

The Influence of Principal Leadership, Teacher Competence, and School Culture on Job Satisfaction and Its Implications for Teacher Performance

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Abstract: Improving educational quality in vocational schools requires effective leadership, competent teachers, and a positive school culture, as these factors shape teachers' job satisfaction and performance. This study aims to analyze the influence of principal leadership, teacher competence, and school culture on teacher job satisfaction and its implications for teacher performance in public vocational high schools (SMK) across Greater Bandung, West Java. Using a descriptive and verifiable quantitative design with path analysis, the study involved 39 public SMKs and collected data through questionnaires administered using proportional stratified random sampling, resulting in a sample of 351 teachers. The findings show that principal leadership, teacher competence, and school culture are perceived as quite effective, good, and strong, respectively, while teacher job satisfaction and performance fall into the fairly high category. Path analysis indicates that principal leadership, teacher competence, and school culture each have a positive and significant effect on teacher job satisfaction. Furthermore, teacher job satisfaction positively and significantly influences teacher performance. These results imply that strengthening leadership, enhancing teacher competence, and cultivating a supportive school culture can meaningfully increase teacher job satisfaction, which subsequently improves teacher performance and contributes to sustained educational quality improvement.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is widely acknowledged as a critical foundation for sustainable national development and the primary means for cultivating human capital. It shapes the intellectual, social, and moral capacities of citizens, and the strength of a nation's education system directly influences its competitiveness in the global knowledge economy (World Bank, 2023; OECD, 2024). Within this system, teachers constitute the most decisive factor affecting learning quality and student achievement. Thus, improving teacher performance is not only an institutional requirement but also a strategic



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imperative for national progress (Restiani, 2024; Baakeel, 2025). This priority aligns with Indonesia's long-term vision of Indonesia Emas 2045, which emphasizes the development of competent, innovative, and high-performing educators (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2024).

The Indonesian National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003 states that education aims to develop learners into knowledgeable, creative, and responsible individuals. However, despite substantial gains in access and inclusivity, Indonesia continues to face challenges in learning quality. International assessments such as PISA show that Indonesian students perform below global averages in literacy, numeracy, and science (OECD, 2022). The World Population Review (2024) likewise ranks Indonesia below several Southeast Asian neighbors, indicating persistent gaps in teaching quality and instructional effectiveness. These issues are particularly salient in vocational high schools (SMK), which are intended to bridge academic preparation with workforce readiness (Santia, 2024; Sarinah, 2024). Teacher performance in these institutions is shaped by multiple organizational and individual factors—most notably principal leadership, teacher competence, and school culture.

Teacher performance is multidimensional and closely tied to leadership practices, competence levels, and the cultural environment within schools. Principal leadership serves as both a structural and cultural driver that shapes work processes, motivation, and professional commitment. Empirical studies consistently show that transformational and instructional leadership styles foster teacher satisfaction, trust, and organizational citizenship behavior (Leithwood et al., 2020; Restiani, 2024; Selamet, 2023). Transformational leaders inspire teachers to pursue shared goals beyond personal interest, while instructional leaders prioritize pedagogical supervision, feedback, and continuous learning (Baakeel, 2025). These leadership forms are particularly essential in vocational education, where practical competencies and innovative practices must be constantly reinforced (Harum et al., 2022).

To examine these relationships empirically, this study involved 39 public vocational high schools across Greater Bandung, with a sample of 351 teachers selected through proportional stratified random sampling to ensure representative distribution. Data were collected through structured questionnaires adapted from national principal and teacher competency standards, Denison and Schein's organizational culture constructs, Herzberg's job satisfaction theory, and Ministry of Education performance indicators. Instruments were tested for validity and reliability before full administration. The data analysis utilized descriptive statistics and path analysis, supported by normality testing and MSI-based ordinal-to-interval transformation to ensure compliance with parametric assumptions. This analytical approach enabled a rigorous assessment of direct and mediated effects linking leadership, competence, and culture to job satisfaction and teacher performance.

Teacher competence is another core determinant of satisfaction and performance. Competence encompasses pedagogical, professional, social, and personal dimensions, each contributing to effective instructional practices (Lestari & Hidayat, 2021; Fitriani & Wahyudi, 2023). Research shows that competent teachers are better able to manage classrooms, design curriculum, and implement adaptive teaching strategies (Rahmawati et al., 2024). Higher competence levels also correlate with increased job satisfaction due to stronger self-efficacy and professional recognition (Mustaqim, 2023; Juhji, 2022). Continuous professional development (CPD) has similarly been found to enhance competence and motivation, especially when aligned with institutional and industry standards (Sarinah, 2024; Wang & Lee, 2023). These findings underscore the importance of institutionalizing CPD systems that emphasize reflective practice, collaboration, and performance-based evaluation (OECD, 2023).

School culture plays an equally critical role as both a mediating and moderating factor in shaping teacher motivation and performance. Defined as shared beliefs, values,

and norms that guide behavior, school culture strongly influences teacher collaboration, engagement, and psychological well-being (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Schein, 2016). A positive culture characterized by trust, collegiality, and open communication encourages innovation and reduces work-related stress (Susilawati, 2024; Ridho et al., 2018). Empirical studies further demonstrate that schools with strong collaborative cultures—particularly those with functioning professional learning communities—tend to show higher levels of teacher engagement and performance (Harum et al., 2022; Santia, 2024). Conversely, rigid or unsupportive organizational cultures hinder innovation, lower morale, and increase burnout (Kunter et al., 2022; Burić & Kim, 2023). In Indonesia, variations in school culture often reflect differences in leadership quality, institutional capacity, and socio-economic context, reinforcing the need to strengthen cultural development initiatives (Rasidi, 2025; Sarinah, 2024).

Previous research also indicates that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between organizational antecedents and teacher performance. Numerous meta-analyses and empirical studies conclude that leadership, competence, and supportive culture indirectly shape performance through their effects on satisfaction (Saine et al., 2023; Rasidi, 2025; Damanik, 2025). Leadership practices that empower teachers and foster trust tend to elevate satisfaction, which then enhances performance (Baakeel, 2025; Santoso, 2021). Similarly, competence improvement influences performance through satisfaction and self-efficacy pathways (Mustaqim, 2023; Wang & Lee, 2023). A strong school culture also reinforces these mechanisms by aligning individual and institutional goals (Selamet, 2023; Harum et al., 2022). Although such integrated models have been validated in various international contexts, research remains limited in Indonesian vocational schools, where teaching practices must be aligned with industry partnerships and applied learning frameworks (Restiani, 2024; Sarinah, 2024).

Vocational education holds strategic significance in Indonesia, particularly as it prepares students for employment in an evolving labor market. Nevertheless, vocational schools face challenges such as outdated instructional practices, inconsistent industry collaboration, and uneven teacher competence (Nugraha et al., 2024; Santia, 2024). The 2024 National Vocational Education Report highlights that only 43% of vocational teachers engage in professional development aligned with industrial standards, and many principals lack adequate training in managing industry-based curricula (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2024). These conditions underscore the importance of leadership and cultural systems that support competence enhancement and teacher satisfaction. Furthermore, vocational schools are increasingly required to operationalize the Merdeka Belajar–Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) framework, which emphasizes autonomy, collaboration, creativity, and continuous professional growth (Restiani, 2024; Susilawati, 2024). These demands highlight the interconnected roles of leadership, competence, and culture in achieving effective teacher performance.

The theoretical basis of this study draws from established frameworks in motivation theory, leadership studies, and organizational behavior. Herzberg's (1968) two-factor theory highlights the importance of motivators such as achievement, recognition, and responsibility in generating job satisfaction, while hygiene factors prevent dissatisfaction. Social-cognitive theory (Bandura, 1997) posits that self-efficacy mediates the link between competence and performance, reinforcing the role of satisfaction as a psychological bridge. Schein's (2016) organizational culture theory emphasizes shared assumptions and values that shape behavior, suggesting that leadership-driven cultural norms influence teacher motivation and professional engagement. Integrating these frameworks, the present study conceptualizes job satisfaction as a central mediating construct linking leadership, competence, and culture to teacher performance.

Despite extensive research on these constructs, empirical gaps remain, particularly in the context of Indonesian vocational schools. Prior studies often examine leadership, competence, culture, and satisfaction in isolation rather than within

integrated structural models (Restiani, 2024; Juhji, 2022). Additionally, regional differences and the unique demands of vocational institutions necessitate context-specific models that capture the complexity of teacher performance (Harum et al., 2022; Damanik, 2025). Schools in Greater Bandung face unique socio-economic and cultural conditions that influence leadership practices and teacher experiences, making them an important setting for comprehensive analysis.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze and verify the influence of principal leadership, teacher competence, and school culture on teacher job satisfaction and their implications for teacher performance in public vocational high schools across Greater Bandung. Using a quantitative, descriptive–verificative approach with path analysis, the study examines both direct and mediated effects among the variables. The research contributes by (1) extending empirical understanding of integrated performance models within vocational education; (2) providing region-specific evidence useful for policymakers and school leaders, and; (3) informing reforms aligned with Merdeka Belajar and the RPJMN 2025–2029 policy agenda.

Ultimately, enhancing teacher performance requires a systemic approach that integrates leadership development, competence strengthening, and culture building. Implementing structured leadership training, institutionalizing professional development, and fostering collaborative school cultures can elevate teacher satisfaction and performance. The findings of this study are expected to support both theoretical advancements and practical strategies for improving the quality of vocational education in Indonesia and contributing to the national vision of Indonesia Emas 2045.

METHODS

This study employs a quantitative research approach using both descriptive and verificative methods, aiming to analyze causal relationships among variables through path analysis. The study investigates the influence of principal leadership, teacher competence, and school culture on teacher job satisfaction and its implications for teacher performance at public vocational high schools (Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan Negeri or SMKN) throughout Greater Bandung, West Java Province, Indonesia. The population includes 39 SMKN, with a total sample of 351 teachers selected using proportional stratified random sampling to ensure representation across schools of varying sizes. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered directly to respondents using standardized procedures, including coordination with school principals, controlled distribution during teacher assemblies, and verification of completed instruments. The questionnaire items were adapted from established sources, including national principal and teacher competency standards (Permendiknas No. 13/2007 and No. 16/2007), Denison and Schein's organizational culture indicators, Herzberg's job satisfaction framework, and teacher performance indicators issued by the Ministry of Education. Prior to field distribution, the instrument underwent validity and reliability testing. Data analysis comprised descriptive statistics to interpret respondent perceptions and verificative analysis using path analysis, preceded by prerequisite tests normality, linearity, reliability, and ordinal-to-interval conversion using the Method of Successive Interval (MSI) to ensure the accuracy, adequacy, and feasibility of the structural model being tested.

Instrument Testing of this research are The validity test aims to determine whether the instrument accurately measures the intended construct. This study employed the Pearson Product Moment correlation formula, where each item score (X) is correlated with the total score (Y) of all items. An item is considered valid if $r_{count} \geq r_{table}$ at $\alpha = 0.05$, indicating that it can be used in hypothesis testing. And then Reliability indicates the consistency and stability of an instrument in measuring a variable. According to

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Sugiyono (2019), a questionnaire is reliable when respondents provide consistent answers over time. Reliability in this study was tested using the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which measures internal consistency among items forming a latent variable. The coefficient (α) ranges between 0 and 1; a value of $\alpha \geq 0.70$ indicates that the instrument is reliable and suitable for data collection.

And then the normality test assesses whether data are normally distributed, determining the suitability of parametric or non-parametric analysis. In this study, normality was tested for five variables Principal Leadership, Teacher Competence, School Culture, Job Satisfaction, and Teacher Performance—using both graphical (P–P plot and histogram) and statistical methods. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test was applied, where data are normally distributed if the significance value $> \alpha$ (0.05). And to strengthen analytical rigor, descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondents' perceptions through mean scores, standard deviations, and category distributions. These results provided an initial overview of leadership effectiveness, teacher competence, school culture, job satisfaction, and performance. Path analysis was then applied to examine direct and indirect causal relationships using MSI-converted interval data, ensuring compliance with parametric assumptions. Model verification included tests of significance, standardized path coefficients, and the contribution of each predictor. These procedures ensured that the conclusions were statistically valid and aligned with the proposed conceptual framework.

This study used Path Analysis, which requires interval-scale data. Since the variables were measured on an ordinal scale, data were converted into interval form using the Method of Successive Interval (MSI) to meet the analytical requirements. Descriptive analysis was conducted to address research questions of a descriptive nature. The statistical technique used includes the calculation of the mean and standard deviation to summarize respondents' perceptions. The interpretation of mean scores is based on the Likert scale criteria (Sugiyono, 2019), where values range from 1.00–1.80 (*Very Poor*), 1.81–2.60 (*Poor*), 2.61–3.40 (*Fair*), 3.41–4.20 (*Good*), and 4.21–5.00 (*Very Good*). Verification analysis was performed using the Path Analysis model, which measures the magnitude and direction of causal relationships between exogenous and endogenous variables. The structural model includes the following variables:

X_1 = Principal Leadership, X_2 = Teacher Competence, X_3 = School Culture, Y_1 = Teacher Job Satisfaction, and Z = Teacher Performance.

Each path coefficient (p) indicates the direct effect among variables, while ϵ (epsilon) represents unexplained variance.

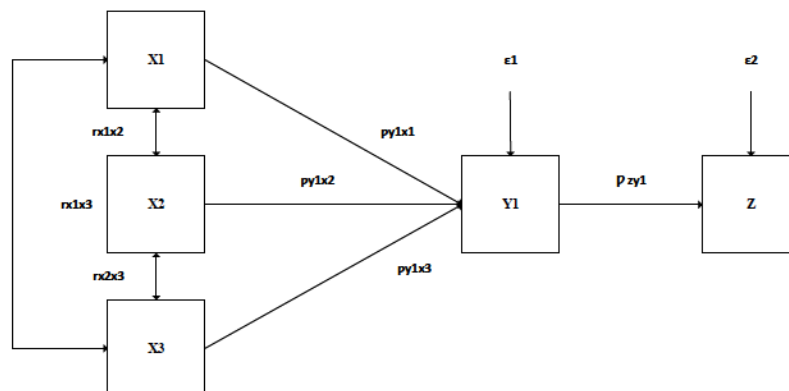


Figure 1. Path Model
Source: Data processed (2025)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study employs a quantitative research approach using both descriptive and verificative methods, aiming to analyze causal relationships among variables through path analysis. The results of the validity test calculations are as follows

Table 1. Validity Test Results

Variable	Number of Items	Range of rcount	rtable ($\alpha = 0.05$)	Valid Items	Result
Principal Leadership (X_1)	15	0.462 – 0.781	0.361	15	All items valid
Teacher Competence (X_2)	16	0.488 – 0.796	0.361	16	All items valid
School Culture (X_3)	12	0.453 – 0.774	0.361	12	All items valid
Job Satisfaction (Y_1)	10	0.471 – 0.752	0.361	10	All items valid
Teacher Performance (Z)	8	0.482 – 0.768	0.361	8	All items valid

Source: Data processed (2025)

While the results of the reliability test calculations are as follows

Table 2. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Reliability Threshold	Result
Principal Leadership (X_1)	0.894	≥ 0.70	Reliable
Teacher Competence (X_2)	0.912	≥ 0.70	Reliable
School Culture (X_3)	0.876	≥ 0.70	Reliable
Job Satisfaction (Y_1)	0.843	≥ 0.70	Reliable
Teacher Performance (Z)	0.823	≥ 0.70	Reliable

Source: Data processed (2025)

Interpretation:

As shown in Tables 1 and 2, all questionnaire items have correlation coefficients (rcount greater than rtable, confirming that all items are valid. Likewise, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for each construct exceed the minimum threshold of 0.70, indicating that all measurement instruments are reliable. Therefore, the research instrument meets the required psychometric standards and is suitable for further statistical analysis.

Normality test, the results of data calculations show that all variables follow a normal distribution with a p-value > 0.05 , which is explained in the following table:

Table 3. Normality Test

		Principal Leadership	Teacher Competence	School Culture	Job Satisfaction	Teacher Performance
N		351	351	351	351	351
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	558.034	1.340.142	609.858	572.194	604.786
	Std. Deviation	781.856	1.813.465	184.772	575.800	255.544
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	0.052	0.061	0.215	0.046	0.114
	Positive	0.052	0.061	0.129	0.043	0.114
	Negative	-0.040	-0.056	-0.215	-0.046	-0.107
Test Statistic		0.052	0.061	0.215	0.046	0.114
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.125 ^c	.103 ^c	.100 ^c	.174 ^c	.100 ^c

Source: Data processed (2025)

The normality test using SPSS was carried out with the Kolmogorov Smirnov method, consistent with the earlier manual testing. The hypotheses were defined as follows:

H0: p-value < 0.05 — the sample does not come from a normally distributed population.

Ha: p-value > 0.05 — the sample comes from a normally distributed population.

The results in Table 3 show that all research variables have p-values greater than 0.05 based on both the Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Shapiro–Wilk tests. This indicates that the data follow a normal distribution, leading to the acceptance of Ha and rejection of H0. Thus, the sample can be considered normally distributed.

Table 4. Multicollinearity Test

Independent Variable	Tolerance	VIF	Interpretation
Principal Leadership	0.412	2.429	No multicollinearity detected
Teacher Competence	0.387	2.584	No multicollinearity detected
School Culture	0.365	2.742	No multicollinearity detected

Source: Data processed (2025)

The multicollinearity test results show that all independent variables principal leadership, teacher competence, and school culture have tolerance values above 0.10 and VIF values below 10. These results indicate that the predictors are not highly correlated with one another and each variable contributes uniquely to the regression model. Therefore, the model is free from multicollinearity and is appropriate for further analysis using path analysis.

Recapitulation of calculation results shown as

Table 5. Recapitulation of Descriptive Data

No	Variable	Mean Score	Range of Values	Criteria
1	Principal Leadership	3.2826	2.6448 – 3.9203	Fairly Good to Good
2	Teacher Competence	3.3504	2.6136 – 4.0871	Fairly Good to Good
3	School Organizational Culture	3.8116	3.4241 – 4.1992	Good
4	Teacher Job Satisfaction	3.3658	2.6879 – 4.0438	Fairly Good to Good
5	Teacher Performance	3.0239	2.6635 – 3.3843	Fairly Good

Source: Processed Data (2025)

The verification analysis method used statistical methods in the form of Path Analysis.

Table 6. Direct and Indirect Effects of Independent Variables on the Intervening Variable

Variable	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect			Total PTL	Total Effect
		X ₁	X ₂	X ₃		
School Principal Leadership (X ₁)	25.20%	–	3.37%	9.31%	12.68%	37.89%
Teacher Competence (X ₂)	9.00%	3.37%	–	1.59%	4.97%	13.97%
Organizational Culture (X ₃)	14.21%	9.31%	1.59%	–	10.91%	25.12%
Total						76.97%
Epsilon 1						23.03%

Source: Calculation results (2025)

Simultaneous Hypothesis Test Result

To test the simultaneous effect of principal leadership, teacher competence, and school culture on teacher job satisfaction (Hypothesis 1), an F-test was applied. The analysis generated an F-calculated value of 90.657. The F-table value was determined

using degrees of freedom where $df1 = k - 1$, with k representing the number of independent variables (3), resulting in $df1 = 2$, and $df2 = n - k$, where n is the sample size (351), giving $df2 = 348$. Based on these degrees of freedom and a significance level of 0.05, the F-table value is 2.21. Since F-calculated (90.657) exceeds the F-table value (2.21), H_0 is rejected. This confirms that principal leadership, teacher competence, and school culture simultaneously exert a significant effect on teacher job satisfaction, thereby supporting Hypothesis 1

Partial Hypothesis Test Results

Partial tests were conducted to examine the influence of principal leadership, teacher competency, and school culture variables, each (partially) significantly on job satisfaction of state vocational high school teachers in Greater Bandung, West Java. This test was conducted to test Hypotheses 2, 3, and 4. This partial test was also conducted to examine the effect of job satisfaction on teacher performance (Hypothesis 5). Table 7 shows that principal leadership has a significant influence on teacher job satisfaction, thus confirming Hypothesis 2. Furthermore, teacher competency also significantly influences teacher job satisfaction, thus confirming Hypothesis 3. Similarly, school culture also significantly influences teacher job satisfaction, thus confirming Hypothesis 4. The analysis results in Table 7 demonstrate that teacher job satisfaction has a significant influence on teacher performance.

Table 7. Partial Test of Principal Leadership (x1), Teacher Competence (x2), and School Culture (x3) Variables on Job Satisfaction (y1)

Variable	Path Coefficient	t-count F-count	t-table F-table	P-value	Hypothesis Criteria	Conclusion
Principal Leadership (X_1)	0.502	5.910	1.96	0.00	If t-count > t-table, H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted.	t-count = 5.910 > 1.96, therefore H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted. Principal Leadership (X_1) has an effect on Teacher Job Satisfaction (Y_1) of 0.502 (50.2%).
Teacher Competence (X_2)	0.300	9.772	1.96	0.00	If t-count > t-table, H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted.	t-count = 9.772 > 1.96, therefore H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted. Teacher Competence (X_2) affects Teacher Job Satisfaction (Y_1) by 0.300 (30%).
School Culture (X_3)	0.377	2.422	1.96	0.16	If t-count > t-table, H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted.	t-count = 2.422 > 1.96, therefore H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted. School Culture (X_3) affects Teacher Job Satisfaction (Y_1) by 0.377 (37%).
Teacher Job Satisfaction (Y_1) → Teacher Performance (Z)	0.898	163.029	2.21	0.05	If F-count > F-table, H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted.	F-count = 163.029 > 2.21, therefore H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted. Teacher Job Satisfaction (Y_1) significantly affects Teacher Performance (Z) by 0.806 (80.6%).

Source: Data processed (2025)

Model Feasibility Test Results

The model feasibility test confirms that the research model meets the criteria for a sound econometric structure. First, the model demonstrates strong theoretical plausibility, with results consistent with human resource management theory (Table 6). Second, the parameter estimates are accurate, unbiased, and statistically significant, fulfilling analytical assumptions with very low error probabilities ($p < 0.05$), as shown in Table 7. Third, the model exhibits strong explanatory power, indicated by Standard Error values less than half of the corresponding path coefficients ($\frac{1}{2}\gamma$), confirming the significance of variable relationships (Table 8). Finally, the model shows high predictive ability, with the predictors explaining 76.97% of the variance in teacher job satisfaction and 80.64% of the variance in teacher performance. These results indicate that the research model is theoretically grounded, statistically robust, and capable of accurately predicting the behavior of the dependent variables.

Presents the results of the model feasibility test, which show that the estimated relationships between variables are consistent with theoretical expectations.

Table 8. Model Feasibility Test Results

Relationship Between Variables	Pre-Estimation	Post-Estimation	Suitability
X_1 (Principal Leadership), X_2 (Teacher Competence), and X_3 (Organizational Culture) $\rightarrow Y_1$ (Teacher Job Satisfaction)	+	+	Appropriate
Y_1 (Teacher Job Satisfaction) $\rightarrow Z$ (Teacher Performance)	+	+	Appropriate

Source: Data processed (2025)

Shows the accuracy of the parameter estimation results, indicating that all path coefficients are accurate, unbiased, and statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

Table 9. Accuracy of Parameter Estimation

Variable	Path Coefficient	P-value	Result
Principal Leadership	0.502	0.000	Accurate
Teacher Competence	0.300	0.034	Accurate
School Culture	0.377	0.000	Accurate
Job Satisfaction	0.898	0.000	Accurate

Source: Data processed (2025)

Demonstrates the explanatory ability of the model, where the Standard Error (SE) values are lower than half of the path coefficients, confirming that the relationships among variables are statistically significant.

Table 10. Explanatory Ability

Variable	Standard Error	Path Coefficient	Result
Principal Leadership	0.034	0.502	$0.034 < 0.502$, Significant
Teacher Competence	0.015	0.300	$0.015 < 0.300$, Significant
School Culture	0.114	0.377	$0.114 < 0.377$, Significant
Job Satisfaction	0.029	0.898	$0.029 < 0.898$, Significant

Source: Data processed (2025)

The results of the model feasibility test, indicate that the research model meets the criteria of a good econometric model in terms of theoretical plausibility, parameter

accuracy, and explanatory ability. Table 6 shows that the relationships among variables—Principal Leadership (X_1), Teacher Competence (X_2), and Organizational Culture (X_3) on Teacher Job Satisfaction (Y_1), as well as Teacher Job Satisfaction (Y_1) on Teacher Performance (Z)—are consistent both before and after estimation, confirming theoretical validity. Table 7 demonstrates that all path coefficients are accurate and statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), with unbiased estimators, indicating the accuracy of parameter estimation. Table 8 further confirms that the Standard Error (SE) values are smaller than the respective path coefficients, proving the significance of the relationships among variables. These results collectively show that the model is theoretically sound, statistically reliable, and capable of explaining the causal relationships within the study.

The results show that principal leadership, teacher competence, and school culture have significant positive effects on teacher job satisfaction and performance, explaining 76.97% of satisfaction and 80.64% of performance. These findings align with studies showing that transformational and instructional leadership enhance motivation and commitment (Baakeel, 2025; Restiani, 2024; Selamet, 2023), while teacher competence strengthens self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation (Mustaqim, 2023; Susilawati, 2024; Rahmawati et al., 2024), consistent with Bandura's social cognitive theory (1997). School culture also supports satisfaction and performance through collaboration and shared values (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Schein, 2016; Santia, 2024; Ridho et al., 2018; Harum et al., 2022). Job satisfaction functions as a mediating factor, reinforcing evidence from Damanik (2025), Rasidi (2025), and Saine et al. (2023) and is aligned with Herzberg's motivation theory (1968). Practically, the findings highlight the need to strengthen leadership, professional development, and collaborative culture in vocational schools, although generalization is limited by self-reported data and regional scope.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that principal leadership, teacher competence, and school culture have significant and positive effects on teacher job satisfaction, which subsequently enhances teacher performance, with the model explaining 76.97% of the variance in satisfaction and 80.64% of the variance in performance, indicating strong statistical robustness. The findings underscore the practical importance of developing transformational and instructional leadership, strengthening teacher competence through continuous professional development, and fostering a collaborative school culture as strategic levers for improving teacher engagement and performance in vocational schools. These contributions offer actionable insights for school leaders and policymakers seeking to enhance institutional effectiveness within the vocational education sector. However, the study is limited by its reliance on self-reported questionnaire data and its focus on public vocational schools within Greater Bandung, which may restrict generalizability. Future research should incorporate longitudinal or mixed-method designs, include diverse school contexts, and examine moderating factors such as emotional intelligence, digital literacy, and organizational support to deepen the understanding of how leadership, competence, and culture interact to shape teacher outcomes.

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