School Culture and Leadership Behavior as Predictors of Job Satisfaction among Private Elementary School Teachers: An Explanatory Sequential Design

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ABSTRACT

Job satisfaction is a pivotal element influencing the efficiency and effectiveness of organizations that assess the degree to which someone views their job favorable or unfavorable. This study aimed to examine the influence of school culture and leadership behavior on the job satisfaction of teachers. This research employed mixed methods research, specifically explanatory sequential design. The research took place in Semarang City, Central Java Province, Indonesia. Private elementary school teachers were surveyed using the purposive sampling technique regarding the level of school culture, leadership behavior, and job satisfaction. Then, the teachers were interviewed through IDI and FGD to confirm the salient points. Results were analyzed using mean and regression in the quantitative strand; and thematic data analysis in the qualitative strand. The results showed that there was as very high status of school culture, which means always evident, while perceived leadership behavior was rated very high, which means it is always observed, and job satisfaction was rated as very high, which means it is always manifested. Moreover, the combined influence of the two independent variables, school culture, and leadership behavior have significant influence on the job satisfaction of teachers. Further, confirmed very high rating and confirmed combined significant influence were the common essential themes. Furthermore, connecting-confirmations were the nature of data integration.

Keywords: Educational leadership, school culture, leadership behavior, job satisfaction, explanatory sequential, Indonesia, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Job satisfaction is a pivotal element influencing the efficiency and effectiveness of organizations (Gaur & Mishra, 2021). It reflects how favorably or unfavorably individuals perceive their jobs (Meier & Spector, 2015) and is shaped by various work-related factors, expectations, and experiences (Thangaswam & Thiyagaraj, 2017). According to Hoque et al. (2023), job satisfaction is particularly significant as it influences students' learning outcomes. However, low job satisfaction among teachers can lead to decreased performance, higher absenteeism, increased turnover intentions, and reduced alignment with organizational goals (Ertürk, 2022; Varma, 2017). In addition, low satisfaction contributes to increased stress and anxiety, diminished teamwork, and weaker professional contributions. Theoretical frameworks highlight the importance of school culture and leadership behaviors as factors of job satisfaction (Zabat et al., 2021; Damayanti & Ismiyati, 2020). Effective leadership, particularly behaviors such as initiating structure and fostering positive school environments, is essential in enhancing both teacher satisfaction and overall school performance (Demirtas et al., 2017). Despite the acknowledged importance of these factors, challenges such as excessive workloads, lack of professional growth opportunities, and low compensation continue to hinder job satisfaction across different teaching contexts.

Moreover, a study in Nigeria revealed the low job satisfaction of teachers, due to increasing job risks, changes in operational methods, and demands for new skills (Iwuagwu, 2021). In Poland, teachers faced dissatisfaction due to challenges requiring them to adopt unconventional teaching methods (Bartosiewicz et al., 2022), while studies in rural China found that over 20 percent of teachers were dissatisfied because of workload pressures and insufficient school facilities (Wang et al., 2022). Similarly, Malaysian teachers reported low job satisfaction because of limited opportunities for professional development and inadequate supervision (Amzat et al., 2017). In the Indonesian context, research revealed teachers have low job satisfaction caused by factors such as inadequate teacher interactions (Sadikin et al., 2023), disparities between public and private schools (Hidayat, 2018), and unsupportive leadership behaviors (Suwuh et al., 2017). A study conducted in Central Java, for example, found that over 48 percent of elementary teachers reported only moderate satisfaction due to organizational conditions, low salary, poor supervision, and insufficient professional development opportunities (Tukiyo, 2015). Similarly, studies in Semarang City and Brebes Regency revealed dissatisfaction among private school teachers (Mulyaningtyas & Soliha, 2023; Wuqso et al., 2023), particularly due to low salaries and work environments lacking motivation and comfort.

Notably, school culture and leadership behaviors have emerged as significant factors influencing teacher job satisfaction. Studies have consistently shown a strong correlation between professional growth, collaborative leadership practices, and satisfaction levels (Abdullahi, 2020; Zabat et al., 2021). Moreover, leadership behaviors, offering clear guidance, providing support, and cultivating a positive workplace atmosphere are essential for improving job satisfaction (Stoll-Lollis, 2015; Demirtas et al., 2017). However, most of these studies (Damayanti & Ismiyati, 2020; Sadikin et al., 2023). rely heavily on quantitative approaches and primarily focus on high school teachers.

However, gaps still exist in addressing the collective impact of school culture and leadership behaviors on job satisfaction, particularly among private elementary school teachers in Indonesia. Previous studies focused on high school teachers and applied either quantitative (Damayanti & Ismiyati, 2020; Zabat et al., 2021; Mulyaningtyas & Soliha, 2023; Sadikin & Nurhani, 2023; Bumay, 2024) or qualitative approaches (Daily, 2018), with very few employing a mixed-methods design for a more comprehensive understanding. Furthermore, previous studies have explored individual factors such as workload, burnout (Lizana et al., 2021; Iwuagwu, 2021), infrastructure issues (Muhamad et al., 2021), and digital literacy (Li & Yu, 2022). However, the holistic impact of school culture and leadership behavior has not been fully examined in the specific context of Semarang City, Central Java Province. Additionally, while leadership behaviors have been extensively studied from the principals' perspectives (Stoll-Lollis, 2015; Daily, 2018; Massengill, 2018), the is a lack of research exploring leadership from teachers' perspectives.

This study examined how school culture and leadership behavior affect job satisfaction among private elementary school teachers in Semarang City, Indonesia, addressing these questions: (1) What are the levels of school culture, leadership behavior, and job satisfaction? (2) Do school culture and leadership behavior significantly impact job satisfaction? (3) What are participants' perspectives on the salient points of the quantitative result? (4) How do qualitative insights explain the quantitative results?

METHOD

This study employed a mixed methods approach using an explanatory sequential design. As defined by Creswell and Creswell (2018), mixed methods integrate quantitative and qualitative data to provide a more comprehensive understanding of research issues.

Analyzing each data type independently is insufficient; thus, integrating both datasets provides a comprehensive perspective. The explanatory sequential design starts with quantitative research, followed by qualitative research to expand on the results. This two-phase method prioritizes quantitative data, using qualitative findings to clarify statistical patterns (Walker, 2022). The questionnaire on school culture is adapted from the study of Hatchett (2010); for Leadership Behavior, the questionnaire is adapted from Crosthwaite (2015); and for Job Satisfaction, the questionnaire is adapted from the study of Bilz (2008). The instrument was tested through pilot testing, the Cronbach's alpha of the school culture variable was .89, while the questionnaire for leadership behavior was .97, and the Cronbach's alpha for the job satisfaction questionnaire was .96. In this research, the quantitative phase guided the creation of the interview guide used for interview both In-Depth Interview (IDI) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The quantitative component employed descriptive correlational methods, while the qualitative phase used phenomenology to examine the meaning of observed phenomena. Integrating both methods provids a thorough and validated understanding of the findings, effectively harnessing their combined strengths.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
The Status of School Culture
It is shown in Table 1.1 that the status of school culture of private elementary school teachers has an overall mean of 4.37, described as very high, which means that positive school culture is always evident. Considering the degrees of dispersion in this variable, the standard deviation is .55, indicating that the responses are relatively clustered around the mean.

Table 1.1

The Status of School Culture of Private Elementary School Teachers

	Mean	SD	Description
Professional Collaboration	4.40	.57	Very High
Affiliative Collegiality	4.37	.57	Very High
Self-determination/Efficacy	4.34	.65	Very High
Overall Mean	**4.37**	**.55**	**Very High**

The Status of Leadership Behavior
The status of leadership behavior in private elementary schools has an overall mean of 4.34 described as very high. This means that leadership behavior is always observed. In addition, its standard deviation of .62 is less than one which shows that responses are clustered close to the mean.

Table 1.2

The Status of Leadership Behavior in Private Elementary Schools

	Mean	SD	Description
Setting Direction	4.38	.63	Very High
Developing People	4.37	.65	Very High
Redesigning the Organization	4.33	.65	Very High
Improving the Instructional Program	4.30	.64	Very High
Overall Mean	**4.34**	**.62**	**Very High**

The Status of Job Staisfaction
The overall status of job satisfaction is 4.31, which is described as very high. It means

that job satisfaction is always manifested. Considering the degrees of dispersion in this variable, the standard deviation is .56, indicating that the responses are clustered near the mean.

Table 1.3

The Status of Job Satisfaction of Private Elementary School Teachers

	Mean	SD	Description
Curriculum and Instruction	4.43	.59	Very High
Time	4.35	.58	Very High
Input into School Policies and Procedures	4.41	.63	Very High
Student Issues	4.31	.60	Very High
Professional Development	4.17	.66	High
Leadership	4.28	.66	Very High
Working Conditions	4.21	.63	Very High
Overall Mean	**4.31**	**.56**	**Very High**

Significance of the Influence of School Culture, and Leadership Behavior on Job Satisfaction

Table 2 presents the multiple regression analysis results, showing that both school culture and leadership behavior significantly predict job satisfaction among private elementary school teachers at a 0.05 significance level. School culture has a standardized beta coefficient of .49 (t = 11.95, p = .00), while leadership behavior has a standardized beta coefficient of .40 (t = 11.10, p = .00), indicating that increases in these variables correspond to significant increases in job satisfaction. The overall regression model is a good fit for the data, as evidenced by $F(2, 335) = 616.89$, p = .00. Additionally, the R-square value of .79 reveals that 79% of the variability in job satisfaction can be explained by school culture and leadership behavior, with the remaining 21% due to other factors not included in the study.

Table 2

Significance of the Influence of School Culture and Leadership Behavior on
Job Satisfaction of Private Elementary School Teachers

	Job Satisfaction			
Individual Influence of Predictors	Standardized Coefficient	t	p-value	Remarks
School Culture	.49	11.95	.00	Significant
Leadership Behavior	.40	11.10	.00	Significant
Combined Influence of Predictors				
R	.89			
R^2	.79			
F	616.89			
P	.00			Significant

Standpoints of the Participants on School Culture

Table 3
Standpoints of the participants on the salient points of the quantitative result

Level	Essential Theme	Typical Reasons
School Culture	Confirmed very high level of school culture	Schools teach traditional cultures, such as regional languages and songs, connecting students with their roots A culture of respect fosters motivation and encourages teacher development. Strong collaboration among teachers, parents, students, and the community enhances the educational experience A solid team spirit promotes positive interactions and cultural sharing among teachers. Teachers embody school values like discipline and honesty, reinforcing a supportive culture. Regular teacher meetings facilitate strategy sharing and growth within the school community
Leadership Behavior	Confirmed very high level of leadership behavior	Effective principals demonstrate strong leadership by providing guidance and direct examples, fostering respect among staff Leaders actively involve teachers and staff in decision-making processes, promoting a sense of ownership and teamwork. Principals motivate teachers to engage in professional development and competitions, encouraging academic growth and self-improvement. Leaders maintain good communication skills, addressing concerns while fostering a positive environment for feedback and dialogue High levels of supervision and support from principals ensure that teacher performance is monitored, with assistance offered when needed Principals prioritize continuous professional growth for teachers, emphasizing the importance of skill enhancement and personal development
Job Satisfaction	Confirmed very high level of job satisfaction	Positive relationships with comfortable coworkers enhance job satisfaction. Freedom to manage classes and choose materials fosters creativity. A culture of discipline leads to focus and fairness among staff. Working under a mosque enhances teachers' sense of purpose Modern facilities and technology support innovative teaching Dynamic private school settings encourage teachers to exceed their duties.
Significant influence of school culture and leadership behavior to job satisfaction	Confirmed significant influence of school culture and leadership behavior to job satisfaction	Collaboration among principals, teachers, students, and parents boosts job satisfaction A strong school culture enhances job satisfaction, even without the principal. Positive school culture and effective leadership enhance teacher satisfaction. Good leaders improve culture; poor leaders worsen it, affecting satisfaction. Effective leadership motivates teachers to improve education quality. A positive school culture aligns with the school's vision, enhancing performance and satisfaction.

The findings highlight the significant influence of school culture and leadership behavior on job satisfaction in private elementary schools. Participants confirmed that teaching traditional cultures, fostering respect, collaboration, and embodying values like discipline and honesty enhance the educational experience and teacher development. Effective leadership, demonstrated through guidance, open communication, teacher involvement in decision-making, and continuous professional growth, further boosts job satisfaction. Additionally, positive coworker relationships, classroom autonomy, discipline, and modern resources contribute to teacher motivation and creativity. A strong collaboration between principals, teachers, parents, and students, combined with effective leadership, creates a supportive school environment that enhances teacher satisfaction and improves educational quality.

Joint Display of Quantitative and Qualitative Result

The joint display of quantitative and qualitative results in Table 5 highlights the significant relationship between school culture, leadership behavior, and job satisfaction. Participants confirmed a strong school culture in private elementary schools in Semarang

City, characterized by traditional values, collaboration, and respect, which enhance teacher development and student learning. Leadership behavior was also rated very high, with leaders fostering respect, decision-making involvement, professional growth, and open communication. Teachers reported high job satisfaction, attributed to positive coworker relationships, classroom autonomy, discipline, modern facilities, and a sense of purpose. The combined influence of school culture and leadership behavior on job satisfaction was confirmed, demonstrating a strong and interconnected relationship.

Table 4
Joint Display of Quantitative and Qualitative Results

Research Area	Quantitative Results	Qualitative Results	Nature of Integration
School Culture	Based on the result of the quantitative strand of this study, the overall mean of School Culture is 4.37, described as very high, which means always evident.	Participants confirmed the very high level of school culture. Basing on the IDI and FGD, it could be gathered that schools promote traditional cultures and values while fostering collaboration, respect, and community involvement, enhancing both the educational experience and teacher development.	Connecting-confirmation
Leadership Behavior	Based on the result of the quantitative strand of this study, the overall mean of Leadership Behavior is 4.34, described as very high, which means always observed	Participants confirmed the very high level of leadership behavior. Basing on the IDI and FGD, it could be gathered that effective principals foster respect, involve staff in decision-making, promote professional development, maintain open communication, provide supervision, and prioritize continuous growth for teachers.	Connecting-confirmation
Job Satisfaction	Based on the result of the quantitative strand of this study, the overall mean of Job Satisfaction is 4.31, described as very high, which means always manifested	Participants confirmed the very high level of job satisfaction. Basing on the IDI and FGD, it could be gathered that positive coworker relationships, classroom autonomy, a disciplined culture, a purpose-driven environment, modern facilities, and dynamic settings all contribute to enhanced job satisfaction for teachers.	Connecting-confirmation
Significant influence of school culture and leadership behavior to job satisfaction	The results revealed that school culture and leadership behavior have a significant combined influence on job satisfaction among private elementary school teachers in Semarang, Indonesia. R=.89 R square= .79 F= 616.89 P= .00	Participants confirmed the significant influence of school culture and leadership behavior to job satisfaction. Basing on the IDI and FGD, it could be gathered that collaboration among stakeholders, a strong school culture, effective leadership, and alignment with the school's vision collectively boost job satisfaction and educational quality for teachers.	Connecting-confirmation

Discussion

The Status of School Culture

The very high status of school culture corroborates the previous studies showing that school culture is generally rated high across different regions. Patonah (2016) found that a school in Banjar, West Java, had a high level of school culture. Similarly, Rahman et al. (2023) reported that schools in Bulukumba Regency, South Sulawesi, Indonesia had a high

school culture rating. In the Davao Region, Guhao and Sioting (2023) found that public elementary schools had a very high school culture rating. Moreover, Epstein et al. (2022), emphasized that school culture is shaped by collaboration among staff, community organizations, and other stakeholders that will build sense of belonging and mutual support, enhancing relationships and strengthening the overall school environment. According to Deal and Peterson (2016), a strong school culture develops when communication is clear, decisions are thoughtfully made, and staff members uphold professionalism while building positive relationships with each other. In addition, School culture serves as a framework shaping all aspects of the school, including its effectiveness where all stakeholders effectively perform their duties (Ismail et al., 2022).

The Status of Leadership Behavior

The very high rating of leadership behavior aligns with the study in Tanjung Raja by Sepriadi and Ahmad (2017), which found that the leadership behavior of school principals was rated high, while a study by Stoll-Lollis (2015) discovered that principal leadership behaviors in California were rated at a moderate level. In addition, a study by Arief et al. (2024) reported that school principals in Semarang, scored an high average in terms of overall managerial skills, described as high. Additionally, a study conducted by Littlejohn (2021) revealed that the leadership behavior of the principals is excellent or very high, specifically in establishing a clear direction and gaining stakeholder consensus on the school's vision and mission.

Additionally, the high status of the private school principal's leadership behavior in Semarang supports the idea of Al-Aghbar et al. (2019) that leadership behavior demonstrates self-awareness, transparency, and ethical behavior that fosters trust and credibility among members, promoting a positive and effective leadership environment. In addition, other studies by Yukl and Gardner (2020) and Zhou (2022) stated that effective leadership behavior requires a flexible approach that can adapt to different contexts and challenges based on the demands and situations.

The Status of Job Satisfaction

The very high status of job satisfaction does not align with the findings of Lin et al. (2024), which showed that about half of the American teachers were dissatisfied or had low job satisfaction. It also contradicts Nugraha's (2019) study, which found that over 50 percent of teachers in North Sumatera Province reported low job satisfaction. Moreover, this study disagrees to the research by Muzayanah (2016), which revealed that teachers in Surakarta, Central Java Province have low job satisfaction. Further, the very high status of job satisfaction contrasts the study by Muhamad et al. (2021) and Li and Yu (2022), which found that teachers' job satisfaction was reduced as they were given a heavy workload. Also, the result rejects the study of Tukiyo (2015), which found moderate satisfaction in the Klaten Regency, and Wuqso et al. (2023), which reported decreased satisfaction in the Brebes Regency.

However, the very high level of job satisfaction corroborates the study conducted by Baluyos et a. (2019), which revealed that the teachers were highly satisfied with their job, specifically on supervision and job security. Also, the very high status of job satisfaction aligns with the study conducted by Oco (2022) that teachers have very high rating of job satisfaction, especially in terms of social relationships. The very high status of job satisfaction emphasizes the idea of Kartiko et al. (2023), which states that teachers' job satisfaction is high if given adequate training and support for technology use to teachers. Additionally, Tatar (2020) also emphasizes the importance of prioritizing resources needed by teachers to enhance job satisfaction. Also, in enhancing the job satisfaction of teachers, Davidescu et al. (2020) stated that various aspects are required such as psychological, physical, and

environmental factors, influence motivation, productivity, and performance.

Significance of the Influence of School Culture and Leadership Behavior on Job Satisfaction

The multiple regression analysis indicated that school culture and leadership behavior have a significant influence on the job satisfaction of private elementary school teachers in Semarang, Indonesia. An increase in positive school culture and effective leadership behavior correlates with higher job satisfaction. The findings are consistent with key theories, such as Organizational Culture Theory (Schein, 1985), which emphasizes the role of collaboration, collegiality, and self-efficacy in enhancing job satisfaction. Similarly, Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory (Graen & Dansereau, 1973) highlights the importance of trust, respect, and support between leaders and teachers, and Herzberg's Motivator-Hygiene Theory (1959) also supports the importance of both intrinsic motivators (e.g., recognition, achievement) and hygiene factors (e.g., supervision, compensation) for job satisfaction. School culture and leadership behavior collectively shape teacher job satisfaction. A positive school culture—marked by collaboration, autonomy, and inclusivity—and effective leadership behavior—characterized by support, fairness, and open communication—create an empowering and motivating environment. Studies such as those by Deal and Peterson (2016) and Karakus et al. (2024) support these findings, showing that fostering teamwork, managing workloads, and addressing teachers' psychological needs can significantly enhance job satisfaction. Educators and policymakers must focus on building supportive school cultures and strong leadership to improve teacher well-being and overall school effectiveness.

Standpoints of the Participants on the Salient Points of the Quantitative Result

The research offers meaningful insights into the relationship between school culture, leadership behavior, and job satisfaction in private elementary schools in Semarang, Indonesia. The quantitative results reveal a very high level of school culture, characterized by strong traditions, respect, and collaboration among teachers and stakeholders. These factors foster motivation, teacher development, and a supportive environment, aligning with the ideas of Deal and Peterson (2016), Bryk and Schneider (2004), and Hargreaves & Fullan (2015). Furthermore, a culture of respect and strong collaboration among teachers, parents, and students enhances the educational experience, promoting a positive school culture and a sense of belonging among teachers.

The study also confirms a very high level of leadership behavior, with effective principals demonstrating strong guidance, respect, and support for teachers' professional growth. This aligns with the views of Imansyah et al. (2020) and Al-Aghbar et al. (2019), who emphasize the roles of educator, manager, supervisor, and motivator in developing people. Effective leadership behaviors involve involving teachers in decision-making, maintaining good communication, and supporting teacher development through coaching and mentoring. The combined influence of school culture and leadership behavior significantly enhances teacher job satisfaction, underlining the importance of a collaborative, inclusive, and supportive environment that directly affects teacher morale and effectiveness.

Data Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Results

The qualitative data in this study validates and confirms the findings in the quantitative results by illustrating the connecting and confirming character of integration. The affirmations from participants regarding school culture, leadership behavior, and job satisfaction align with the statistical data, confirming observed tendencies. The qualitative component provides depth and context to the numerical scores, highlighting the experiences and viewpoints of private elementary school teachers. This validation is evident as participants noted the promotion of traditional cultures and values, collaboration, respect, and community engagement within the schools, which enhances both the learning experience and teacher development. The study supports the ideas of Deal and Peterson (2016), who

emphasize the importance of values and beliefs in traditional cultures within school culture, and Hargreaves and Fullan (2015), who highlight the role of collaboration in maintaining a positive school culture.

The IDI and FGD findings reveal that effective principals foster respect, involve staff in decision-making, support professional development, and maintain open communication. This aligns with studies by Sadikin et al. (2023) and Jerab and Mabrouk (2023), which underscore the importance of effective leadership in enhancing teacher job satisfaction. The qualitative data demonstrates that a strong school culture and effective leadership significantly influence teacher job satisfaction, which supports the statistical significance and provides a more comprehensive understanding of how these variables interact. This connection highlights the importance of a supportive, inclusive, and collaborative school culture, as well as effective leadership behavior, to enhance job satisfaction among private elementary school teachers in Semarang, Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

Private elementary school teachers in Semarang, Indonesia, rated very high school culture, where teachers feel valued, respected, and connected. Leadership behavior was rated very high, with school leaders promoting collaboration, clear direction, and open communication. Also, teachers experience very high job satisfaction, supported by autonomy in teaching, adequate planning time, input into policies, effective student issue management, and access to professional development. School culture and leadership behavior significantly influence on teachers' job satisfaction. Data integration confirmed that both quantitative and qualitative results support the influence of school culture and leadership behavior on job satisfaction. The connecting-confirmation link of school culture and leadership behavior to job satisfaction confirmed the quantitative result that school culture and leadership behavior play a substantial and meaningful role in teachers' job satisfaction.

Since professional development was not rated at an optimal level, principals and administrators may improve it by offering teachers choices for in-service training, assisting with content selection, and providing on-site professional development. Administrators may consider enhancing school culture and leadership behavior to further boost job satisfaction, as indicated by the regression model. In addition, future researchers may explore additional factors that could contribute to job satisfaction. Given the strong influence of school culture and leadership behavior, principals are encouraged to lead by example with integrity, motivate teachers, foster teamwork through inclusive decision-making, and maintain open communication. Policymakers can support these efforts through professional development and leadership training.

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