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Organisational Culture: A Key to Enhancing Teacher Job Satisfaction at Witthayapanya Matthayom School, Thailand

Rizka Dara Vonna^{1*}, Nur Hasmalawati

^{1*}Department Psychology, Universitas Muhammadiyah Aceh, Indonesia.

email: rizka.dara@unmuha.ac.id

²Department Psychology, Universitas Muhammadiyah Aceh, Indonesia.

email: nur.hasmalawati@unmuha.ac.id

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Corresponding Author: ^{1*}**Rizka Dara Vonna**, Department of Psychology, Universitas Muhammadiyah Aceh, Indonesia, Email: rizka.dara@unmuha.ac.id

Organizational Culture: A Key to Enhancing Teacher Job Satisfaction at Witthayapanya Matthayom School, Thailand

Abstract: This study explores the role of organizational culture in shaping teacher job satisfaction at a Muslim school in Thailand within a predominantly non-Muslim society. This context is important because the school functions not only as a formal educational institution but also as a space for preserving religious values and Islamic identity. The study employed a qualitative case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with five teachers selected purposively. The findings reveal that organizational culture characterised by religious values, togetherness, and mutual respect contributes to teacher job satisfaction. Teachers felt motivated and emotionally connected to the school when organizational culture aligned with their personal and spiritual values. *Ikhlas* (sincerity) emerged as a key spiritual value underlying teachers' commitment. Supportive leadership and a harmonious working environment further strengthened teachers' sense of belonging. These findings highlight the importance of organizational culture in faith-based schools operating in minority contexts.

Keywords: *Job satisfaction, organizational culture, teachers, Thailand*

Budaya Organisasi: Kunci untuk Meningkatkan Kepuasan Kerja Guru di Witthayapanya Matthayom School, Thailand

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi peran budaya organisasi dalam membentuk kepuasan kerja guru di sebuah sekolah Muslim di Thailand yang berada dalam konteks masyarakat mayoritas non-Muslim. Konteks ini penting karena sekolah tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai lembaga pendidikan formal, tetapi juga sebagai ruang pelestarian nilai-nilai religius dan identitas keislaman. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam terhadap lima orang guru yang dipilih secara purposive. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa budaya organisasi yang ditandai oleh nilai-nilai religius, kebersamaan, dan saling menghargai berkontribusi terhadap kepuasan kerja guru. Para guru merasa termotivasi dan memiliki keterikatan emosional dengan sekolah ketika budaya organisasi selaras dengan nilai-nilai pribadi dan spiritual mereka. Nilai *ikhlas* muncul sebagai nilai spiritual utama yang mendasari komitmen guru. Kepemimpinan yang suportif dan suasana kerja yang harmonis turut memperkuat rasa memiliki guru terhadap sekolah. Temuan ini menegaskan pentingnya budaya organisasi di sekolah berbasis keagamaan dalam konteks minoritas.

Kata kunci: *Budaya organisasi, guru, kepuasan kerja, Thailand*

Introduction

Teacher job satisfaction is an important issue in educational psychology as well as industrial and organisational psychology. Job satisfaction levels are not only related to individual well-being, but also have an impact on the quality of learning, teacher-student relationships, and overall school performance. Previous research has shown that job satisfaction correlates with the quality of teacher interactions in the classroom, student engagement, and better learning outcomes (Wartenberg, Aldrup, Grund, & Klusmann, 2023). Teachers who feel satisfied tend to show high motivation, loyalty to the school, and lower levels of burnout (Klassen et al., 2025). Thus, understanding the factors that influence teacher job satisfaction is urgent, one of which is through organisational culture studies.

Organisational culture can be understood as a set of basic assumptions, values, and norms developed within a group to address issues of external adaptation and internal integration, which are then passed on to new members as the appropriate way of thinking, feeling, and acting (Schein, 2010). Culture is a concept with diverse definitions and approaches in terms of its content, methods, and practical relevance. Despite these differences, culture can essentially be understood as shared ways of thinking, feeling, and acting within a group, which are learned and continuously reproduced by its members, resulting in relatively stable and predictable patterns of behaviour (Serpa, 2016). In the context of schools, organisational culture is reflected in the way teachers interact, leadership styles, reward systems, and shared values. When organisational culture is aligned with the psychological needs and personal values of teachers, job satisfaction increases. Conversely, cultural incompatibility can lead to stress, role conflict, and low loyalty (Schein, 2010).

Empirical findings support a close relationship between organisational culture and teacher job satisfaction. Klassen et al. (2025), through meta-analysis, found that teachers' self-efficacy, which is formed from a collaborative work climate, is positively related to job satisfaction. Teachers who feel competent, valued, and supported by their work environment show higher satisfaction. Similarly, (Wartenberg et al., 2023) emphasise that organisational variables, including culture and work climate, contribute significantly to job satisfaction, in addition to individual factors. This means that job satisfaction is not only a personal matter but also a social construct supported by organisational culture.

In the context of Muslim schools in Thailand, the issue of organisational culture is becoming increasingly interesting. Islamic schools, particularly in southern Thailand such as Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat, function not only as educational institutions but also as guardians of the religious and cultural identity of the Muslim minority community (Wekke, Siddin, & Langputeh, 2019). Research by (Assalihee, Bakoh, Boonsuk, & Songmuang, 2024) shows that the implementation of lesson study in private Islamic schools in Southern Thailand has successfully fostered a culture of collaboration, reflection, and professional support among teachers. This kind of culture increases teachers' motivation and attachment to the school.

Furthermore, teacher job satisfaction at Muslim schools in Thailand is not only influenced by administrative or managerial factors, but also by religious values that are alive in the school culture. Values such as *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), *amanah* (responsibility), and *adab* (ethics) form the foundation of the organisational culture that influences how teachers interact, interpret their work, and build commitment (Wekke et al., 2019). When religious values are integrated with a fair work system and supportive leadership, teacher job satisfaction increases. However, if these values are only used as symbols without being internalised in daily practice, teachers may experience dissatisfaction.

Organisational culture is one of the important factors that influence various aspects within an institution, including employee job satisfaction (Schein, 2010). In the context of education, organisational culture in schools plays a major role in creating a conducive working environment for teachers. A supportive and positive culture can increase teachers' motivation, commitment, and job satisfaction (Kennedy, 1982). Teacher job satisfaction is crucial because teachers who are satisfied with their work tend to perform better and have a positive impact on the learning process and student achievement (Dinham, 2000). Conversely, job dissatisfaction can lead to problems such as high absenteeism, turnover, and a decline in teaching quality (Ingersoll, 2001). Therefore, understanding how organisational culture affects teacher job satisfaction is important for creating a school environment that supports the achievement of educational goals.

Previous studies have shown that a strong and healthy organisational culture can significantly increase teacher job satisfaction (Sarros, 2008). A culture that values participation, collaboration, and professional development can create a sense of belonging and appreciation among teachers (Sergiovanni, 1992). However, the context of organisational culture in Indonesian schools still requires further study, given the diverse characteristics of schools and local cultures.

Thus, this study aims to explore the relationship between organisational culture and teacher job satisfaction in a Muslim school in Thailand. Therefore, this study is important to be conducted using a qualitative approach through in-depth interviews with five teachers. This approach allows the researchers to explore teachers' personal and collective experiences regarding organisational culture and job satisfaction. By understanding how teachers interpret school culture, how religious and professional values are internalised, and how leadership and organisational support are enacted, this study is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to the understanding of organisational culture and teacher job satisfaction in faith-based schools, particularly within minority contexts.

In short, organisational culture is key to creating teacher job satisfaction. In Muslim schools in Thailand, organisational culture is not only related to modern management aspects, but also imbued with religious and social values. Examining the relationship between the two will open up new insights into how educational organisations can build a healthy, contextual and sustainable culture to support teacher job satisfaction and improve the quality of education.

Methods

This research design uses qualitative methods, namely research procedures that produce descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behaviour. The approach used is the case study approach. According to (Yin, 2014), a case study is a research method used to understand a phenomenon in depth and comprehensively in the context of real life. This approach allows researchers to explore the details of events, processes, and meanings experienced by research subjects through data collection techniques such as in-depth interviews, observation, and document analysis.

This study was conducted at Witthayapanya Matthayom School, located in Nong Chok District, Bangkok 10530, Thailand. This school is one of the Muslim schools in an area with a Muslim majority population. In this study, the research population consisted of all teachers at Witthayapanya Matthayom School. Meanwhile, the research sample consisted of five teachers selected purposively. These teachers came from various countries, but all of them were Muslim. This study utilised instruments developed based on five key models for improving job satisfaction according to (Kinicki & Fugate, 2018), which are outlined as follows:

Table 1.*Job Satisfaction Model According to Kinicki & Fugate (2018)*

Model	Indicators
Need fulfillment	Understand and meet employee needs
Met expectations	Meet employee expectations about what they will receive from their work
Value attainment	Structure jobs and rewards to align with employee values
Equity	Monitor employee perceptions of fairness and interact with them so they feel they are being treated fairly
Dispositional/genetic components	Hire employees with the right character traits

Furthermore, the measurement of organisational culture in this study refers to the theory of organisational culture characteristics proposed by (Robbins, Judge, Millett, & Boyle, 2013), which is described as follows:

Table 2.*Organisational Culture Characteristics According to Robbins (2017)*

Characteristics	Definition
Innovation and risk-taking	To what extent are employees encouraged to be innovative and take risks?
Attention to detail	To what extent are employees expected to exercise precision, analysis and attention to detail?
Results orientation	To what extent is the focus more on results than on the techniques and processes used to achieve those results?
People orientation	To what extent do management decisions consider the effects of those results on the people within the organisation?
Team orientation	To what extent are work activities organised around teams rather than individuals?
Assertiveness	To what extent are people aggressive and competitive rather than relaxed?
Stability	To what extent do organisational activities emphasise maintaining the status quo in comparison with growth?

Data collection in this study was conducted through observation and interviews. This strategy is used in phenomenological research to explore, understand, and interpret the meaning of a phenomenon, event, and its relationship with individuals in a particular situation. Data analysis in qualitative research is a continuous process that begins at the data collection stage and continues through to the writing of the research results. The purpose of this analysis is to interpret the meaning of the data obtained, rather than simply organising the information descriptively. Qualitative data analysis consists of three main stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification. In addition, this study uses a data-driven analysis approach, which is an analysis technique that emphasises the inductive discovery of themes based on raw data obtained from the field (Miles, 1994).

Result

The results of the study indicate that teacher job satisfaction is greatly influenced by the organisational culture that is implemented. The culture that develops in the school environment is a key factor in determining the level of satisfaction teachers feel in carrying out their duties. The implementation of Islamic culture contributes significantly to individual job satisfaction. In Islam, the value of sincerity is the main foundation that encourages teachers to apply values and culture that are in line with Islamic teachings in their daily activities. The results of interviews and observations revealed that Islamic values and Muslim culture play an important role in shaping teacher job satisfaction at Witthayapanya Matthayom School. All sources emphasised that satisfaction does not only depend on salary or material compensation, but more on the harmony between work and spiritual values.

In-depth interviews revealed that organisational culture plays an important role in shaping teacher job satisfaction at Witthayapanya Matthayom School. Teachers view job satisfaction because of a school culture that emphasises fairness, order, and support for teachers' professional and personal needs. A consistent organisational culture creates a sense of security, belonging, and psychological comfort in carrying out teaching duties. Subject 1 (S1) interprets the school's organisational culture through discipline and spiritual values that are consistently applied. He stated that the work culture enabled teachers to persevere and adapt, as well as foster inner peace at work. This attitude was reflected in his statement that working with patience and prayer was a way of coping with pressure in the work environment. This shows that an organisational culture that provides space for religious values contributes to job satisfaction through psychological peace and a deeper meaning of work.

Furthermore, Subject 2 (S2) emphasised the importance of an organisational culture that is communicative and responsive to teachers' needs. He stated that schools should listen to teachers' aspirations and provide adequate support. This statement shows that open communication in organisational culture increases feelings of appreciation and job satisfaction. Subject 3 (S3) highlighted an appreciative culture as an important factor that influences job satisfaction. He revealed that verbal appreciation and recognition in front of colleagues has a positive impact on motivation and job satisfaction.

In addition, Subject 4 (S4) viewed the school's organisational culture as a support system that made it easier for teachers to carry out their professional roles. He said that the administrative support and facilities provided by the school allowed teachers to focus more on learning activities. This shows that an organisational culture oriented towards internal service also increases job satisfaction. Subject 5 (S5) emphasised that an organisational culture that values loyalty and pays attention to the balance between work and family life contributes to job satisfaction. The school's support for family needs makes teachers feel accepted and valued as individuals, not merely as workers. Overall, the results of the study show that a fair, disciplined, religious, and supportive organisational culture is the main foundation for improving teacher job satisfaction at Witthayapanya Matthayom School. This culture not only creates a conducive working environment, but also functions as a psychological mechanism that helps teachers view their work in a positive, sustainable, and meaningful way.

Discussion

The results of the study indicate that organisational culture plays a key role in shaping teacher job satisfaction at Witthayapanya Matthayom School. These findings reinforce the view that

job satisfaction is not solely influenced by individual or material factors but is the result of an interaction between teachers' personal values and the value system that exists within the organisation. A fair, disciplined, supportive organisational culture that accommodates religious values has been proven to create a meaningful work experience for teachers. Theoretically, these findings are in line with the concept of organisational culture proposed by (Schein, 2010) , which places culture as a set of basic assumptions that guide the way members of an organisation think, feel, and act. In the context of Witthayapanya Matthayom School, organisational culture is not only evident in artefacts and formal rules, but also in the religious values and work ethic internalised by teachers. These values serve as a psychological framework that helps teachers interpret their work positively, thereby increasing job satisfaction despite being in the context of a minority school with various limitations.

The findings of this study also support (Kinicki & Fugate, 2018) theory of job satisfaction, particularly in terms of value attainment and need fulfilment. Teachers feel satisfied when the values they hold, such as professionalism, dedication, loyalty, and sincerity, are in line with the school's organisational culture. This harmony creates a sense of psychological fulfilment that does not always depend on financial rewards. In other words, organisational culture acts as a mediator that connects teachers' psychological needs with their daily work experiences. In addition, an organisational culture that emphasises fairness and order reinforce the perception of equity among teachers. When rules are applied consistently and without favouritism, teachers feel they are treated equally, which ultimately increases job satisfaction and attachment to the school. This is especially important for foreign teachers working in a cross-cultural and minority context.

Another prominent aspect of the research findings is the role of organisational culture in providing social and emotional support. A communicative, collaborative, and appreciative work culture enables teachers to build positive professional relationships with colleagues and management. These findings are in line with (Robbins et al., 2013) view that people and team orientation are important dimensions of organisational culture that have a direct impact on job satisfaction. Administrative support and attention to work–family balance also strengthen teachers' psychological well-being, enabling them to perform their professional roles more optimally.

From an Islamic psychological perspective, the findings of this study enrich the study of job satisfaction by placing religious values, such as sincerity, trustworthiness, and devotion, as an integral part of organisational culture. Sincerity can be understood not only as a moral value but also as an adaptive mechanism that helps teachers cope with work pressures. When organisational culture provides space for the internalisation of sincerity, work is interpreted as a form of worship and social contribution, resulting in intrinsic and sustainable job satisfaction. Thus, the organisational culture at Witthayapanya Matthayom School functions not only as a managerial system but also as a system of meaning that shapes how teachers understand, feel, and carry out their work. These findings confirm that efforts to improve teacher job satisfaction, especially in minority Muslim schools, need to be directed towards strengthening an organisational culture that is fair, supportive, and in line with religious values and the psychological needs of teachers.

Conclusion

This study concludes that organisational culture plays a decisive role in shaping teacher job satisfaction at Witthayapanya Matthayom School, where satisfaction is determined not only by material factors but also by the alignment between organisational culture and teachers' personal, professional, and spiritual values. A culture characterised by fairness, discipline, support, open

communication, and appreciation creates psychological comfort and a sense of belonging that enables teachers to perform their roles more meaningfully. The integration of Islamic values, particularly sincerity, contributes significantly to job satisfaction by functioning not only as a moral value but also as a psychological coping mechanism that helps teachers manage work pressures and interpret their work positively within the context of a Muslim minority school.

Moreover, supportive leadership, recognition, administrative assistance, and attention to work-family balance strengthen teachers' well-being and commitment. Overall, this study highlights the importance of a fair, supportive, and value-based organisational culture, while contributing to the literature by emphasising spiritual and cultural dimensions from an Islamic psychological perspective in sustaining teacher motivation and commitment in minority educational settings.

Suggestion

Based on the research results and conclusions, the researchers recommend that schools continue to develop and strengthen an organisational culture based on Islamic values as the main framework in the work environment. Values such as sincerity, fairness, togetherness, and mutual respect need to be consistently integrated into policies, leadership practices, and daily activities at school. Strengthening Islamic culture is expected to not only increase teacher job satisfaction, but also strengthen intrinsic motivation, psychological well-being, and create a harmonious, sustainable, and meaningful work atmosphere.

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