

The Influence of Transformational Leadership Style, Interpersonal Communication, and Work Climate on Job Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

This study was motivated by the importance of teacher job satisfaction in improving the quality of education, particularly in public junior high schools in Banjarbaru City. The purpose of this study was to analyse the direct and indirect influence of principals' transformational leadership, interpersonal communication, and work climate on teacher job satisfaction in public junior high schools in Banjarbaru City. This study employed a quantitative approach using a survey method involving 219 public junior high school teachers selected through proportional stratified random sampling. The research instrument was a five-point Likert scale questionnaire that had been tested for validity and reliability. The results showed that principals' transformational leadership, interpersonal communication, and work climate had a positive and significant influence on teacher job satisfaction. In addition, work climate was proven to mediate the influence of principals' transformational leadership and interpersonal communication on teacher job satisfaction. These findings confirm that inspirational leadership, effective interpersonal communication, and a positive work climate can enhance teacher job satisfaction, which in turn contributes positively to educational quality.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is the main foundation for the rise, progress, and glory of a nation. Countries that pay serious attention to the education sector tend to experience rapid development, while those that ignore it will be left behind. A workforce that is adaptive and able to respond to the dynamics of progress is very necessary. The quality of education is reflected in the quality of the human resources produced. Higher education has an important role in improving the quality of human resources (HR) in Indonesia (Abdillah, 2024). Efforts are made to prepare human resources (HR) who are competent, disciplined, innovative, and productive. In a situation like this, teacher job satisfaction is an important factor that determines the quality of human resources and the success of schools in achieving educational goals. Job satisfaction is one of the psychological factors that has a significant role in shaping teachers' professional attitudes and behaviors in the school environment (Sermantho et al., 2025). According to research conducted in private schools in North Banjarbaru District, teachers' job satisfaction is directly and indirectly influenced by the principal's transformational leadership, assertive communication, and a good work environment. Teacher job satisfaction and these supporting variables are in the high category (Manao et al., 2023).

Increasing job satisfaction can be done by creating a good and comfortable work environment (Prayuda et al., 2025). This condition is able to foster a sense of comfort and loyalty for employees so that the organization becomes a place that makes them feel at home to continue contributing. There are several important factors that can affect teacher job satisfaction, In line with these findings, teacher job satisfaction does not arise by itself. Leadership is a process in

which a leader influences the thoughts, feelings, or behaviors of his subordinates, this is an important element that affects job satisfaction (Warni et al., 2021). Transformational leadership has a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction (Rizkie et al., 2022).

Transformational leadership of school principals is able to provide inspiration, motivation, individual attention, and encouragement to develop professionally. Transformational leadership of school principals has a significant direct effect on teacher job satisfaction, and indirect effects are also observed with transformational leadership of school principals through teacher job satisfaction in high schools in Palangkaraya City (Yulie et al., 2025). Another study found that transformational leadership and communication both have a significant effect on job satisfaction (Fitriyana, 2025). Another study found that communication between principals and organizational climate have a significant effect on teacher job satisfaction, both directly and indirectly (Firdaus et al., 2022). Transformational leadership of school principals has a significant direct influence on teacher job satisfaction, as well as indirect effects through assertive communication and work climate in private elementary schools in North Banjarbaru District (Manao et al., 2023). In the study, the work climate was proven to be a mediator that strengthened the relationship between assertive communication and teacher job satisfaction. Assertive communication encourages principals to establish effective, open, and empathetic relationships with teachers, while a conducive work climate makes teachers feel safe, appreciated, and ultimately increases teacher job satisfaction.

Theories such as cognitive dissonance, which is closely related to persuasion, attitude formation, and attitude change, are one of the theories underlying human organizational communication. Meanwhile, the theory of social exchange places interpersonal communication as a medium for meeting individual needs, including in obtaining information to support self-development (Suriyansyah, 2014). Interpersonal communication will be more effective in increasing teacher job satisfaction if the principal implements a transformational leadership style and is supported by a high-level work climate (Nabang & Poernomo, 2021). The principal's interpersonal communication ability is an external factor that comes from outside a person, including the principal's leadership (Nopiyana et al., 2024). Interpersonal communication shows a significant influence on teacher job satisfaction (Suartini et al., 2024). Other research states that interpersonal communication also has a positive and significant effect on employee job satisfaction (Pertwi et al., 2019). In another study, it was said that interpersonal communication had a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction (Deviyani et al., 2025). This supports the reason for the test in this study.

In addition, the workplace climate serves as an important factor that connects transformational leadership with interpersonal communication, so it is relevant to include the work climate. An unsupportive work climate, as reflected in the work situation and atmosphere in the implementation of tasks, also contributes to the decline in job satisfaction of teachers (Subagia et al., 2019). This is supported by the significant positive contribution of the work climate to job satisfaction (Subagia et al., 2019). Other research proves that there is a direct influence of the work climate on teacher job satisfaction (Arfan, 2023). Other research findings also show that there is a significant influence between work climate variables on teacher job satisfaction, which is shown by a significance value of $0.00 < 0.05$ (Limbu, 2024).

This study aims to explain the conditions of transformational leadership, interpersonal communication, work climate, and job satisfaction of teachers in State Junior High School in

Banjarbaru City. The research hypothesis is that these three variables have a positive and significant effect on teacher job satisfaction. In addition, the purpose of this study is to examine the direct influence of these three variables on teacher job satisfaction; In addition, this study also examines the indirect influence of interpersonal communication and transformational leadership on job satisfaction as a mediating variable of work climate. This research makes a significant contribution in the field of education, especially in supporting the improvement of learning quality and more effective school management. Theoretically, the results of the study are expected to be able to enrich studies in the field of education management, as well as become a practical reference in efforts to increase teacher job satisfaction in the school environment. In addition, the findings of this study are expected to expand the understanding of education policy makers and school principals regarding the urgency of transformational leadership in building a positive and conducive work climate. Furthermore, the results of this research also have the potential to be used as a basis for strategic decision-making to improve interpersonal communication and work climate, so that it can have a positive impact on increasing teacher job satisfaction.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research collects data through quantitative surveys. The survey method is a type of quantitative research that uses the same questions for multiple respondents. The researcher then notes, processes and analyzes the respondents' answers. These structured questions are called questionnaires and consist of a list of questions to measure variables, relationships between variables, or respondents' opinions and experiences. These types of questions can include aspects such as behavior, expectations and self-identity.

The purpose of this study was to show how the transformational leadership of a school principal, interpersonal communication and work climate correlated with the job satisfaction of State Junior High School teachers in Banjarbaru City. This study involved 480 State Junior High School teachers in Banjarbaru City, South Kalimantan Province. To count the samples, the Slovin formula and the error tolerance rate were used of 5%/0.05. The result was 219 teachers. The stratified proportional random sampling method, which takes into account the proportion of each group in the population, was used in this study.

This study collected data through the distribution of online questionnaires that were compiled based on indicators for each research variable. This facilitated the data collection process with a significant number of respondents enrolled in various schools. The research instrument was carried out using a 5-level Likert scale, namely Strongly Agree with a value of 5 to Disagree with a value of 1. In this study, a validity and reliability test process has been carried out, including normality, linearity, heteroscedasticity, multicollinearity and autocorrelation tests. For hypothesis testing, ANOVA or regression tests were used. This was done using the SPSS program version 27.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Description of Respondent Characteristics

This research can be determined through several aspects, namely gender, rank or class, length of service, and last level of education. From a total of 219 research samples, respondents were classified by gender with the majority of female teachers (57.5%) and male respondents (42.5%). The proportion of respondents' characteristics by gender provides important implications

for the study variables. The dominance of female respondents indicates that teachers' job satisfaction in this location tends to be influenced by gender-responsive factors, such as work-life balance, harmonious interpersonal relationships, and a safe work environment. Female teachers generally respond more positively to a transformational leadership style that is humanistic, empathetic, and individually mindful. In terms of the rank of groups IV/a – IV/d, the respondents were large (38.8%), III/a – III/d was the largest respondent (38.4%), Honorary (12.8%) respondents (12.8%) and PPPK was only (10.0%) respondents. These characteristics of established and experienced senior teachers make transformational leadership styles very relevant. They need principals who act as facilitators and discussion partners, not just top-down instructionalists. On the other hand, the variation in status with honorary teachers (12.8%) requires school principals to create an inclusive and equitable work climate.

Based on the level of education, most of the respondents (90.4%) are undergraduate (S-1) graduates while only (9.6%) have taken postgraduate education (S-2). This percentage indicates that the development of the academic level of State Junior High School teachers in Banjarbaru City still has opportunities to be improved. The S1 education level shows that most teachers have met the minimum qualifications of educators. Teachers with S2 education are still relatively few, which needs encouragement to improve academic qualifications. The demographic condition dominated by S1 graduates has direct implications for the dynamics of job satisfaction in schools. With the majority of teachers at a uniform level of education (S1), school principals can more easily design interpersonal communication programs and an inclusive work climate. In terms of service period, respondents with service periods were divided into 4 groups with 11-20 years of experience being the largest group (38.7%), respondents with experience with work period of less than 10 years (28.3%), respondents with 21-30 years of work (25.6%) and the group with the smallest proportion of working period over 30 years (6.4%) the majority of teachers were known to be at an adequate level of career maturity in supporting the process of adaptation and task implementation. The variation in working period between senior teachers and teachers with a working period of less than 10 years (28.3%) confirms that a conducive work climate and adaptive interpersonal communication are needed in schools to minimize inter-generational psychological barriers, which will ultimately simultaneously optimize teacher job satisfaction. In addition, the diversity of respondents' characteristics makes the research data more representative, allowing generalization in State Junior High Schools with similar characteristics.

Descriptive Statistics of Research Variable Distribution

The four main factors studied in the focus of this study are teacher job satisfaction, leadership1transformational principal, interpersonal communication, and work climate. Table 1 The following shows descriptive statistics for each variable

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variabel	Sub Variabel	Variable Average	Average Sub Variable	Criteria
Teacher Satisfaction	Job	4,23	4,36	Very High
	Actual work as control to job		4,07	
	Supervision by superiors		4,34	
	Organization and management		4,23	
	Opportunity to advance			

Variabel	Sub Variabel	Variable Average	Average Sub Variable	Criteria
	Salary and benefits financial		4,18	
	Colleagues		4,25	
	Condition job		4,21	
Leadership Transformational Head School	<i>Idealized Influence</i>	4,13	4,09	Height
	<i>Inspirational Motivation</i>		4,23	
	<i>Intellectual Stimulation</i>		4,05	
	<i>Individual Consideration</i>		4,17	
Interpersonal Communication	<i>Openness</i>	4,22	4,12	Very High
	<i>Empathy</i>		4,15	
	<i>Supportiveness</i>		4,22	
	<i>Positiveness</i>		4,25	
	<i>Equality</i>		4,33	
Working Climate	Placement personnel	4,23	4,24	Very High
	Coaching between relationship and communication		4,29	
	Dynamisation and conflict resolution		4,15	
	Utilization of Information		4,21	
	Improvement of the work environment and learning environment		4,25	

Source: Research Data 2025

The results of the analysis shown in Table 1 show that the variables of teacher job satisfaction, interpersonal communication, and work climate are included in the very high category and the leadership variable 1 transformational head of school is in the high category. The condition of the school environment is positive and supports the work process and the principal has been able to carry out leadership well in motivating and directing teachers, although it can still be improved to be more optimal.

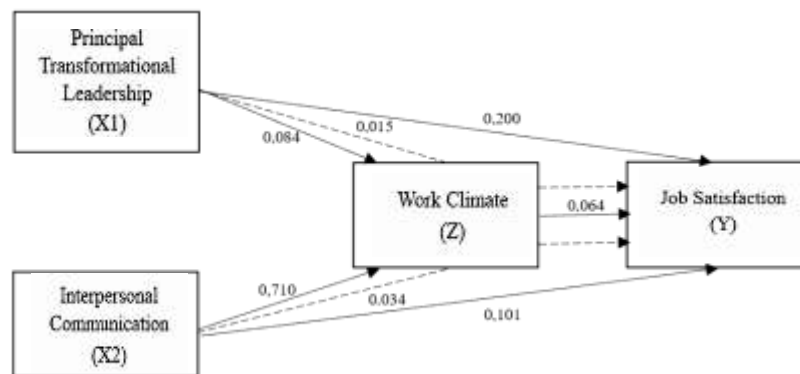
Prerequisite Test

The results of the analysis prerequisite test were used before further data processing. Normality, linearity, heteroscedasticity, multicollinearity, and autocorrelation tests. The normality test results showed that the standardized residual values contributed normally; the significance value of Kolmogorov Smirnov was greater than 0.05. To test for linearity, the Test For Linearity method was used. The results showed that the regression equation could be described linearly if the value of sig linearity was less than 0.05 and the value of sig deviation was more than 0.05. The heteroscedasticity test was used in this study to find out whether the regression model showed an inequality of residual variation between two observations. In this case, the significance value of all variables > from 0.05. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was used to evaluate multicollinearity; if the VIF value in this study is above 0.1, it is stated that there are no symptoms of multicollinearity. The autocorrelation test showed a Durbin-Watson value of 1.974 in the first model and 2.189 in the second model, both of which were close to 2, to produce the conclusion that there was no autocorrelation.

Uji Hypothesis

The hypothesis test of this research analysis begins with a path analysis, also known as a path test. This method is used to determine the influence of the work climate, interpersonal communication, and transformational leadership of the principal on teacher job satisfaction, either directly or indirectly resulting in the relationship between the variables as shown.

Figure 1. Analysis of Paths X1, X2, Z, and Y



Source : Research Data 2025

The test results shown in Figure 1 show that the transformational leadership of the principal (X1) on teacher job satisfaction (Y) shows a constant value (a) of 0.867, while the regression coefficient value (b) is 0.200, the tcal value is 2.785, and sig 0.001 with a significant level (α) of 0.05. For interpersonal communication (X2) the constant value (a) is 0.867, while the regression coefficient value (b) is 0.101 and the tcal value is 4.760 and sig 0.000 with a significant level (α) of 0.05. the work climate (Z) on teacher job satisfaction (Y) with a constant value (a) is 0.867 while the regression coefficient value (b) is 0.064 and the tcount value is 3.627, and sig 0.002 with a significant level (α) of 0.05. The value of the constant value (a) of the principal's transformational leadership (X1) on the work climate (Z) is 25.794, the regression coefficient value (b) is 0.084, and the tcount value is 4.140, and sig 0.001, with a significant level (α) of 0.05. The value of the constant (a) of interpersonal communication (X2) on the work climate (Z) was 25.794, the regression coefficient value (b) was 0.710, and the tcount value was 4.580 and sig 0.000, with a significant level (α) of 0.05. The transformational leadership of the principal (X1) on job satisfaction (Y) through the work climate (Z) obtained a coefficient of 0.015, tcount of 2.084 and sig of 0.035. Interpersonal communication (X2) on job satisfaction (Y) through work climate (Z) obtained a coefficient of 0.034, tcount of 2.150 and sig 0.024. All hypothetical variables showed a sig value of < 0.05 which means that there is a coefficient between the variables tested

DISCUSSION

Teachers' job satisfaction is greatly influenced by the principal's transformational leadership, interpersonal communication, and work climate. In addition, the principal's transformational leadership and interpersonal communication also have a significant effect on the work climate, so the work climate also plays a role as a mediating variable in increasing teacher job satisfaction. Thus, the level of teacher job satisfaction is positively correlated with the quality of the principal's leadership, interpersonal communication, and school work climate. The results of

this study are supported by previous empirical studies that show a similar influence in private schools in Greater Jakarta found that the transformational leadership of school principals has a positive and significant effect on teacher job satisfaction (Hidayat, 2019). This is in line with studies that show that the transformational leadership of school principals affects teacher job satisfaction through organizational culture (which is equivalent to the work climate) (Prayitno, 2023). Other studies have also shown that transformational leadership has a positive effect on job satisfaction (Anggraeni et al., 2013). Directly and indirectly, the transformational leadership of school principals can increase teacher job satisfaction. The better the principal leads, motivates, and builds a positive work environment, the more satisfied teachers are with the teacher's work. Transformational leadership shows that State Junior High Schools in Banjarbaru City are at an ideal level. This condition is indicated by teacher assessments, which generally place the principal's leadership attributes in the medium to very high range, with the most common high category. The existence of leadership behaviors that are able to inspire and protect throughout the sample schools is indicated by low or very low levels of negative perception. The existence of open communication with teachers about performance problems, the encouragement to increase teachers' creativity in learning, and the encouragement to encourage them to do so also make the principal considered capable of being a figure that makes teachers motivated. Intellectual stimulation is the sub-variable with the lowest score.

Interpersonal communication, in addition to leadership, has been shown to have a great influence on teacher job satisfaction. Good interpersonal communication between individuals in the school environment can increase teacher job satisfaction. The more effective communication is established, both with the principal and colleagues, the more comfortable, appreciated, and motivated teachers will feel more comfortable, appreciated, and motivated in carrying out their work. In line with research, there is a positive relationship between interpersonal communication and teacher job satisfaction. (Hartati et al., 2025). Teachers in general feel satisfied with their work, both in terms of salary, promotion, relationships with colleagues, and their own responsibilities (Hartati et al., 2025). Interpersonal communication related to improving teacher performance can also produce job satisfaction, this happens because the interaction between employees can produce support for each other and this is what creates job satisfaction (Sarasvati et al., 2025). This good quality of communication shows that the work environment at SMPN Kota Banjarbaru is very trusting of each other. The occurrence of information distortion and internal conflicts is minimized by this harmonious relationship. Teachers feel listened to, appreciated, and easily get feedback on their work. As a result, they feel psychologically comfortable at work.

These results support DeVito's theory of interpersonal communication, which states that good understanding and positive human relationships are signs of effective communication. In school structures, effective communication has been shown to function as an emotional relationship that binds teachers to their educational responsibilities. According to research, work climate variables have been shown to have an influence on job satisfaction. The work climate itself is related to employees who can trust their colleagues more openly, provide constant support, have work goals that are in line with school, are ready to take risks with risky work, have a good personality, and are flexible in carrying out their duties. (Alfiyah et al., 2023). A good work climate, characterized by open communication, effective collaboration, consistent managerial support, and lecturer involvement in the organizational decision-making process, has been shown to have a great influence on job satisfaction (Wijaya, 2024). This pleasant working conditions are a very

important macro factor in determining the level of teacher satisfaction with their work. When teachers enter the school in a friendly, collaborative, and valued environment, even the heavy workload will feel lighter. The level of job satisfaction of teachers at SMPN Kotal Banjarbaru is very high because of the positive work environment.

According to Pidarta's research, relationship and communication coaching, a sense of community, and individual appreciation are factors that create healthy emotions and help teachers perform their duties well. In addition, a good environment helps to increase intrinsic job satisfaction through participation and recognition of teachers' performance. Based on previous discussions, the work climate at State Junior High School in Banjarbaru City is considered good and pleasant, as shown by the high level of teacher commitment and the average value of work climate variables that meet very high criteria. With the placement of personnel that match the teacher's skills and good relationships and communication among school residents, this situation shows that the school is capable of creating a supportive work environment.

The job satisfaction formed in an employee reflects a person's feelings towards their job, this is seen in the employee's positive attitude towards work and everything faced in their work environment which will ultimately lead to better performance (Hadi Prayoga, 2023). The majority of teachers at State Junior High School in Banjarbaru City say that they are satisfied with their work, especially if their work is in accordance with their education. This condition shows that the school has succeeded in creating a comfortable work environment for employees, increasing employee morale, and supporting teacher professionalism.

Some subvariable components of supervision by superiors still need to be improved, especially those related to the role of principals in helping teachers learn to manage the learning process. It is expected that principals can maximize the implementation of academic supervision through professional mentoring, continuous guidance, and constructive feedback. This will ensure that teachers' job satisfaction is maintained and improved consistently.

The novelty of this research lies in its context in the junior high school teacher environment, where the work climate has proven to be a significant mediating factor in strengthening the influence of transformational leadership and interpersonal communication on teacher job satisfaction. This provides a theoretical and practical contribution that strengthening the work climate needs to be made a priority in school management policies to build a solid, collaborative, and oriented work culture to improve the quality of education.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that school principals must have transformational leadership that is in the high category, while interpersonal communication and work climate are included in the very high category. This is characterized by the ability of school principals to provide direction, motivation, and encourage teachers to be creative and innovative in completing their responsibilities. Principals are also considered able to create open, empathetic, and supportive communication. On the other hand, the work environment is considered conducive to the implementation of tasks through appropriate work placement, harmonious working relationships, and effective communication between teachers. This condition has implications for the high job satisfaction of teachers, which is reflected in the suitability of work with abilities, support and direction from superiors, as well as harmonious interpersonal relationships in the school environment.

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