

Research Article

The influence of reward, transformational leadership and motivation on job satisfaction of primary school teachers

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This study aimed to examine how incentives, transformational leadership, and motivation directly and indirectly affect the job satisfaction of elementary school teachers. A quantitative approach with an explanatory research design was adopted. Using stratified random sampling, data were collected from 251 instructors and analyzed through structural equation modeling to assess the causal relationships among the variables studied. The results showed that both transformational leadership and incentives significantly influenced teacher motivation. Motivation, in turn, acted as a mediating factor that enhanced job satisfaction. Furthermore, both the direct and indirect effects of transformational leadership and incentives on job satisfaction were observed through increased motivation. These findings suggest that reward systems and leadership styles play a critical role in improving job satisfaction by enhancing motivation. Based on these results, it is recommended that educational institutions prioritize the development of fair and transparent reward systems and place strong emphasis on cultivating transformational leadership. Such policies can help create a more supportive work environment, thereby increasing teacher performance, satisfaction, and engagement. These insights may assist policymakers and school administrators in designing strategic initiatives aimed at enhancing professional well-being and, ultimately, improving the overall quality of education.

Keywords: Job satisfaction; Motivation; Primary school teachers; Reward; Transformational leadership

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1. Introduction

Teacher job satisfaction is critical in improving learning quality and sustaining the educational system. Satisfied teachers are more motivated, creative, and practical, leading to better student outcomes (Ishak et al., 2024). Personal motivation, school leadership style, and reward systems significantly influence teacher satisfaction (Surahman et al., 2023). However, how these factors interact remains insufficiently understood, particularly in varied school settings where leadership and reward practices are inconsistent. In many basic education contexts, especially in rural or under-resourced schools, the lack of equitable leadership and reward structures continues to impact teacher morale and motivation. Research has shown that transformational leadership positively contributes to teacher satisfaction by fostering a supportive and empowering work

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environment (Panagopoulos et al., 2024). Principals who demonstrate visionary leadership, encourage innovation, and involve teachers in decision-making have been found to enhance trust, collaboration, and professional growth (Kılınc et al., 2024).

In addition to leadership, reward are also an important aspect in increasing teachers' job satisfaction (Toropova et al., 2021; Xin & Tahir, 2024). Reward given in both financial and non-financial forms can increase teachers' sense of self-esteem and motivation in carrying out their duties. According to previous research, recognition of teachers' hard work can increase morale, a sense of belonging to the institution, and reduce turnover rates (Promchart & Potipiroon, 2020). Educators who receive reward for their achievements are also more likely to improve the quality of their teaching because of clear incentives and a sense of appreciation by the school and the community (Terek et al., 2015). In addition, reward also have a positive psychological impact on teachers, such as increasing self-confidence and emotional satisfaction, which ultimately contributes to improving the quality of teaching in the classroom (Wahab et al., 2014).

Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation also play a important role in determining the level of teacher job satisfaction (Yusuf, 2021). Motivated educators feel their work has meaning and purpose, which makes them happier (Kilag, Angtud, et al., 2023). A study conducted in Malaysia showed that motivational aspects such as intellectual challenges, opportunities to develop, and a supportive workplace can significantly increase teachers' job satisfaction (Wahab et al., 2014). In addition, research by Panagopoulos et al., (2024) found that highly motivated educators tend to be more proactive in developing their professional competencies, as well as better able to overcome challenges in the world of education. Motivation also influences teachers' perception of the workload and the work pressure they experience, with educators with high levels of motivation more likely to see challenges at work as opportunities for improvement rather than as obstacles (Sánchez-Rosas, 2023).

While previous studies have examined the effects of rewards, leadership, or motivation separately, a limited number of studies explore their combined and interrelated influence on teacher job satisfaction using robust models such as Structural Equation Modeling. Additionally, few investigations have explicitly focused on primary school teachers within stratified educational systems, where reward policies and leadership practices differ significantly between schools. This gap becomes more pressing amid current efforts to reform educational leadership and improve teacher retention in basic education settings.

Based on the description above, this study aims to analyze the influence of reward, transformational leadership, and motivation on the job satisfaction of primary school teachers. By understanding the relationship between these three variables, this study is expected to make a theoretical and practical contribution to the management of human resources in the education sector (Hardianto et al., 2019). The findings of this study will be useful for policymakers in designing more effective strategies for improving teachers' welfare and job satisfaction, as well as strengthening the role of school principals in creating a workplace that supports the growth of educators' professionalism.

Figure 1 represents the structural connections between key variables that influence job satisfaction among primary school teachers. It highlights how reward systems, transformational leadership, and motivation interact to enhance work satisfaction. These connections emphasize the importance of these factors in fostering a positive and productive workplace for teachers.

The following hypotheses explore the direct effects of various factors on teacher job satisfaction. These factors include rewards, transformational leadership, and motivation, each of which is considered crucial in enhancing work satisfaction in the educational setting. The hypotheses aim to test whether these factors have a positive and strong effect on teachers' overall job satisfaction, motivation, and the leadership dynamics within schools.

(H1): There is a direct beneficial impact between Reward (X1) on Job Satisfaction (Y).

(H2): There is a direct beneficial impact of transformational leadership (X2) on job satisfaction (Y).

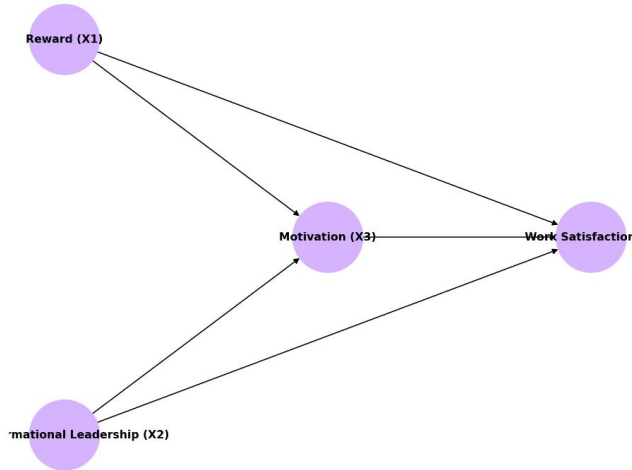
(H3): There is a direct beneficial impact between motivation (X3) on job satisfaction (Y).

(H4): There is a positive direct influence of Reward (X1) on Motivation (X3).

(H5): There is a direct beneficial impact of transformational leadership (X2) on motivation (X3).

Figure 1

Research Framework



2. Method

2.1. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative survey method to examine the influence of reward, transformational leadership, and motivation on elementary school teachers' job satisfaction. The survey technique was chosen because it enables the collection of standardized data from a large sample, essential for analyzing perceptions and testing relationships among variables in diverse school contexts (Creswell, 2020; Kumar, 2024). Quantitative methods are particularly effective in educational research when the aim is to generalize findings and validate theoretical models (Gay et al., 2012).

An explanatory research design was applied to explore direct and indirect effects among the variables and identify causal patterns. This design is appropriate for studies that explain complex interrelationships and the mechanisms by which independent variables influence outcomes. It also aligns with the study's objective of assessing the mediating role of motivation and the structural impact of leadership and reward systems on teacher satisfaction. Structural Equation Modeling [SEM] was selected as the analysis technique, as it allows for simultaneously testing multiple relationships and mediating effects in a single model (Byrne, 2013).

The population of this study consisted of all elementary school teachers in Rokan Hulu Regency, Riau. Stratified random sampling was employed to ensure proportional representation between public and private schools (Kumar, 2024). The inclusion criteria were as follows: teachers must have at least two years of teaching experience at their current school, have received rewards from the school, and be working under a principal who applies a transformational leadership style. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error, resulting in a total of 251 respondents.

2.2. Instruments

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed as the primary instrument within a survey method framework. The questionnaire consisted of four main sections, each measuring a different construct: reward, transformational Leadership, motivation, and job satisfaction.

Reward was measured through items adapted from Wahab et al. (2014), covering financial and non-financial incentives. Transformational Leadership was assessed using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire [MLQ], a validated and widely used scale in leadership studies (Ishak et al., 2024). Motivation included items related to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation based on

established work motivation theories (Sánchez-Rosas et al., 2023). Job Satisfaction was measured using the Job Satisfaction Index [JSI], which has been validated in educational research (Panagopoulos et al., 2024).

All items in the questionnaire were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), as follows: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. To ensure content validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by experts and pilot-tested prior to distribution.

2.3. Data Collection and Data Analysis

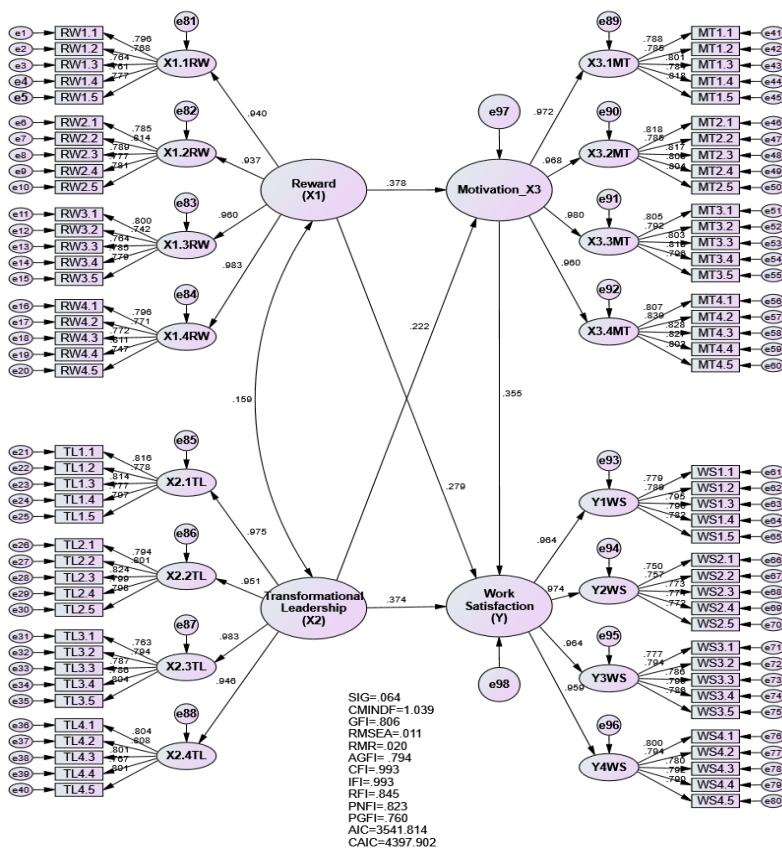
Data were collected through the distribution of both online and paper-based questionnaires to the respondents (Kumar, 2024). To enrich the quantitative findings, semi-structured interviews were also conducted with several educators, providing valuable qualitative insights (Hardianto et al., 2022). The reliability of the research instrument was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha to ensure internal consistency. To examine construct validity, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed, verifying that the questionnaire items appropriately reflected the underlying theoretical constructs. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the characteristics of the respondents and to examine the distribution patterns within the dataset. To test the study's hypotheses, multiple linear regression analysis was applied to determine the effects of rewards, motivation, and transformational leadership on teachers' job satisfaction.

3. Results

Figure 2 represents the structural model used in this study, illustrating the connections between key variables such as rewards, transformational leadership, motivation, and work satisfaction (Wu, 2022). The image visualizes the connections between these factors, along with various observed variables and their corresponding loadings (Eripuddin & Hardianto, 2018). This model aims to assess the direct and indirect effects of these variables on teachers' job satisfaction.

Figure 2

SEM Standardized Solution Model



From Figure 2, the structural model presented illustrates the important connections between rewards, transformational leadership, motivation, and work satisfaction among teachers (Hardianto et al., 2024). The model shows that both rewards and transformative leadership have a positive impact on teachers' motivation, with rewards having a stronger direct effect (Alam, 2023). Motivated educators are more likely to experience upper levels of work satisfaction, emphasizing the importance of fostering both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in the educational environment (Xu, 2022). Transformative leadership also plays a crucial role in shaping motivation and satisfaction, indicating that effective leadership practices contribute to a positive and engaged workforce. Overall, the model suggests that a combination of fair rewards, supportive leadership, and motivated educators leads to increased job satisfaction, which ultimately enhances teaching performance and the overall quality of education. The model fit indices indicate that this model effectively represents these relationships, providing valuable insights for school management to improve teacher welfare and organizational success.

Table 1 shows the confirmatory factor analysis results.

Table 1

Validity and Reliability Test (Confirmatory Factor Analysis)

Reward (X1)		Transformational Leadership (X2)		Motivation (X3)		Work Satisfaction (Y)	
(Reliability Test: 0.976)		(Reliability Test: 0.981)		(Reliability Test: 0.984)		(Reliability Test: 0.982)	
Indicators	Validity Test	Indicators	Validity Test	Indicators	Validity Test	Indicators	Validity Test
X1.1RW	0.940	X2.1TL	0.975	X3.1MT	0.972	Y1WS	0.964
X1.2RW	0.937	X2.2TL	0.951	X3.2MT	0.968	Y2WS	0.974
X1.3RW	0.960	X2.3TL	0.983	X3.3MT	0.980	Y3WS	0.964
X1.4RW	0.983	X2.4TL	0.946	X3.4MT	0.960	Y4WS	0.959
RW1.1	0.796	TL1.1	0.816	MT1.1	0.788	WS1.1	0.779
RW1.2	0.768	TL1.2	0.778	MT1.2	0.785	WS1.2	0.789
RW1.3	0.764	TL1.3	0.814	MT1.3	0.801	WS1.3	0.795
RW1.4	0.761	TL1.4	0.777	MT1.4	0.784	WS1.4	0.790
RW1.5	0.777	TL1.5	0.797	MT1.5	0.818	WS1.5	0.782
RW2.1	0.785	TL2.1	0.794	MT2.1	0.818	WS2.1	0.750
RW2.2	0.814	TL2.2	0.801	MT2.2	0.785	WS2.2	0.757
RW2.3	0.789	TL2.3	0.824	MT2.3	0.817	WS2.3	0.773
RW2.4	0.777	TL2.4	0.799	MT2.4	0.800	WS2.4	0.774
RW2.5	0.781	TL2.5	0.798	MT2.5	0.804	WS2.5	0.772
RW3.1	0.800	TL3.1	0.763	MT3.1	0.805	WS3.1	0.777
RW3.2	0.742	TL3.2	0.794	MT3.2	0.792	WS3.2	0.794
RW3.3	0.764	TL3.3	0.787	MT3.3	0.803	WS3.3	0.786
RW3.4	0.785	TL3.4	0.786	MT3.4	0.813	WS3.4	0.799
RW3.5	0.779	TL3.5	0.804	MT3.5	0.796	WS3.5	0.786
RW4.1	0.796	TL4.1	0.804	MT4.1	0.807	WS4.1	0.800
RW4.2	0.771	TL4.2	0.808	MT4.2	0.839	WS4.2	0.794
RW4.3	0.772	TL4.3	0.801	MT4.3	0.828	WS4.3	0.780
RW4.4	0.811	TL4.4	0.767	MT4.4	0.827	WS4.4	0.792
RW4.5	0.747	TL4.5	0.801	MT4.5	0.803	WS4.5	0.790

The instrument employed in this study is of very good quality, according to the reliability and validity test findings shown in the table (Mahmood, 2022). The Cronbach's Alpha values for each construct Reward (X1), Transformational Leadership (X2), Motivation (X3), and Work Satisfaction (Y) all show very high scores, spanning from 0.976 to 0.984, indicating excellent constructive influence. This suggests that the measurements used in this study are reliable for further analysis.

Furthermore, the validity test results indicate that each indicator used to measure these constructs has high factor loadings. All the indicators associated with Reward (X1),

Transformational Leadership (X2), Motivation (X3), and Work Satisfaction (Y) show factor loadings above 0.50, with most indicators having factor loadings above 0.70, indicating very good convergent validity. The highest loadings are found in the indicators for Reward (X1) and Transformational Leadership (X2), which means these indicators strongly represent their respective constructs.

Although the indicators for Work Satisfaction (Y) have slightly lower loadings compared to the other constructs, these values still meet the acceptable validity criteria, indicating that these indicators are relevant for measuring work satisfaction. Overall, the results from the tests of validity and reliability indicate that the instrument used in this study is reliable and valid for analyzing the relationships between Reward (X1), Transformational Leadership (X2), Motivation (X3), and Work Satisfaction (Y).

Based on the results of the normality test presented in Table 1, it can be concluded that the data for all constructs Reward (X1), Transformational Leadership (X2), Motivation (X3), and Work Satisfaction (Y) are generally normally distributed. The skewness values for each indicator fall within the acceptable range of -3 to $+3$, indicating that the data for these indicators are approximately normally distributed. For example, the skewness values for the Reward (X1) indicators range from -3.147 to -1.783 , all of which meet the normality criteria. The same is true for the Transformational Leadership (X2), Motivation (X3), and Work Satisfaction (Y) indicators, with skewness values spanning from -3.076 to -2.021 , all within the acceptable limits for normality.

Table 2

Normality Test

<i>Reward (X1)</i>		<i>Transformational Leadership (X2)</i>		<i>Motivation (X3)</i>		<i>Work Satisfaction (Y)</i>	
Indicators	Normality Test	Indicators	Normality Test	Indicators	Normality Test	Indicators	Normality Test
RW1.1	-2.987	TL1.1	-2.647	MT1.1	-2.349	WS1.1	-3.702
RW1.2	-3.122	TL1.2	-2.116	MT1.2	-2.483	WS1.2	-3.22
RW1.3	-2.652	TL1.3	-2.298	MT1.3	-2.773	WS1.3	-3.777
RW1.4	-2.667	TL1.4	-2.044	MT1.4	-1.744	WS1.4	-3.61
RW1.5	-2.697	TL1.5	-2.35	MT1.5	-3.408	WS1.5	-2.961
RW2.1	-2.808	TL2.1	-1.551	MT2.1	-2.491	WS2.1	-3.592
RW2.2	-2.979	TL2.2	-2.323	MT2.2	-1.622	WS2.2	-3.023
RW2.3	-2.767	TL2.3	-2.042	MT2.3	-2.467	WS2.3	-2.735
RW2.4	-3.147	TL2.4	-2.219	MT2.4	-2.653	WS2.4	-2.59
RW2.5	-2.955	TL2.5	-1.625	MT2.5	-2.278	WS2.5	-3.237
RW3.1	-3.483	TL3.1	-2.358	MT3.1	-2.021	WS3.1	-2.139
RW3.2	-2.475	TL3.2	-1.99	MT3.2	-3.076	WS3.2	-3.181
RW3.3	-2.097	TL3.3	-3.011	MT3.3	-2.923	WS3.3	-3.696
RW3.4	-2.769	TL3.4	-2.443	MT3.4	-2.632	WS3.4	-3.68
RW3.5	-2.408	TL3.5	-2.646	MT3.5	-2.681	WS3.5	-3.052
RW4.1	-2.153	TL4.1	-1.74	MT4.1	-2.748	WS4.1	-3.35
RW4.2	-2.328	TL4.2	-1.986	MT4.2	-2.943	WS4.2	-2.626
RW4.3	-1.783	TL4.3	-2.134	MT4.3	-2.822	WS4.3	-3.724
RW4.4	-3.555	TL4.4	-2.445	MT4.4	-2.373	WS4.4	-2.555
RW4.5	-3.579	TL4.5	-1.798	MT4.5	-2.659	WS4.5	-2.033
Multivariate				2.156			

Additionally, the multivariate skewness value of 2.156 indicates that the overall data distribution is close to normal. A multivariate skewness value less than 2.58 is considered to reflect good normality, suggesting that the data in this study meet the assumption of multivariate normality. Thus, it can be concluded that the data are normal, both for the distribution of the individual indicators and for the overall multivariate distribution, making the data suitable for

further statistical analysis such as structural equation modeling or regression analysis, where normality is an important assumption.

Based on the calculation of Mahalanobis distance presented in Table 3, no observations are identified as outliers in this dataset. The Mahalanobis distance values for each observation range from 101.884 to 112.760, with the highest value observed for Observation 297 (Perez, 2023). While the Mahalanobis distance for some observations is relatively high, such as for Observation 297, these values do not exceed the critical value of χ^2 (chi-square) of 124.839 for 80 degrees of freedom at a significance level of 0.001 (Yuwono, 2023). Additionally, the p -values for all observations are greater than .001, indicating that none of the observations are statistically important outliers. Therefore, it can be concluded that there are no multivariate outliers in this dataset, and the data is valid for further analysis. Table 4 presents the results of the Goodness of Fit indices.

Table 3

Data outliers

Observation number	Mahalanobis d-squared	$p1$	$p2$
297	112.760	.009	.939
145	108.989	.017	.966
26	108.979	.017	.893
225	106.035	.027	.965
205	105.786	.028	.929
250	104.795	.033	.931
147	103.424	.040	.959
222	103.300	.041	.926
14	102.523	.046	.933
176	102.491	.046	.885
33	102.115	.048	.862
40	101.959	.049	.811
198	101.884	.050	.738

Table 4

Goodness of fit

<i>Absolut Fit Measure</i>			
"Goodness-of-Fit	Cut-off Value	Hasil	Kecocokan
p -value (Sig.)	> .05	0.064	Good fit
Chi-Square/df	≤ 3	1.039	Good fit
GFI(Goodness of Fit)	≥ 0.90	0.806	Marginal fit
RMSEA(Root Mean square Error of Approximation)	≤ 0.08	0.011	Good fit
RMR(Root Mean Square Residual)	≤ 0.05	0.020	Good fit
<i>Incremental Fit Measure</i>			
Goodness-of-Fit	Cut-off Value	Hasil	Kecocokan
AGFI(Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index)	≥ 0.90	0.794	Marginal fit
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	≥ 0.90	0.993	Good fit
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	≥ 0.90	0.993	Good fit
Relative Fit Index (RFI)	≥ 0.95	0.845	Margina; fit
<i>Parsimonious Fit Measure</i>			
Goodness-of-Fit	Cut-off Value	Hasil	Kecocokan
PNFI (Parsimonious Normed Fit Index)	Harus kecil	0.823	Marginal fit
PGFI (Parsimonious Goodness Of Fit Index)	Mendekati 1	0.760	Good fit
AIC (Akaike Information Criterion)	<21720.255	4397.902	Good fit
CAIC (Consistent Akaike Information Criterion)	<6480.000	3541.814	Good fit

Based on the results in Table 4 displayed in the Goodness of Fit, the model overall demonstrates a good fit. Indices such as p -value, χ^2 /df, RMSEA, and RMR all show excellent results, with values falling within acceptable ranges, indicating that the model fits the data well (Shah, 2023).

Specifically, the very low RMSEA value (0.011) and the strong χ^2 / df value (1.039) suggest that the model approximates the data very well.

Additionally, the low values for AIC and CAIC (4397.902 and 3541.814, respectively) indicate that the model is simple, efficient, and well-suited to the data. Overall, while some indices show marginal fit, the model is considered acceptable and provides a good representation of the data (Sobaih, 2022a).

Based on the results presented in Table 5, all the relationships between the variables in the model show important positive effects. The relationship between Reward (X1) and Work Satisfaction (Y) shows a path coefficient of 0.279 with a C.R. of 5.360, indicating a moderate and important positive effect. This suggests that the rewards received by educators contribute to their overall job satisfaction.

Table 5

Path coefficient

NO	Variable	Estimate	C.R.	Result
1	Direct positive effect of Reward (X1) on Work Satisfaction (Y)	0.279	5.360	Valid, Significant
3	Direct positive effect of Transformational Leadership (X2) on Work Satisfaction (Y)	0.374	7.247	Valid, Significant
3	Direct positive effect of Motivation (X3) on Work Satisfaction (Y)	0.355	6.423	Valid, Significant
4	Direct positive effect of Reward (X1) on Motivation (X3)	0.378	6.195	Valid, Significant
5	Direct positive effect of Transformational Leadership (X2) on Motivation (X3)	0.222	3.916	Valid, Significant

Next, the relationship between Transformational Leadership (X2) and Work Satisfaction (Y) shows a path coefficient of 0.374 with a C.R. of 7.247, indicating a stronger and important effect (Sobaih, 2022b). This highlights that effective leadership plays a crucial role in enhancing teachers' job satisfaction.

The positive effect of Motivation (X3) on Work Satisfaction (Y) is also significant, with a path coefficient of 0.355 and a C.R. of 6.423, suggesting that higher motivation leads to increased job satisfaction among teachers.

Additionally, the relationship between Reward (X1) and Motivation (X3) shows a path coefficient of 0.378 with a C.R. of 6.195, indicating that rewards significantly influence teachers' motivation levels. Lastly, Transformational Leadership (X2) also has a positive effect on Motivation (X3) with a path coefficient of 0.222 and a C.R. of 3.916, which, while smaller, still shows a important relationship (Awan, 2022).

4. Discussion

The finding of this study demonstrate that reward, transformational leadership, and motivation significantly affect teacher job satisfaction. Among these, transformational leadership showed a slightly lower direct impact on motivation than rewards. This may be due to contextual factors in the local school system, where teachers more immediately value material incentives than leadership styles, especially in rural or under-resourced areas. In such settings, rewards may provide a stronger sense of appreciation and stability, directly boosting motivation.

Compared to previous studies, these results are consistent with Wahab et al., (2014) and Panagopoulos et al., (2024), who found that rewards and transformational leadership contribute to teacher satisfaction. However, our findings add nuance by showing that the impact of transformational leadership may vary depending on how it is practiced within different school environments. For instance, in Rokan Hulu, leadership practices may be constrained by

bureaucratic limitations, lack of leadership training, or inconsistent implementation, which may explain the relatively moderate influence.

Furthermore, while motivation demonstrated a strong mediating role between institutional supports and performance outcomes, the magnitude of this effect also indicates that neither rewards nor leadership strategies alone are sufficient. To be effective, these efforts must be complemented by practices that actively foster intrinsic motivation—such as autonomy, meaningful goal-setting, and opportunities for professional growth (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018).

4.1. First Hypothesis

The analysis of the direct effect of Reward (X1) on Work Satisfaction (Y) reveals a moderate positive effect with a path coefficient estimate of 0.279 and a C.R. value of 5.360. Since the C.R. is significantly greater than the threshold of 1.96, this confirms that the relationship is statistically significant, allowing us to reject the null hypothesis (H0) and accept the alternative hypothesis (H1). These results indicate that higher rewards lead to greater job satisfaction, reinforcing the idea that a well-structured recognition and reward system plays a crucial role in enhancing teachers' work satisfaction (Kalsoom et al., 2017).

This finding aligns with recent studies in the field of organizational behavior and education. For example, Tumati and Al Yousfi (2023) found that a well-structured reward system—both intrinsic (e.g., recognition, professional development) and extrinsic (e.g., bonuses, benefits)—is strongly correlated with job satisfaction, particularly when rewards are perceived as fair and aligned with performance metrics. Similarly, Saeidi et al. (2024) demonstrated that both financial and non-financial rewards are essential factors in motivating employees and improving their job satisfaction, especially in sectors where intrinsic motivation plays a key role, such as education. The observed positive association between rewards and job satisfaction in this study reinforces prior research emphasizing the central role of reward systems in cultivating a supportive and motivating work environment for educators (Hamzah et al., 2023).

Therefore, the results of this study affirm the hypothesis that Reward (X1) has an important positive effect on Work Satisfaction (Y). As rewards increase, educators are more likely to experience greater satisfaction with their work, thereby improving their overall engagement and commitment to their roles. This reinforces the importance of designing fair and motivating reward systems in educational institutions to support teacher satisfaction and performance.

4.2. Second Hypothesis

The analysis of the direct effect of Transformational Leadership (X2) on Work Satisfaction (Y) reveals a strong positive effect with a path coefficient estimate of 0.374 and a C.R. value of 7.247. Given that the C.R. value far exceeds the threshold of 1.96, the result is both statistically important and indicates that Transformational Leadership plays a crucial role in enhancing Work Satisfaction. This finding suggests that the leadership style of school principals or administrators, characterized by inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration, significantly contributes to teachers' job satisfaction.

This result supports existing research that highlights the importance of transformational leadership in fostering a positive work environment. For instance, Leithwood et al. (2023) found that transformational leadership behaviors directly influence teacher satisfaction, as leaders who engage with their staff in meaningful ways help create a more supportive and motivated workforce (Ratnawati, 2023). Additionally, demonstrated that principals who apply transformational leadership principles are more likely to build trust with their teachers, reduce stress, and increase overall job satisfaction. These findings align with the results of this study, reinforcing the idea that effective leadership is a key driver of teacher satisfaction.

Thus, the results of this study validate the hypothesis that Transformational Leadership (X2) has a important positive effect on Work Satisfaction (Y). Educators who perceive their leaders as transformational are more likely to experience upper levels of job satisfaction, suggesting that

leadership practices in schools should focus on transformational strategies to promote a positive and motivating environment for teachers.

4.3. Third Hypothesis

The analysis of the direct effect of Motivation (X3) on Work Satisfaction (Y) shows a moderate positive effect with a path coefficient estimate of 0.355 and a C.R. value of 6.423. Since the C.R. value is well above the threshold of 1.96, the relationship is statistically significant, confirming that Motivation is a key factor influencing Work Satisfaction. This result indicates that motivated educators are more likely to experience higher levels of job satisfaction, which aligns with the initial hypothesis suggesting that motivation plays a crucial role in enhancing job satisfaction (Panagopoulos, 2024).

This finding is consistent with recent research in the field of educational psychology and organizational behavior. For example, Sánchez-Rosas et al. (2023) found that educators who are intrinsically motivated tend to have upper levels of job satisfaction, as they feel more engaged and committed to their work. Similarly, Kilag, Bariquit, et al. (2023) demonstrated that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation contribute significantly to teacher satisfaction, highlighting that motivated educators are more likely to adopt innovative teaching strategies and contribute positively to the school environment. The results of this study reinforce these findings, confirming that motivation is a crucial determinant of teacher job satisfaction.

Therefore, the results of this study validate the hypothesis that Motivation (X3) has an important positive effect on Work Satisfaction (Y). Motivated educators are not only more likely to be satisfied with their work but are also more likely to engage in behaviors that enhance the overall teaching environment (Leithwood, 2023). These findings underline the importance of fostering both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation among educators to improve their job satisfaction and, by extension, their performance in the classroom.

4.4. Fourth Hypothesis

The analysis of the direct effect of Reward (X1) on Motivation (X3) shows a positive and statistically important relationship, with a path coefficient estimate of 0.378 and a C.R. value of 6.195 (Alkandi et al., 2023). Since the C.R. exceeds the threshold of 1.96, this result confirms that rewards play an important role in enhancing teachers' motivation. The relatively high path coefficient suggests that rewards, both intrinsic and extrinsic, are important drivers of teacher motivation, highlighting the pivotal role of reward systems in influencing teachers' enthusiasm and engagement in their work.

This finding is consistent with recent studies on motivation and rewards in the workplace. Studies have found that educators who perceive their workplace as rewarding are more likely to experience intrinsic motivation, which in turn leads to improved performance and increased job satisfaction (Kumari & Kumar, 2023). Similarly, Ono and Kawasaki (2023) demonstrated that fair and transparent reward systems positively affect motivation, particularly when rewards are aligned with teachers' efforts and achievements. These studies support the results of this study, reinforcing the idea that rewards are a critical factor in motivating educators to excel in their roles.

Therefore, the results of this study validate the hypothesis that Reward (X1) has an important positive effect on Motivation (X3). This suggests that implementing effective reward systems in schools can significantly enhance teachers' motivation, encouraging them to be more committed and productive in their teaching practices (Vedder-Weiss & Fortus, 2013). These findings emphasize the importance of designing reward structures that are perceived as fair, transparent, and aligned with teachers' needs and expectations.

4.5. Fifth Hypothesis

The analysis of the direct effect of Transformational Leadership (X2) on Motivation (X3) reveals a positive but relatively weaker effect with a path coefficient estimate of 0.222 and a C.R. value of 3.916. Since the C.R. exceeds the critical threshold of 1.96, this relationship is statistically important

(Huang et al., 2021). Although the effect size is not as strong as some other connections in the model, the positive path coefficient indicates that transformational leadership plays an important role in motivating teachers, suggesting that leaders who demonstrate inspiring and supportive behaviors can enhance teachers' motivation.

This finding aligns with recent research that emphasizes the role of leadership in fostering motivation within organizations. For example, Yukl (2023) highlighted that transformational leaders (Lubaba & Udin, 2021), through behaviors such as individual consideration and intellectual stimulation, are effective in increasing employees' intrinsic motivation. Similarly, Transformational leadership has been shown to positively influence teacher motivation by fostering an environment of trust and respect, which in turn encourages deeper engagement with their work (Sumampong & Arnado, 2024). The results of this study reinforce the idea that transformational leadership, even though the effect may be moderate, significantly contributes to enhancing teachers' motivation.

Therefore, the results of this study validate the hypothesis that Transformational Leadership (X2) has a important positive effect on Motivation (X3). Although the effect is not as strong as other factors like rewards, leadership still plays a crucial role in shaping teachers' motivation levels, suggesting that educational institutions should prioritize transformational leadership practices to foster a motivating environment for educators (Kılınc et al., 2024). This finding underscores the importance of leadership in influencing not only job satisfaction but also the intrinsic motivation of teachers, which ultimately impacts their performance and engagement.

5. Implications and Recommendations

The findings of this study have several practical implications for stakeholders involved in primary education management. First, school principals and district-level educational administrators—particularly those working under the Ministry of Education or local education offices—should prioritize the development of fair and transparent reward systems. Recognizing teachers' efforts through financial and non-financial incentives can boost motivation and satisfaction.

Second, teacher training and leadership development programs should promote transformational leadership practices among school leaders. Supervisors and school management bodies can benefit from structured leadership models that emphasize vision-building, individualized support, and innovation, all of which contribute to better teacher engagement.

For policymaker at the regional and national levels, including education policy planners and curriculum authorities, the results offer evidence-based support for designing strategies that improve teacher well-being. Policies integrating leadership capacity-building and equitable reward distribution can foster a more motivated and satisfied teaching workforce, particularly in underserved or rural schools.

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Data availability: The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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