Leadership Practices and Teacher Satisfaction: The Critical Role of Trust and Professional Development in Mid-Career Stages

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Abstract
Collaborative leadership, characterized by shared decision-making and teamwork, is closely linked to enhanced teacher satisfaction, as it fosters a supportive and inclusive work environment. However, there is a scarcity of empirical research specifically investigating the impact of principals' collaborative leadership on teacher satisfaction in the Malaysian context. This study adopts a quantitative approach using a survey method and applies multilinear regression analysis to explore the impact of different dimensions of collaborative leadership on teacher satisfaction. The population consists of 2,157 teachers from 38 primary and secondary schools, with a sample size of 331 teachers selected through simple random sampling. The findings indicate that collaborative leadership significantly impacts teacher satisfaction. Key dimensions such as developing the people around, building trust, sharing power and influence, and having a clear vision in leadership were found to enhance teacher satisfaction, accounting for 95.6% of the variance in satisfaction levels. Developing the people around was identified as the most significant predictor of teacher satisfaction, highlighting the importance of professional development and support. Conversely, environmental factors did not significantly influence satisfaction. These results suggest that principals who foster a collaborative environment, build trust, share power, and articulate a clear vision can substantially improve teacher satisfaction. The findings also suggest that at mid-career stages, teachers are likely to seek opportunities for professional development that allow them to expand their skills and take on new challenges. The implications for educational policy and practice include emphasizing collaborative leadership in training programs for school leaders to foster a supportive and engaging work environment for teachers.
Keywords: Leadership Practices, Teacher Satisfaction, Role Of Trust, Professional Development, Mid-Career

Introduction

The dynamic nature of educational leadership has brought collaborative leadership to the forefront as a critical factor in fostering positive school environments and enhancing teacher satisfaction. Recent research has underscored the importance of collaborative leadership in educational settings, highlighting its impact on teacher satisfaction and overall school performance. Recent studies have underscored the critical role of collaborative leadership in enhancing teacher job satisfaction and retention (Ali et al., 2022) as well as teacher commitment (Thien et al., 2021) and overall school performance by fostering a sense of belonging, professional growth, and mutual support among teachers (Karnan & Marimuthu, 2021; Zhang & Xie, 2021).

Professional development is another critical aspect influenced by collaborative leadership. Principals who promote professional development opportunities and encourage collaborative learning among staff contribute to higher levels of teacher satisfaction (Dugas, 2024). Ali et al (2022), highlighted that supportive leadership practices that facilitate continuous learning and growth among teachers lead to increased job satisfaction. Teachers who feel supported in their professional development are more likely to experience higher levels of job satisfaction and commitment to their schools.

A supportive school climate, fostered by collaborative leadership, is essential for teacher satisfaction. Thien et al (2021), identified a positive relationship between collaborative leadership and teacher commitment in Malaysian schools. Thien et al., (2021) also discovered that distributed leadership positively impacts teacher academic optimism. Their research emphasized that shared leadership roles enhance not only commitment but also the overall optimism of teachers regarding their academic responsibilities, thus contributing to a more positive and supportive school environment.

Cultural factors play a significant role in shaping leadership practices and their impact on teacher satisfaction (Ozcan & Ozturk,2020). The effectiveness of participative decision-making in schools varies significantly between individualist and collectivist cultures. In individualist cultures, decision-making is often influenced by personal goals and autonomy, while in collectivist cultures, the emphasis is on group harmony and consensus (Or & Berkovich, 2021). It is important to understand these cultural dynamics to effectively implement distributed leadership and enhance teacher participation and satisfaction. This cultural consideration is crucial for the successful implementation of collaborative leadership in Malaysian schools.

A localised study by Musa et al (2020), have demonstrated positive impact of collaborative leadership which includes instructional leadership, transformational leadership, self-efficacy and trust among primary school teachers. These findings underscore the potential benefits of adopting collaborative leadership practices in enhancing teacher satisfaction within the Malaysian educational system. However, there is a need for more context-specific studies that explore the impact of collaborative leadership on teacher satisfaction in different regions and educational settings within Malaysia.

This research is significant because it aims to fill the existing gaps in the literature on collaborative leadership and teacher satisfaction, specifically within the Malaysian context.

By focusing on localized insights into the relationship between principals' collaborative leadership and teacher satisfaction in Port Dickson, the study provides valuable, context-specific data that can inform educational policies and practices. This research aligns with the national educational goals outlined in the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2025, emphasizing the importance of understanding and implementing effective leadership strategies to enhance teacher satisfaction and, ultimately, student outcomes. Conducting the research in Port Dickson allows for a detailed examination of the specific regional and educational context, providing nuanced insights that are often missing in broader studies. The unique socio-cultural and administrative characteristics of Port Dickson's educational environment can shed light on how collaborative leadership practices affect teacher satisfaction in this particular setting, which can differ from other regions. There is a lack of localized studies in Malaysia, especially in specific regions like Port Dickson. This research aims to address this gap by providing an in-depth analysis of the influence of principals' collaborative leadership on teacher satisfaction in this area. Hence, the findings from Port Dickson can provide practical recommendations for local educational leaders and policymakers, helping them to tailor their strategies to better meet the needs of teachers and improve overall school performance.

Malaysia's National Education Policy underscores the importance of effective leadership in achieving the educational goals of the nation. The policy advocates for a holistic and integrated approach to education that not only emphasizes academic excellence but also the development of a positive school environment and the well-being of teachers and students. The Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2025 highlights the need for school leaders to adopt collaborative and transformative leadership styles to improve school performance and teacher morale (Omoresemi-Ogiamien,2022) The Blueprint recognizes that empowered and satisfied teachers are critical to delivering high-quality education and achieving the national vision of a world-class education system. Despite the policy's strong emphasis on leadership and teacher satisfaction Existing studies have largely focused on broader aspects of leadership without delving deeply into the collaborative practices of school principals and their direct influence on teachers' job satisfaction (Abidin & Alias,2022).

Building on these insights, this study will provide a localized examination of how principals' collaborative leadership practices influence teacher satisfaction in Port Dickson, offering valuable implications for educational policy and school leadership practices in Malaysia. The current body of literature lacks focused studies examining how the collaborative leadership practices of school principals specifically affect teacher satisfaction in this region. This research aims to address this gap by leveraging recent findings to explore and analyse the influence of principal's' collaborative leadership on teacher's' job satisfaction in Port Dickson, providing valuable insights for policy makers and educational leaders. This paper answers the following research questions:

1. What is the level of principal's collaborative leadership?
2. What is the level of teacher's satisfaction?
3. Does principal's collaborative leadership influence teacher satisfaction?
4. Which particular behaviours and practices within collaborative leadership that have the most substantial effect on enhancing teacher's satisfaction?

Literature Review

Theories

In examining the influence of principal's collaborative leadership on teacher's satisfaction, several key theories provide a robust theoretical framework. Transformational Leadership Theory serves as a foundational perspective, positing that leaders who inspire, motivate, and foster an inclusive vision significantly enhance follower satisfaction and performance. Principals who embody transformational leadership by encouraging teamwork, professional development, and creating a supportive environment can positively impact teachers' job satisfaction. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of motivation also underpins this research, distinguishing between hygiene factors such as working conditions and motivators such as recognition and achievement. By addressing both through collaborative leadership practices, principals can improve the overall satisfaction of their teachers. Additionally, Social Exchange Theory offers insight into the relational dynamics between principals and teachers. This theory suggests that relationships are built on reciprocal exchanges, and when principals engage in collaborative practices, they foster mutual respect and support. This reciprocal relationship increases trust and commitment, enhancing job satisfaction as teachers feel valued and included in decision-making processes. Distributed Leadership Theory complements this by emphasizing that leadership responsibilities should be shared among various stakeholders within the school. Such distribution promotes a culture of collaboration and shared responsibility, which can lead to higher levels of teacher satisfaction by making them feel integral to the school's success.

Finally, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) highlights the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in fostering intrinsic motivation and well-being. Collaborative leadership practices that enhance teachers' sense of autonomy through participative decision-making, boost their competence via professional development opportunities, and strengthen relatedness by building a cohesive school community can significantly improve job satisfaction. Together, these theories provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how principal's collaborative leadership practices can positively influence teacher's satisfaction in the educational context of Port Dickson, Negeri Sembilan.

Collaborative Leadership

Collaborative leadership in education is characterized by the inclusion of various stakeholders, particularly teachers, in the decision-making processes. This leadership style promotes shared responsibility, mutual respect, and collective goal-setting. Bellibas (2020) emphasizes that the significant direct impact of principals' leadership positively influences teaching quality, collaboration, and job satisfaction among teachers. Schools that adopt collaborative leadership practices tend to exhibit higher levels of teacher morale and lower turnover rates (Bellibas, 2020). Jones (2023) found that when teachers feel valued and included in decision-making, their motivation and satisfaction increase, leading to better educational outcomes.

In examining the influence of principal's collaborative leadership on teacher's satisfaction, it is essential to explore the specific dimensions of the independent variables. These dimensions include environment, building trust, developing the people around, clear vision in leadership, and sharing power and influence. This section elaborates on each dimension.

Environment
The school environment is a critical factor that influences teachers' job satisfaction and overall well-being. A supportive and conducive working environment fosters collaboration, innovation, and a sense of belonging among teachers. According to Johnson and Kraft (2021), an environment that includes adequate resources, manageable workloads, and supportive leadership significantly enhances teacher satisfaction. Meredith et al (2020), found that schools with a positive working environment, characterized by collaborative practices and a strong sense of community, report higher levels of teacher satisfaction and lower turnover rates. Principals play a vital role in shaping this environment by promoting open communication, providing necessary resources, and encouraging teamwork.

Building Trust
Building trust is fundamental to effective leadership and a key component of collaborative leadership. Trust between principals and teachers is built through consistent, transparent, and respectful interactions. Bryk and Schneider (2020), emphasize that trust is crucial for fostering a positive school culture and enhancing teacher satisfaction. Principals who engage in collaborative leadership practices, such as involving teachers in decision-making and being transparent about school policies, build stronger trust relationships. Tschannen-Moran & Constatino (2021) highlights that high-trust environments lead to higher levels of teacher satisfaction, as teachers feel more secure and valued in their roles.

Developing People Around
The development of teachers is a critical responsibility of school leaders and a significant factor in job satisfaction. Collaborative leaders invest in professional development, mentoring, and coaching, which are essential for teachers' growth and satisfaction. Kilag & Sasan (2023) highlight that effective leader create opportunities for continuous learning and professional development, fostering a culture of improvement and innovation. Koppelberger (2023) demonstrate that when principals prioritize the development of their staff, teachers feel more competent, supported, and motivated, leading to higher levels of job satisfaction and retention.

Clear Vision in Leadership
A clear and compelling vision in leadership provides direction and purpose for teachers, aligning their efforts towards common goals. Collaborative leaders ensure that the school's vision and mission are developed inclusively and communicated effectively. According to Kilag & Sasan (2023), leaders who articulate a clear vision and mission inspire and align their teams towards common objectives, fostering a sense of ownership and commitment among teachers. Day et al (2020), found that teachers who understand and believe in their school's vision and mission are more likely to be satisfied and dedicated to their work, as they feel their efforts contribute to a larger purpose.

Sharing Power and Influence
Sharing power and influence is a hallmark of collaborative leadership. This involves delegating authority, empowering teachers to make decisions, and recognizing their contributions. Lovett (2022), argue that distributed leadership, where power and influence are shared among school staff, leads to more effective and satisfying work environments. Teachers who feel empowered and involved in school governance report higher levels of job satisfaction.

Bokhart(2022) suggest that schools practicing shared leadership experience increased innovation, collaboration, and teacher engagement, contributing to a positive and productive school culture.

These five dimensions highlight the multifaceted nature of collaborative leadership and its impact on the independent variables that contribute to teacher satisfaction. By creating a supportive environment, building trust, developing staff, articulating a clear vision, and sharing power and influence, principals can foster a positive and engaging work environment for teachers.

Teacher's Satisfaction

Teacher satisfaction is a crucial element in effective educational systems, as it directly impacts teacher retention, performance, and student achievement. Various factors contribute to teacher satisfaction, with collaborative leadership emerging as a significant predictor in recent studies. Inclusive leadership practices, which involve teachers in decision-making processes, have been shown to enhance job satisfaction. Wang et al., (2022) discovered that teachers who perceive their principals as inclusive and participatory are more likely to report higher job satisfaction. This sense of inclusion helps teachers feel respected and valued, fostering a positive work environment. This section elaborates on three dimensions of teacher's satisfaction.

Relationship with the School Principal and Colleagues

The relationship between teachers and their school principal, as well as with their colleagues, plays a crucial role in job satisfaction. A positive and collaborative relationship with the principal can lead to a supportive and nurturing work environment. According to Tschannen-Moran (2021), trust and mutual respect between teachers and principals are fundamental to building strong professional relationships. Principals who engage in open communication, provide constructive feedback, and involve teachers in decision-making processes foster a sense of belonging and collaboration. Similarly, collegial relationships are essential for a positive work environment. Ertürk, Ramazan (2021), found that strong, supportive relationships among teachers lead to increased job satisfaction, reduced stress, and greater collaboration, ultimately enhancing the overall school climate.

Motivation

Teacher motivation is a critical factor influencing job satisfaction and performance. Motivated teachers are more likely to be engaged, enthusiastic, and committed to their work (Basalamah & As'ad, 2021). Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory suggests that intrinsic motivators, such as recognition, achievement, and professional growth, are essential for job satisfaction. Collaborative leadership practices that recognize and celebrate teachers' efforts, provide opportunities for professional development, and foster a culture of continuous improvement can significantly boost motivation. Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory also highlights the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in fostering intrinsic motivation. When principals create an environment that supports these needs, teachers are more likely to feel motivated and satisfied in their roles.

Work Achievement

Work achievement is closely linked to job satisfaction, as it reflects a teacher's sense of accomplishment and effectiveness in their role. Collaborative leadership can enhance work achievement by setting clear goals, providing necessary resources, and offering support and feedback. According to Malik et al (2021), visible learning and achievement are more likely to occur in schools where leaders actively engage teachers in setting and reaching educational goals. Additionally, Bellibas (2021), found that teachers who perceive their principals as supportive and collaborative are more likely to report higher levels of job satisfaction and achievement. This sense of accomplishment and recognition of their contributions can lead to a more fulfilling and rewarding professional experience.

These dimensions underscore the multifaceted nature of teacher satisfaction and the critical role of collaborative leadership in enhancing relationships with principals and colleagues, motivation, and work achievement. By fostering strong professional relationships, boosting motivation through recognition and professional development, and supporting teachers in achieving their goals, principals can significantly improve job satisfaction. Understanding and addressing these dimensions is crucial for creating a positive and supportive work environment in schools in Port Dickson, Negeri Sembilan, ultimately leading to better educational outcomes for students.

Research Methodology

Research Design**:** This research employs cross-sectional survey to examine the relationship between various dimensions of collaborative leadership and teacher satisfaction. By utilizing this cross-sectional survey method, the study aims to quantify the impact of independent variables such as working environment, building trust, developing people around, clear vision in leadership, and sharing power and influence on the dependent variable, which is teacher satisfaction. A cross-sectional survey is ideal for this research because it allows the simultaneous analysis of multiple predictors, offering a comprehensive understanding of how various aspects of collaborative leadership collectively influence teacher satisfaction.

Population and Sample: Based on the data obtained from the website of the Negeri Sembilan State Education Department, there are 38 primary and secondary schools in this district with total population of 2157 teachers. A simple random sampling technique was used as it ensures that every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected. This eliminates selection bias and helps in achieving a representative sample of the population. Simple Random sampling also supports the application of statistical tests and models, which require that the data be collected randomly. This allows for more robust and accurate statistical analysis.

Research Instrument: The questionnaire is divided into three sections. Section A covers the demographic information such as age, gender, tenure, and school name. There are a total of 84 questions in Section B measure collaborative leadership and C measure teacher satisfaction using a 5-point Likert scale from "strongly disagree (1) to "strongly agree (5). The items in Section B are adapted, modified, and translated from the Turning Point Collaborative Self-Assessment Questionnaire by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Meanwhile, Section C instrument translated, adapted, and modified from the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire Long Form version 1967.

A pilot study was conducted with 30 respondents who were teachers not included in the main study area. The respondents for this pilot study were also selected using a random sampling method. Cronbach's Alpha value was used to verify the reliability of each construct used in the questionnaire. The Cronbach's Alpha value for the principal's collaborative leadership is 0.95, while for teacher satisfaction, it is 0. 94.

Data Analysis: The data was collected and analysed using SPSS version 26.0. Descriptive statistics, such as mean and standard deviation, were utilized alongside multiple linear regression analysis to identify the factors contributing to teacher satisfaction. The strength of the relationship between variables was evaluated using Pearson's correlation coefficient, r, interpreted using the guidelines provided by Cohen et al. (2000) for assessing correlation strength.

Research Findings

The sample consists of 331 respondents, with a fairly balanced gender distribution. Male teachers account for 48.6% (161 respondents), while female teachers represent 51.4% (170 respondents). This slight majority of female respondents indicates a relatively even gender representation among the teachers surveyed. The age distribution of the respondents is varied, with the majority falling within the 31-40 years age group, which comprises 51.8% (170 respondents) of the total sample. This is followed by the 41-50 years age group, making up 34.7% (115 respondents). Teachers aged 51-60 years constitute 7.9% (26 respondents), while the youngest group, aged 25-30 years, represents 6.0% (20 respondents). The age distribution suggests that most teachers are in their early to mid-career stages, with a significant portion in the later stages of their career. The data on working experience reveals that the largest group of respondents has between 1-10 years of experience, accounting for 42.6% (141 respondents) of the total. This is closely followed by those with 11-20 years of experience, who make up 40.2% (133 respondents). Teachers with 21-30 years of experience constitute 15.4% (51 respondents), while those with 31-35 years of experience represent a small proportion, at 1.8% (6 respondents). This distribution indicates a diverse range of experience levels among the teachers, with a substantial number of respondents having significant experience in the field.

Table 1

Respondent Demographic Profile

	Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	159	48.0
	Female	170	51.4
Age	25-30 years	20	6.0
	31-40 years	170	51.4
	41-50 years	115	34.7
	51-60 years	26	7.9
Working experience	1-10 years	141	42.6
	11-20 years	133	40.2
	21-30 years	51	15.4
	31-35 years	6	1.8
	Total	331	100

Principal's Collaborative Leadership
In Table 2, the level of collaborative leadership practiced by principals in the Port Dickson area is at a high level with an average mean score of 3.82 (SD = 0.45). Based on the five dimensions, the environment and building trust dimension has the highest mean value with mean = 3.83 respectively. Followed by the dimension of a clear vision in leadership (mean = 3.82, SD = 0.46), developing people around (mean = 3.81, SD = 0.46) and sharing power and influence (mean = 3.80, SD = 0.46) have the lowest mean values and are less practiced by principals compared to other dimensions.

Table 2
Principal's Collaborative Leadership

Dimension	Mean	SD
Environment	3.83	0.47
Clear vision in leadership	3.82	0.46
Building trust	3.83	0.46
Sharing power and influence	3.80	0.46
Developing the people around	3.81	0.46
Overall Collaborative Leadership	3.82	0.45

Teacher's Satisfaction
Based on Table 3, overall, the level of teacher satisfaction in the Port Dickson area is at a high level with an average mean score of 3.82 (SD = 0.44). Among the three dimensions, the dimension with the highest mean satisfaction is relationship with the principal and colleagues as well as motivation with the mean scores of 3.82. Meanwhile, the dimensions of work satisfaction stated a lower mean value of 3.80 (SD = 0.44). Table 5.3 shows the mean scores and standard deviations for the level of teacher satisfaction in the Port Dickson area.

Table 3
Teacher's Satisfaction

Dimension	Mean	SD
Relationship with principal and colleagues	3.82	0.45
Work satisfaction	3.80	0.44
Motivation	3.82	0.46
Overall Teacher's satisfaction	3.82	0.44

Model Summary
The model presented in Table 3 demonstrates a robust and statistically significant relationship between the independent and dependent variables. With an R value of .978, the model exhibits an extremely high correlation, indicating that the predicted values align closely with the actual data. This strong correlation is further supported by the R Square value of .956, which suggests that 95.6% of the variance in the dependent variable can be explained by the independent variables in the model. The Adjusted R Square of .955, which accounts for the number of predictors, indicates that the model is well-fitted and avoids unnecessary complexity.

Additionally, the standard error of the estimate is .09366, reflecting the average distance between the observed values and the regression line. This low standard error suggests that

the model's predictions are precise. The significance level (p-value) is reported as less than .001, confirming that the results are highly statistically significant. This low p-value indicates that the observed relationships in the data are unlikely to have occurred by chance.

Table 3
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Sig (p)
1	.978^d	.956	.955	.09366	<.001

Factor's Contributing Teachers' Satisfaction
The table of coefficients provides insights into the influence of various dimensions of collaborative leadership on teacher satisfaction. The analysis focuses on four key dimensions: building trust (Collaborative_L3), developing people around (Collaborative_L5), sharing power and influence (Collaborative_L4), and clear vision in leadership (Collaborative_L2).

The analysis reveals that among the dimensions of collaborative leadership, developing people around stands out as the most significant predictor of teacher satisfaction, with a notable standardized coefficient (Beta = 0.312) and a highly significant t-value (7.82, p < .001). Building trust also plays a crucial role, positively influencing teacher satisfaction with a Beta of 0.246 (t = 5.05, p < .001). Sharing power and influence, along with having a clear vision in leadership, further contribute to teacher satisfaction, though to a slightly lesser extent, as indicated by their respective Beta values of 0.220 and 0.176 collectively.

All four dimensions of collaborative leadership building trust, developing people, sharing power, and having a clear vision are statistically significant predictors of teacher satisfaction. Among these, developing people around (Collaborative_L5) and building trust (Collaborative_L3) have the strongest impact. This suggests that focusing on these aspects of leadership can significantly enhance teacher satisfaction, contributing to a more positive and productive educational environment. The absence of the working environment (Collaborative_L1) from the listed coefficients suggests that it has a minimal or negligible impact on teacher satisfaction in this model, as it was not found to be a significant predictor compared to the other dimensions of collaborative leadership.

Table 5
Coefficient Results of SPSS

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.180	.044		4.12	<.001
Collaborative_L3	.246	.049	.257	5.05	<.001
Collaborative_L5	.312	.040	.326	7.82	<.001
Collaborative_L4	.220	.041	.230	5.36	<.001
Collaborative_L2	.176	.039	.185	4.47	<.001

Discussions

The motivation behind this study is deeply rooted in the pressing need to enhance teacher satisfaction through effective leadership practices in Malaysian schools, particularly in the context of Port Dickson. By focusing on the critical role of collaborative leadership, this study contributes valuable insights that address the gap in localized studies within the Malaysian educational landscape. The findings not only reinforce the significance of developing people and building trust but also offer actionable recommendations that can guide policymakers and educational leaders in creating more supportive and engaging environments for teachers. These insights are crucial for driving forward the goals of the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2025, ultimately contributing to a more dynamic and effective educational system.

Research by Mahzan and Nordin (2021), found that effective school leadership significantly improves teacher job satisfaction and school performance. The Blueprint of Malaysian Education Development Plan (PPPM) 2013-2025 advocates for principals to be instructional leaders who can foster collaborative environments, share leadership responsibilities, and build trust among teachers. The significant impact of vision, trust, shared power, and building a collaborative environment on teacher satisfaction underscores the need for policies that promote these leadership qualities.

The highest dimension of collaborative leadership that contributes to teacher satisfaction which is developing people around, is integral to fostering a collaborative and positive school culture (Nguyen et, al.,). When teachers are given opportunities to grow professionally, it not only boosts their confidence but also strengthens their relationships with colleagues and school leadership. This, in turn, creates a more cohesive and supportive working environment, which is closely linked to higher levels of teacher satisfaction.

The second dimension of collaborative leadership that contributes to teacher satisfaction in this research is building trust. Özdemir et al.(2024) supports the idea that trust in leadership is crucial for teacher satisfaction. The research indicates that schools where leaders actively work to build and maintain trust tend to have more satisfied and committed teachers (Bryk &d Schneider, 2020). The study also notes that trust can mitigate the effects of job-related stress, further contributing to overall job satisfaction.

This is followed by the dimension of sharing power and influence. School principals should receive training that focuses on developing a clear vision, building trust, and sharing power. This training should be part of continuous professional development programs. There is a strong need to leadership development programs that emphasize collaborative practices (Kilag et al., 2023).

In this research, having a clear vision in leadership placed fourth in influencing teacher satisfaction. A principal's clear vision not only guides the school towards achieving its goals but also helps in building trust and respect among teachers (Anderson, 2022). When teachers see that their principal has a strong vision for the future, they are more likely to feel secure, valued, and motivated in their roles, leading to greater job satisfaction (Day et al., 2020).

Although the dimension of environment has the least impact towards teacher satisfaction in this research, schools should create environments that support collaboration among

teachers. This can involve physical spaces that encourage interaction and professional learning communities where teachers can share ideas and practices. According to Majid et al. (2020), a supportive school environment significantly contributes to teacher job satisfaction. The age distribution of the respondents shows that a significant majority (86.1%) are in the 31-50 years age bracket, with 51.4% aged 31-40 years and 34.7% aged 41-50 years. This concentration of mid-career teachers is crucial in understanding the importance they place on developing people and building trust within the school environment. Mid-career teachers are typically at a stage where they have gained substantial experience and have established their professional identity. For these teachers, leadership practices that focus on developing their potential further and fostering trust are particularly impactful. The data reflects high satisfaction scores in both "Developing the people around" and "Building trust". These findings suggest that teachers in this age group value leadership that continues to invest in their growth and nurtures a trusting, collaborative environment. At this stage in their careers, teachers are likely to seek opportunities for professional development that allow them to expand their skills and take on new challenges. Leadership that actively supports their development not only enhances their competence but also reinforces their commitment to the school. Additionally, building trust is crucial for this demographic, as it fosters a sense of security and belonging, which is essential for job satisfaction and retention.

The education system in Malaysia is centralized, with policies and guidelines being implemented from the Ministry of Education down to individual schools. This top-down approach can sometimes limit the autonomy of school leaders. However, the study's findings suggest that even within a centralized system, principals who adopt a collaborative leadership style can significantly enhance teacher satisfaction. A study by Nagurar et al (2023), indicates that decentralized decision-making within schools can lead to higher job satisfaction among teachers. Encouraging principals to develop clear visions, build trust, share power, and create supportive environments can help mitigate some of the challenges posed by the centralized system. Education policies should emphasize and support collaborative leadership practices. This can include frameworks for shared decision-making and mechanisms to foster trust and open communication within schools. A study by Jafar et al (2022), recommends policy adjustments to support a more collaborative school culture.

Malaysia's multicultural society values collectivism, respect for authority, and harmonious relationships. These cultural values are reflected in the education system, where respect for school leadership is paramount. The significant impact of trust and shared power in the study indicates that while teachers respect authority, they also value being included in decision-making processes and having their voices heard. This balance between respect for authority and collaborative practices can lead to a more satisfied and motivated teaching workforce. Ang'ana and Chiroma (2021), highlights that collaborative leadership styles that resonate with cultural values of respect and collectivism are more effective in the Malaysian context.

The findings strongly support the notion that collaborative leadership significantly influences teacher satisfaction in Port Dickson, Negeri Sembilan. This aligns well with the Malaysian Education Blueprint's objectives and fits within the broader cultural context of Malaysia. By fostering collaborative leadership practices, the education system can enhance teacher satisfaction, leading to better educational outcomes and a more positive school climate. The

recent research further corroborates the importance of these leadership qualities in improving teacher satisfaction and overall school performance.

Conclusion and Recommendation
This research aimed to investigate the influence of the principal's collaborative leadership on teacher satisfaction in Port Dickson, Negeri Sembilan. The findings revealed that several aspects of collaborative leadership significantly impact teacher satisfaction. The strongest predictor was developing the people and built the trust, indicating the critical importance of a supportive and collaborative environment. On the other hand, environmental factors alone did not significantly impact teacher satisfaction within this model. These findings align well with the Malaysian Education Blueprint's objectives and the broader cultural context of Malaysia, emphasizing the value of collaborative leadership in enhancing educational outcomes.

As recommendation, Schools should create professional development programs tailored specifically for mid-career teachers, focusing on advanced skills, leadership opportunities, and innovative pedagogical approaches to foster continuous growth. Additionally, encouraging these teachers to participate in or lead mentorship programs can leverage their expertise while offering reciprocal learning experiences, keeping them engaged and motivated in their roles.

Leadership training programs, such as the National Professional Qualification for Educational Leaders (NPQEL), should prioritize trust-building strategies, including conflict resolution, active listening, and fostering collaborative environments. By promoting a shared leadership style that distributes power and influence, schools can enhance teacher investment in decision-making, thereby building trust and empowering mid-career teachers, ultimately leading to higher job satisfaction.

Elements of collaborative leadership should be emphasized in future iterations of the National Education Policy, particularly in light of Malaysian Teacher Standards 2.0 and the aspirations of Malaysia's Education Direction 2030. To align with the forward-looking goals of the Malaysian Education Development Plan (PPPM) 2013-2025 and beyond, the National Professional Qualification for Educational Leaders (NPQEL) program can be enhanced to include a stronger focus on collaborative leadership. This approach, as supported by Malaysian Teacher Standards 2.0, emphasizes the development of future-ready educators and leaders who are capable of fostering teacher satisfaction and improving school effectiveness. Furthermore, by aligning with the vision outlined in Malaysia's Education Direction 2030, which advocates for innovation, inclusivity, and shared leadership, the integration of collaborative leadership principles will better prepare school leaders to meet the challenges of a dynamic educational landscape.

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