A STRUCTURAL MODEL ON LEADERSHIP SKILLS AS PREDICTED BY JOB SATISFACTION, CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SCHOOL CULTURE AMONG PUBLIC SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Kriztian R. Ibaos[1]

[1]Researcher, Department of Education, The Rizal Memorial Colleges, Inc

ABSTRACT

Fundamentally, the success of schools depend on first-rate school leadership, on leaders reinforcing the teachers' willingness to adhere to the school's vision, creating a sense of purpose, binding them together and encouraging them to engage in continuous learning. Leadership skills, job satisfaction, continuing professional development and school culture are considered as the key to school improvement. The respondents are from the four hundred school principals from four hundred elementary and secondary schools. A descriptive correlationa! research design was used in order to attain its objectives. Levels were measured using mean and standard deviation while the significant relationships and influences were measured using Pearson -r and multiple regression respectively. Statistics was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The model five shows a direct causal link of the exogenous variables, job satisfaction to endogenous variable, leadership skills. The model evidently exemplifies the association of job satisfaction, professional development and school culture as predictors of leadership skills. Consequently, job satisfaction is directly influencing leadership skills. Results were indicative of the influence of the principals' leadership skills as predicted by job satisfaction, continuing professional development and school culture. The skills of the principal can be improved through the help of the indicators presented in the study.

Keywords: Leadership skills, schools, principals, structural model

1. INTRODUCTION

Effective school leadership plays a pivotal role in determining the success and progress of educational institutions. Globally, schools are grappling with challenges that directly affect student performance, teacher satisfaction, and overall school effectiveness. School leaders are expected not only to manage operations but to inspire and support teachers, students, and the broader school community to achieve educational goals. The relationship between leadership skills and key factors such as job satisfaction, continuing professional development, and school culture has been identified as central to the improvement of schools (Leithwood et al., 2020). However, many schools still struggle with the question of how to effectively foster and sustain these leadership qualities within principals, particularly in light of global, national, and local challenges.

Globally, school systems are facing critical challenges that necessitate strong leadership at the helm of educational institutions. One pressing issue is the teacher retention crisis, which has affected many countries, leading to a shortage of qualified teachers and increased workloads for those remaining (OECD, 2020). Without effective leadership that can inspire and support teachers, this issue is exacerbated, leading to declines in both teacher performance and student outcomes (Ingersoll et al., 2021).

Another global concern is the implementation of 21st-century skills, which has been highlighted by global education frameworks such as the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (UNESCO, 2019). School leaders must guide the transition to curricula that emphasize critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving, all while managing resistance to change from educators accustomed to traditional teaching methods (Schleicher, 2021).

A third significant issue is the digital divide in education. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and intensified the inequities in access to digital tools and internet connectivity, which affects students' ability to engage with online learning platforms (World Bank, 2020). School leaders are required to navigate these disparities and implement strategies that ensure all students can access quality education regardless of their socioeconomic background.

In the Philippines, the education system faces a host of challenges that call for improved school leadership. One of the major national issues is the low performance in international assessments, such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), where Filipino students ranked among the lowest in reading, mathematics, and science (Department of Education, 2020). This underperformance has raised questions about the quality of education and leadership in schools.

Another national concern is the inadequate professional development opportunities for teachers and school leaders. While the Department of Education has initiated training programs, many educators feel that these opportunities are insufficient in addressing the evolving demands of 21st-century teaching (Bautista & Romero, 2021). Without continuous learning, both teachers and school leaders struggle to adapt to new pedagogical practices and technologies.

Furthermore, overcrowded classrooms remain a significant problem in many public schools. The Philippines has one of the highest student-to-teacher ratios in the region, placing immense pressure on school leaders to manage resources effectively while maintaining quality education (Tabunda, 2022). In these conditions, leadership skills such as resource management and teacher motivation are crucial.

At the local level, Panabo City faces its own set of educational challenges that highlight the need for strong school leadership. A primary concern is the disparity in resource allocation between urban and rural schools. Schools in rural areas often suffer from a lack of teaching materials, poor infrastructure, and insufficient funding, all of which hinder the learning process (Mendoza, 2020). Principals in these areas must display exceptional leadership in order to manage with limited resources while striving to provide quality education.

Inconsistent implementation of professional development programs for school leaders is another issue that impacts the local educational landscape. Many school principals report that while training is available, it is either not regularly conducted or does not address the specific needs of their schools (Alabado, 2021). Without consistent and relevant professional development, the leadership skills of school principals may remain stagnant.

Lastly, teacher burnout has been identified as a growing concern in Panabo City, with many teachers experiencing high levels of stress due to heavy workloads and lack of support (Caballero, 2022). In these circumstances, school leaders play a crucial role in fostering a positive school culture and ensuring teacher well-being to mitigate burnout and its negative effects on student learning.

Research Problem

Given the global, national, and local challenges in education, there is an urgent need to investigate the factors that contribute to effective school leadership. Specifically, this study aims to examine the relationship between job satisfaction, continuing professional development, school culture, and the leadership skills of school principals. Although much research has been conducted on these individual factors, there remains a gap in understanding how they interact to influence leadership in the context of elementary and secondary schools, particularly in the Philippines.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to develop a model that explains how job satisfaction, continuing professional development, and school culture predict leadership skills among school principals. The study seeks to:

1. Assess the levels of job satisfaction, professional development, school culture, and leadership skills among school principals.

2. Determine the relationships between these variables.

3. Identify the key predictors of leadership skills within the context of elementary and secondary schools.

4. Provide recommendations for improving school leadership based on the findings.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it provides valuable insights into how school leadership can be enhanced through a focus on job satisfaction, professional development, and school culture. For policymakers, the findings can inform the development of targeted programs that address these key factors in educational leadership. For school administrators and teachers, the research highlights the importance of fostering a supportive and collaborative school environment that promotes continuous learning and leadership development.

Furthermore, this study adds to the body of knowledge on educational leadership, offering a specific focus on the Philippines and the broader ASEAN context.

In synthesis, the global, national, and local challenges in education underscore the critical role of school leadership in navigating complex issues such as teacher retention, resource management, and professional development. By examining the interplay between job satisfaction, professional development, and school culture in shaping leadership skills, this study contributes to the broader conversation on how to improve the quality of education in schools both locally and beyond.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

School leadership plays a critical role in shaping the overall success of educational institutions by driving improvement in student outcomes, fostering teacher satisfaction, and establishing a supportive school culture. Across different regions, school leaders face diverse challenges that necessitate varying approaches to effective leadership.

This literature review draws from studies in the ASEAN, European, African, and Australian contexts to explore the relationships between leadership, job satisfaction, continuing professional development, and school culture. The review also identifies gaps in the literature and highlights areas requiring further exploration.

School Leadership in the ASEAN Region

Job Satisfaction and Leadership in the ASEAN Context

In the Philippines, Aguado and Perez (2020) found that job satisfaction among school principals is closely tied to the support they receive from higher authorities and opportunities for professional growth. Principals who reported higher levels of support were more likely to exhibit effective leadership practices. This highlights the need for structured support systems that enable principals to lead more effectively.

Similarly, in Malaysia, Ismail et al. (2021) demonstrated that transformational leadership significantly enhances job satisfaction among school principals. Transformational leaders, who inspire and motivate their staff, reported higher job satisfaction and better school performance. This indicates that leadership styles are critical in influencing principals' satisfaction and their effectiveness in leadership roles.

In Vietnam, Nguyen et al. (2020) highlighted that principals who foster a collaborative school culture report greater job satisfaction and better staff engagement. This underscores the importance of creating a culture where teachers and staff feel valued, as it directly affects the principal's leadership success and overall school environment.

These studies from the ASEAN region emphasize the importance of leadership styles and school culture in determining job satisfaction among school principals. The findings suggest that leadership development should not only focus on administrative skills but also on fostering positive and collaborative environments that enhance satisfaction.

Continuing Professional Development in the ASEAN Context

In Thailand, Srisopha and Intarakumnerd (2021) revealed that school leaders who participate in regular professional development programs are more effective in their roles. Principals who engage in continuous learning reported higher confidence in managing their schools and motivating teachers, showing that CPD is essential for keeping school leaders updated with best practices.

In Indonesia, Santoso et al. (2019) emphasized that CPD programs focusing on instructional leadership are particularly beneficial. They found that principals who received training on instructional leadership techniques were more capable of improving teaching quality and student outcomes in their schools.

In Cambodia, Chhum and Dary (2020) noted several barriers to professional development for school leaders, such as time constraints and limited access to relevant training. This finding suggests that there is a need for more flexible and accessible CPD opportunities for school leaders, particularly in developing countries.

The literature highlights the critical role of professional development in improving school leadership effectiveness across the ASEAN region. However, access to CPD remains uneven, with some countries experiencing barriers that limit the opportunities for leadership growth. This points to a need for policies that facilitate continuous learning for school leaders.

School Culture and Leadership in ASEAN

Rodriguez and Morales (2021) in the Philippines found that school culture significantly influences leadership effectiveness. Schools with a culture of collaboration and mutual trust reported higher levels of leadership success, suggesting that a positive school culture is essential for fostering strong leadership.

In Singapore, Tan and Low (2020) found that inclusive school cultures lead to better student outcomes. Principals who promoted inclusivity and support within their schools were more successful in achieving academic improvement, demonstrating the importance of culture in leadership success.

In Malaysia, Abdullah et al. (2021) demonstrated that principals who emphasize transparent communication and shared decision-making enhance both teacher satisfaction and student engagement.

This suggests that school culture not only impacts leadership but also extends its influence on overall school performance.

The studies from ASEAN countries collectively show that a positive and collaborative school culture is fundamental to leadership success. Principals who prioritize building strong relationships with staff and creating an inclusive environment are more effective, which suggests that fostering a supportive culture should be a key focus in leadership development programs.

School Leadership in the European Context

Job Satisfaction and Leadership in Europe

In the UK, Jones and Harris (2020) explored the effects of distributed leadership on job satisfaction, finding that principals who share responsibilities with their staff report higher satisfaction. This study underscores the importance of delegation and shared leadership in enhancing both job satisfaction and school performance.

In Finland, Korhonen et al. (2021) found that leadership training improves job satisfaction among school principals. Principals who received structured leadership development reported feeling more equipped to handle the challenges of their roles, leading to greater job satisfaction and school success.

In Italy, Martini and Galletti (2019) explored the role of emotional intelligence in leadership. They found that principals with higher emotional intelligence were better able to manage stress and maintain positive relationships with their staff, which directly impacted their job satisfaction.

These studies from Europe demonstrate that both shared leadership models and emotional intelligence are key contributors to job satisfaction among school leaders. This suggests that leadership training programs should include emotional intelligence development and strategies for delegation.

Continuing Professional Development in Europe

In Norway, Vogt and Brudvik (2020)emphasized the importance of CPD programs focused on instructional leadership. Principals who engaged in such programs reported improvements in school outcomes, as they were better equipped to guide their teachers in effective instructional practices.

In Germany, Schmidt et al. (2021) highlighted the role of mentorship in the professional development of school leaders. Principals who had access to mentorship programs were more successful in their roles, suggesting that peer support plays a significant role in leadership development.

In France, Dupont and Berger (2021) noted that government-led CPD initiatives significantly improve leadership skills. They found that principals who participated in structured government training programs reported higher levels of job satisfaction and school performance. CPD programs in Europe are largely successful in enhancing leadership skills, with a particular emphasis on instructional leadership and mentorship. The inclusion of mentorship in CPD programs is a key factor that contributes to the ongoing development of school principals, as it provides opportunities for reflection and peer learning.

School Culture and Leadership in Europe

In Sweden, Johansson and Lindberg (2019) found that school culture significantly impacts leadership effectiveness. Principals who fostered a collaborative culture reported greater success in achieving school goals, emphasizing the role of culture in school improvement.

In Spain, Garcia and Romero (2021) demonstrated that principals who promote continuous learning within their school culture see higher levels of teacher engagement and student performance. This suggests that a culture of learning not only benefits students but also enhances leadership effectiveness.

In Denmark, Eriksen and Larsen (2020) highlighted the importance of trust in school culture, finding that principals who prioritize trust and open communication are more successful in fostering a positive and productive school environment.

School culture continues to play a fundamental role in leadership effectiveness in Europe. Trust, collaboration, and a focus on continuous learning are critical components that influence a principal's ability to lead successfully. Leadership development programs must therefore integrate these elements to foster strong leadership.

School Leadership in the African Context

Job Satisfaction and Leadership in Africa

In South Africa, Moyo and Sibanda (2021) found that transformational leadership significantly improves job satisfaction among school principals. Principals who adopt transformational leadership practices, such as inspiring and motivating their staff, reported higher satisfaction and school success.

In Kenya, Njeri and Wachira (2020) explored the external factors influencing job satisfaction, noting that community and government support play a crucial role. Principals who felt supported by their communities and authorities reported higher job satisfaction.

In Nigeria, Adebayo and Olaleye (2021) demonstrated that high administrative workloads negatively impact job satisfaction among school principals. This suggests that resource management and support systems are essential for reducing stress and improving job satisfaction.

The African context highlights the importance of external support and manageable workloads in improving job satisfaction. Principals who feel supported and less burdened by administrative tasks are more likely to experience job satisfaction and succeed in their leadership roles.

Continuing Professional Development in Africa

In Uganda, Kasozi and Nakanjako (2020) found that school principals who participated in CPD programs were better equipped to manage their schools effectively, leading to improved student outcomes. This reinforces the importance of continuous learning for school leaders.

In Ghana, Owusu and Abban (2021) noted that limited funding and access to quality training programs were significant barriers to CPD. The study calls for increased investment in professional development for school leaders to improve their leadership capacity.

In Ethiopia, Bekele and Tadesse (2019) found that government-sponsored CPD initiatives improved leadership skills but recommended that training programs should be more tailored to the specific needs of school leaders in different regions.

CPD remains a critical factor in improving school leadership in Africa. However, the challenges of access and funding present significant barriers. Tailoring CPD programs to the unique challenges faced by African school leaders could greatly enhance their effectiveness.

Gaps in the Literature

While there is extensive research on school leadership, there are still notable gaps, particularly in how job satisfaction, professional development, and school culture interact to influence leadership effectiveness in different contexts. Additionally, many studies focus on individual factors without exploring their combined effects on leadership success. This study aims to address these gaps by exploring the combined impact of job satisfaction, continuing professional development, and school culture on school leadership, particularly in the Philippine context.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationships between school leadership skills, job satisfaction, continuing professional development, and school culture among school principals. The descriptive aspect of the design was used to measure the current levels of these variables, while the correlational aspect explored the relationships and interactions between them. Descriptive-correlational research is ideal for understanding how different variables relate without manipulating the study environment (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). This design allows for a comprehensive analysis of existing conditions and the interactions between job satisfaction, professional development, school culture, and leadership skills.

Participants and Sampling Procedure

The study involved 400 school principals from both elementary and secondary schools in the Philippines. A stratified random sampling method was employed to ensure that participants were representative of both school types and regions. Stratified sampling is often used in educational research to reduce bias and ensure that different subgroups (e.g., urban vs. rural schools) are adequately represented (Etikan & Bala, 2017). This approach allowed for the inclusion of diverse school contexts, which is important for generalizing the findings across different types of schools in the region.

Data Collection Instruments. Data were collected using a validated questionnaire designed to measure the four key variables: leadership skills, job satisfaction, professional development, and school culture. The questionnaire consisted of several sections:

Leadership Skills: This section was adapted from the Leadership Practices Inventory (Kouzes & Posner, 2019), a widely used tool to assess leadership behaviors across five key dimensions: modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart.

Job Satisfaction: The Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) developed by *Spector (2020 was used to assess the principals' overall job satisfaction across different facets, including pay, promotion, supervision, and work environment. This instrument has been extensively used in educational leadership research to gauge satisfaction levels (Davis & Smith, 2021).

Continuing Professional Development (CPD): A custom-made section was included to measure the frequency and perceived quality of professional development activities attended by school principals, based on the framework provided by *Day and Sammons (2020)*. Items in this section included questions on participation in leadership workshops, online courses, mentorship programs, and self-directed learning.

School Culture: The School Culture Survey (SCS), as adapted by Gruenert and Whitaker (2021), was used to measure the overall school environment in terms of collegiality, trust, shared leadership, and continuous learning. This instrument has been validated in various educational contexts for its reliability in assessing school climate. The questionnaire was pilot-tested with 50 principals from neighboring districts to ensure its reliability and validity. The pilot test results yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.88, indicating a high level of internal consistency (Taber, 2019). After adjustments

based on pilot feedback, the survey was distributed to the sample population. Data Collection Procedure. Data were collected over a three-month period. Given the restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the survey was administered through Google Forms and distributed via email. The use of online tools for data collection has been increasingly recommended, particularly in educational research, due to its convenience and ability to reach large populations quickly (Bryman, 2021). Principals were given two weeks to respond, with regular follow-up emails sent to increase the response rate. Participation was voluntary, and all participants provided informed consent before completing the survey. Online data collection methods have been shown to yield comparable results to face-to-face methods, provided that appropriate follow-up and data quality controls are implemented (Cohen et al., 2021).

4. DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

The data collected from the questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS version 27for Windows. The following statistical procedures were employed:

Descriptive Statistics. The mean, standard deviation, and frequencies were calculated for each of the four variables (leadership skills, job satisfaction, professional development, and school culture). Descriptive statistics provide an overview of the data and allow for the initial understanding of the levels of each variable (Creswell & Creswell, 2020).

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. This statistical tool was used to assess the strength and direction of the relationships between leadership skills and the other three variables. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) is commonly used in educational research to determine the linear relationship between continuous variables (Schober et al., 2018).

Multiple Regression Analysis. To explore the influence of job satisfaction, professional development, and school culture on leadership skills, multiple regression analysis was conducted. This method is appropriate for determining the extent to which several predictor variables influence an outcome variable (Field, 2020). The analysis provided insights into the relative contribution of each variable to leadership skills and identified the strongest predictors.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). SEM was used to test the proposed model of how job satisfaction, continuing professional development, and school culture predict leadership skills. SEM is particularly useful in testing complex models involving multiple relationships between variables (Kline, 2020). The bootstrapping method was applied to assess the indirect effects of professional development and school culture on leadership skills through job satisfaction (Hayes, 2021).

Significance Testing. All statistical tests were conducted at the 0.05 level of significance meaning that results with a p-value of less than 0.05 were considered statistically significant. This threshold is standard in educational research and ensures that the results are not due to chance (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).

Rationale for Method Choices

The descriptive-correlational design was chosen because it allows for a clear understanding of relationships between variables without manipulating the research environment (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). By using this design, the study could assess the existing levels of leadership skills, job satisfaction, professional development, and school culture while also exploring the interrelationships between these variables.

The use of stratified random sampling ensures that the sample is representative of various subgroups within the population, which is critical in education research where contextual factors such as school type or location can significantly affect the results (Etikan & Bala, 2017). The validated questionnaires were selected based on their widespread use and reliability in educational research, ensuring the accuracy and consistency of the data collected (Spector, 2020; Kouzes & Posner, 2019).

Finally, the combination of descriptive statistics, correlation, multiple regression, and SEM provided a robust framework for analyzing both the direct and indirect relationships between the variables. These methods were selected to ensure that the study could explore not only whether the variables were related, but also how much influence one variable has on another (Field, 2020).

5. RESULTS

This section presents the findings of the study, based on data collected from 400 school principals using validated instruments to measure leadership skills, job satisfaction, continuing professional development (CPD), and school culture. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression were used to analyze the data.

Descriptive Statistics. The levels of leadership skills, job satisfaction, professional development, and school culture among the 400 school principals were measured using mean and standard deviation. The key findings are as follows:

Leadership Skills: The average score for leadership skills among the principals was 4.35 (SD = 0.51), indicating that most principals exhibit a high level of leadership capability. This suggests that leadership behaviors, such as modeling the way and enabling others to act, are generally well-developed among the respondents (Kouzes & Posner, 2019).

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF PROGRESSIVE
RESEARCH IN ENGINEERING MANAGEMENT
AND SCIENCE (IJPREMS)
(Int Peer Reviewed Journal)
Vol. 04, Issue 10, October 2024, pp : 506-517

www.ijprems.com
editor@ijprems.com

e-ISSN :
2583-1062

Impact
Factor :
7.001

Job Satisfaction: Principals reported an average job satisfaction score of 4.12 (SD = 0.65), reflecting relatively high satisfaction levels. However, some areas, such as workload and administrative support, were identified as contributing to lower satisfaction for a subset of respondents (Spector, 2020).

Continuing Professional Development: The mean score for professional development participation was 3.95 (SD = 0.58), indicating moderate engagement with CPD activities. Most principals participated in leadership workshops and self-directed learning, but only a minority had access to mentorship programs, which are considered highly effective for leadership development (Day & Sammons, 2020).

School Culture: The average score for school culture was 4.28 (SD = 0.54), with a strong emphasis on collegiality, shared leadership, and trust among staff. Principals in schools with more positive cultures reported better cooperation and a stronger commitment to continuous improvement (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2021).

Correlation Analysis

The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used to assess the relationships between leadership skills, job satisfaction, continuing professional development, and school culture. The results are as follows:

Leadership Skills and Job Satisfaction. There was a significant positive correlation between leadership skills and job satisfaction ($r = 0.64$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that principals who are more satisfied with their jobs tend to demonstrate stronger leadership behaviors (Jones & Harris, 2020).

Leadership Skills and Professional Development. A positive correlation was also found between leadership skills and participation in CPD ($r = 0.57$, $p < 0.01$). Principals who regularly participated in CPD activities reported higher leadership effectiveness, highlighting the importance of ongoing professional learning (Santoso et al., 2019).

Leadership Skills and School Culture: The strongest correlation was between leadership skills and school culture ($r = 0.71$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that principals in schools with a positive, collaborative culture are more likely to exhibit effective leadership behaviors (Rodriguez & Morales, 2021).

Multiple Regression Analysis

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to explore the extent to which job satisfaction, professional development, and school culture predict leadership skills. The regression model explained 58% of the variance in leadership skills ($R^2 = 0.58$, $F(3, 396) = 94.23$, $p < 0.01$).

Job Satisfaction: The standardized beta coefficient for job satisfaction was 0.31 ($p < 0.01$), indicating that job satisfaction is a significant predictor of leadership skills. Principals who are more satisfied with their work environment tend to develop stronger leadership skills (Korhonen et al., 2021).

Professional Development: CPD also emerged as a significant predictor of leadership skills, with a standardized beta coefficient of 0.25 ($p < 0.01$). This finding supports the role of professional development in enhancing leadership effectiveness (Harrison & Simmons, 2020).

School Culture: The strongest predictor of leadership skills was school culture, with a standardized beta coefficient of 0.42 ($p < 0.01$). Principals who work in schools with a positive and supportive culture are more likely to display effective leadership (Garcia & Romero, 2021).

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

The results of the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) showed that school culture and professional development indirectly influence leadership skills through job satisfaction. The model had good fit indices ($\chi^2 = 23.45$, $p < 0.05$, CFI = 0.97, RMSEA = 0.05), indicating that the model appropriately captures the relationships among the variables (Kline, 2020).

Indirect Effects: The indirect effect of professional development on leadership skills through job satisfaction was significant ($\beta = 0.15$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that CPD improves leadership skills partly by increasing job satisfaction (Dupont & Berger, 2021).

Direct Effects: School culture had a direct effect on leadership skills ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < 0.01$), showing that a positive school environment directly fosters leadership behaviors (Eriksen & Larsen, 2020).

Summary of Findings

Leadership Skills: Most principals demonstrated high levels of leadership skills, with job satisfaction, professional development, and school culture being significant predictors.

Job Satisfaction: Principals who reported higher job satisfaction exhibited stronger leadership capabilities, highlighting the importance of addressing factors that contribute to satisfaction, such as workload and administrative support.

Continuing Professional Development: CPD participation, though moderate, significantly contributed to leadership skills. Principals who engaged in more comprehensive CPD activities, including mentorship, exhibited better leadership outcomes.

School Culture: A positive school culture was the strongest predictor of leadership effectiveness, underscoring the role of collaboration, trust, and shared leadership in enhancing the leadership capabilities of school principals.

6. DISCUSSION

Interpretation of Results

The results of this study provide valuable insights into the factors that influence school leadership effectiveness, specifically the roles of job satisfaction, continuing professional development (CPD), and school culture. These findings align with existing research and contribute to a deeper understanding of how these factors interact to shape school leadership skills.

Job Satisfaction and Leadership Skills. The significant positive correlation between job satisfaction and leadership skills ($r = 0.64$) confirms that principals who are more satisfied with their work environment tend to exhibit stronger leadership capabilities. This finding is consistent with previous research, such as *Korhonen et al. (2021)*, which highlighted the importance of job satisfaction in enhancing the leadership abilities of school principals. Principals who experience greater satisfaction in their roles are more likely to be motivated, engage their staff effectively, and demonstrate the leadership behaviors that contribute to school success.

Moreover, the multiple regression analysis identified job satisfaction as a significant predictor of leadership skills ($\beta = 0.31$). This suggests that efforts to improve job satisfaction—through addressing workload concerns, increasing administrative support, and providing opportunities for professional growth—can directly enhance leadership effectiveness. The connection between job satisfaction and leadership performance indicates that improving working conditions for school leaders should be a priority for educational policymakers and school administrators (Davis & Smith, 2021).

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and Leadership Skills

The positive correlation between CPD participation and leadership skills ($r = 0.57$) highlights the critical role of ongoing professional learning in leadership development. Principals who actively engage in professional development activities—such as leadership workshops, self-directed learning, and mentorship programs—tend to demonstrate higher levels of leadership competence. This finding is supported by *Harrison and Simmons (2020)*, who found that CPD is essential for keeping school leaders up to date with the latest educational trends and leadership strategies.

CPD emerged as a significant predictor of leadership skills in the regression analysis ($\beta = 0.25$), indicating that professional development is crucial for improving leadership effectiveness. These results suggest that regular and targeted CPD programs can help principals refine their leadership skills, improve decision-making, and foster better school environments. This finding also echoes the work of *Santoso et al. (2019)*, who emphasized the need for continuous leadership training to address the evolving challenges in education.

However, the relatively moderate engagement with CPD (mean score = 3.95) suggests that access to or participation in high-quality professional development opportunities may be limited for some principals. Owusu and Abban (2021) noted similar challenges in other regions, particularly in schools where funding and access to CPD are constrained. This underscores the need for more accessible and flexible CPD programs, especially in resource-limited settings.

School Culture and Leadership Skills. The study found that school culture has the strongest correlation with leadership skills ($r = 0.71$) and is the most significant predictor of leadership effectiveness ($\beta = 0.42$). This aligns with research by Garcia and Romero (2021), who demonstrated that a positive school culture—characterized by collaboration, trust, and shared leadership—enhances the ability of principals to lead effectively. School culture not only influences leadership behaviors but also shapes the broader educational environment, including teacher motivation, student engagement, and school performance.

The strong relationship between school culture and leadership skills suggests that creating a supportive, inclusive, and collaborative school environment is critical to fostering effective leadership. Principals who work in schools with a positive culture are more likely to demonstrate leadership practices that inspire and motivate their staff, leading to improved school outcomes. This finding highlights the importance of cultivating a healthy school culture as a key strategy for developing strong leadership, which is consistent with the findings of *Rodriguez and Morales (2021)*.

Implications of the Study

For Educational Policy and Practice. The findings have significant implications for educational policymakers and school administrators. First, improving the working conditions of school principals by addressing the factors that influence job satisfaction—such as reducing administrative burdens and providing better support systems—can lead to stronger

leadership within schools. The direct impact of job satisfaction on leadership effectiveness suggests that school systems should prioritize the well-being of their leaders to foster better educational outcomes (Jones & Harris, 2020).

Second, the role of CPD in enhancing leadership skills underscores the need for continuous investment in professional development programs. Policymakers should ensure that school leaders have access to high-quality, relevant, and ongoing professional learning opportunities. Providing funding and creating more flexible CPD options can help overcome the barriers to participation highlighted in this study and other research (Day & Sammons, 2020).

Third, the strong influence of school culture on leadership effectiveness suggests that efforts to build and maintain positive school cultures should be central to leadership development initiatives. Training programs for principals should include components on how to foster collaboration, trust, and shared leadership within their schools (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2021). By focusing on building a positive school culture, schools can create an environment where both teachers and students thrive, leading to better leadership outcomes.

For School Leaders. For current school leaders, the findings highlight the importance of investing in their own professional development and actively working to improve school culture. Principals who engage in regular CPD activities and strive to create a supportive and inclusive environment are more likely to succeed in their leadership roles. The study also suggests that principals should seek opportunities for mentorship and peer learning, as these forms of professional development can provide valuable support and guidance (Dupont & Berger, 2021).

For Future Research. While this study provides important insights into the predictors of leadership effectiveness, several gaps remain that future research should address. For instance, the relatively moderate engagement with CPD suggests that more research is needed to understand the barriers to professional development for school leaders, particularly in different educational contexts. Additionally, further studies could explore how other factors—such as emotional intelligence or community support—interact with job satisfaction, CPD, and school culture to influence leadership skills (Martini & Galletti, 2019).

7. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Despite its contributions, the study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the use of self-reported data from principals may introduce bias, as participants might overestimate their leadership abilities or job satisfaction levels due to social desirability (Bryman, 2021). Future research could benefit from incorporating additional data sources, such as teacher or student evaluations of leadership effectiveness, to provide a more comprehensive view of the relationships between the variables.

Second, the study was conducted in a specific geographical context (the Philippines), which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions. While the results align with broader research, future studies should include more diverse samples from different countries or regions to confirm whether these findings hold in different educational systems (Cohen et al., 2021).

Lastly, the study focused on a limited set of variables (job satisfaction, CPD, and school culture) in relation to leadership skills. While these factors are critical, future research should explore additional variables, such as leadership styles, emotional intelligence, and external community support, to provide a more holistic understanding of what influences leadership effectiveness (Kline, 2020).

8. CONCLUSION

Findings of the Study. This study examined the relationships between leadership skills, job satisfaction, continuing professional development (CPD), and school culture among school principals in the Philippines. The key findings indicate that all three factors—job satisfaction, CPD, and school culture—significantly contribute to leadership effectiveness. The following are the main conclusions based on the analysis:

Leadership Skills: School principals exhibited a high level of leadership skills, with job satisfaction, professional development, and school culture emerging as significant predictors of leadership effectiveness. The correlation analysis confirmed strong positive relationships between these variables and leadership skills.

Job Satisfaction: The study found a significant positive relationship between job satisfaction and leadership skills. Principals who reported higher job satisfaction demonstrated better leadership effectiveness, suggesting that improving the work environment and addressing factors such as administrative support and workload can enhance leadership capacity (Korhonen et al., 2021).

Continuing Professional Development (CPD): CPD was also found to be a significant contributor to leadership effectiveness. Principals who participated more frequently in professional development activities—such as leadership training and mentorship programs—reported higher levels of leadership competence. This finding highlights the importance of ongoing learning for school leaders (Harrison & Simmons, 2020).

School Culture: School culture was the strongest predictor of leadership skills, with principals working in collaborative and supportive environments demonstrating higher leadership effectiveness. A positive school culture that fosters trust, shared leadership, and continuous improvement was found to be crucial for effective leadership (Garcia & Romero, 2021).

These findings contribute to the broader understanding of the factors that enhance school leadership effectiveness and provide insights into how job satisfaction, CPD, and school culture interact to shape the leadership skills of school principals.

Contributions of the Research

This study offers several important contributions to the field of educational leadership. First, it emphasizes the critical role of job satisfaction in shaping leadership effectiveness, highlighting the need for schools and education departments to address principals' working conditions. Second, the study underscores the importance of CPD, providing evidence that ongoing professional development is necessary for improving leadership capacity. Third, the findings reinforce the significance of school culture in influencing leadership, suggesting that fostering a positive, inclusive, and collaborative environment is essential for developing strong leaders.

Areas for Future Research.

While this study provides valuable insights, there are several areas that future research could explore. First, additional studies could examine other factors influencing leadership effectiveness, such as emotional intelligence, community support, or leadership styles, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the variables affecting leadership. Second, future research could investigate how these relationships vary in different educational contexts, such as public versus private schools or urban versus rural settings, to determine the generalizability of these findings (*Davis & Smith, 2021*). Lastly, research on the barriers to professional development, particularly in under-resourced schools, could provide insights into how to make CPD more accessible for all school leaders.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's findings, several recommendations can be made for key stakeholders in education.

Recommendations for the Department of Education

Improve Working Conditions for Principals: The Department of Education should prioritize the well-being of school principals by addressing factors that affect their job satisfaction, such as reducing administrative workloads, increasing resources, and offering more support. By improving working conditions, principals can focus more on leadership tasks, which will enhance school outcomes (Jones & Harris, 2020).

Increase Access to Professional Development: The Department should invest in more comprehensive CPD programs for school principals, ensuring that they have access to regular, high-quality training. Programs should be flexible and cater to the specific needs of principals in different school contexts, including rural and under-resourced schools (Day & Sammons, 2020).

Foster Positive School Cultures: The Department of Education should promote policies that encourage school culture development. Training for school leaders should include components on building trust, fostering collaboration, and developing shared leadership practices within schools (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2021).

Recommendations for School Heads

Focus on Building a Positive School Culture: School heads should prioritize creating and maintaining a supportive and inclusive school environment. By fostering collaboration and trust among staff, principals can enhance both their leadership effectiveness and overall school performance (Garcia & Romero, 2021).

Engage in Continuous Professional Development: School leaders should actively participate in CPD programs, seeking opportunities for mentorship, peer learning, and leadership training. By staying engaged in professional development, principals can refine their skills and stay updated on the latest educational trends (*Harrison & Simmons, 2020*).

Seek Feedback and Support: School heads should regularly seek feedback from their staff and community, using this input to improve their leadership practices. Engaging with staff and fostering open communication will strengthen leadership effectiveness (Dupont & Berger, 2021).

Recommendations for Teachers

Support Collaborative School Cultures: Teachers play an essential role in creating a positive school culture. By engaging in open communication, sharing leadership responsibilities, and participating in school-wide initiatives, teachers can contribute to a supportive and collaborative environment that enhances both their satisfaction and leadership effectiveness (Rodriguez & Morales, 2021).

Participate in Professional Development: Teachers should also engage in CPD opportunities, particularly those related to leadership development. Teachers who develop leadership skills can contribute to shared decision-making and take on leadership roles within the school, which can support the principal and improve school outcomes (Santoso et al., 2019).

Recommendations for Future Researchers

Explore Additional Leadership Factors: Future researchers should investigate other factors that influence leadership effectiveness, such as emotional intelligence, leadership styles, or external community support, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the variables affecting school leadership (Martini & Galletti, 2019).

Examine Leadership in Different Contexts: Researchers should also explore how job satisfaction, CPD, and school culture affect leadership in different types of schools, such as public versus private or urban versus rural schools. This would provide a clearer picture of the generalizability of the study's findings (Cohen et al., 202).

Study the Barriers to CPD: Further research is needed to explore the challenges that school leaders face in accessing CPD, particularly in under-resourced areas. Identifying these barriers can help design more inclusive and effective professional development programs (Owusu & Abban, 2021).

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