structured and continuous learning evaluation systems, including daily formative assessments and clear performance benchmarks for English language learning. Second, knowledge management practices should be strengthened through gradual technology integration, such as simple digital dashboards for tracking student progress, shared digital repositories for learning materials, and internal training for teachers—implemented without undermining pesantren values by maintaining face-to-face instruction and moral guidance as core practices. Third, organizational culture should be reinforced by aligning leadership policies with learning objectives, for example by formally recognizing language motivators (muharrikul lughah) and encouraging peer-based knowledge sharing among teachers.

At the policy level, support from educational authorities and pesantren networks can focus on capacity-building programs that train pesantren educators in technology-supported knowledge

management while respecting traditional pedagogical values. Measurable targets—such as increased frequency of formative evaluation, improved access to shared learning resources, and gradual adoption of digital assessment tools can serve as indicators of successful implementation.

Overall, this study demonstrates that improving English language competence in pesantren requires an integrated approach in which organizational culture provides a supportive environment, learning evaluation drives motivation and accountability, and knowledge management is systematically developed to support instructional practice. The mixed-method findings highlight that effectiveness depends not merely on the presence of these elements, but on the quality and coherence of their implementation within the pesantren context.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the interaction between organizational culture, knowledge management, and learning evaluation in improving English language competence in pesantren in East Java using a sequential exploratory mixed-method approach. The findings indicate that English language learning outcomes are shaped by the coherence of institutional culture, evaluation practices, and knowledge management rather than by isolated interventions.

The quantitative results show that learning evaluation is the most influential factor in enhancing English language competence, supported by qualitative evidence demonstrating the role of continuous assessment, feedback, and follow-up actions in motivating students. Organizational culture contributes positively by fostering discipline, language habituation, and collective responsibility. In contrast, knowledge management displays a negative relationship, reflecting partial and uneven implementation, limited technological integration, and fragmented knowledge-sharing practices across the pesantren studied.

This study contributes to the literature by offering an integrated perspective on educational management in faith-based institutions, emphasizing that the effectiveness of knowledge management depends on contextual adaptation and implementation quality. Practically, the findings suggest that pesantren leaders should prioritize strengthening structured evaluation systems, reinforcing learning-oriented culture, and gradually integrating technology for knowledge management in ways that respect pesantren values. Overall, the study highlights that sustainable improvement in English language competence in pesantren requires an integrated and context-sensitive educational ecosystem that aligns culture, evaluation, and knowledge management.

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