



PSYCHOSOCIAL PREDICTORS OF JOB SATISFACTION AMONG SCHOOL TEACHERS: THE INTERPLAY OF LEADERSHIP AND WORKPLACE DEVIANCE IN THE PAKISTANI CONTEXT

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Abstract

The educational landscape of Pakistan faces a critical challenge regarding teacher retention and quality, often attributed to resource constraints and administrative instability. However, empirical evidence suggests that the psychosocial environment, specifically the "human element" of management, plays a decisive role in teacher well-being. This study investigates the psychosocial predictors of job satisfaction among school teachers ($N = 300$) in Faisalabad and Lahore, specifically examining the impact of Authoritative Leadership style and Deviant Workplace Behavior. Grounded in Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Social Exchange Theory (SET), the research posits that supportive leadership acts as a resource enhancing satisfaction, while workplace deviance acts as a stressor eroding it.

Using a quantitative, predictive correlational design, data was analyzed using Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression. Results indicate a significant positive relationship between Authoritative Leadership and Job Satisfaction ($r = .55$) and a significant negative relationship between Deviant Workplace Behavior and Job Satisfaction ($r = -.49$). The regression model explains 40% of the variance in job satisfaction ($R^2 = .40$), identifying Authoritative Leadership as a robust positive predictor ($\beta = .56$) and Deviant Workplace Behavior as a significant negative predictor ($\beta = -.38$). The findings suggest that in the Pakistani context, democratic leadership buffers workplace stress, highlighting the urgent need for leadership training and zero-tolerance policies regarding workplace incivility.

Keywords: *Job Satisfaction, Authoritative Leadership, Deviant Workplace Behavior, School Teachers, Pakistan.*

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1.Introduction

Education is universally recognized as the bedrock of societal development, economic prosperity, and individual empowerment. It serves as the primary engine for social mobility and the cultivation of human capital. Within this complex educational ecosystem, teachers are the most critical variable. They act not merely as transmitters of information but as the primary catalysts for knowledge transmission, character building, and the shaping of future generations. Consequently, the psychological well-being, motivation, and job satisfaction of teachers are not merely personal concerns but are pivotal to the effectiveness of the entire educational apparatus.

When a school system is analyzed, its effectiveness relies heavily on the quality of its teaching workforce. However, teachers do not operate in a vacuum. They are embedded within a specific organizational climate defined by the leadership style of their principals and the behavioral norms of their colleagues. When this climate is supportive, teachers thrive; when it is toxic, the educational mission suffers. Job satisfaction, defined as the extent to which an individual feels positively or negatively about their job, serves as a critical barometer of an educational institution's health. Satisfied teachers exhibit higher levels of commitment, lower absenteeism, and better instructional quality, which directly translates into improved student achievement. Conversely, dissatisfaction leads to burnout, high turnover rates, and a deterioration in the quality of education.

1.1. Global and Local Trends in Teacher Satisfaction

Globally, the teaching profession is facing a dual crisis of retention and satisfaction. According to the OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) (2024), while a majority of teachers report general satisfaction, a significant minority, particularly those under 30, express intentions to leave the profession within the next five years due to stress and lack of support. In developed nations, this attrition is often linked to accountability pressures and excessive workload.

However, the context in South Asia, particularly Pakistan, presents unique challenges. Historically, the teacher (or "Guru") was revered, but modern bureaucratic structures have eroded this professional autonomy, leading to a "crisis of status". Research from the region indicates that teachers are often motivated by intrinsic factors like social

recognition but are deeply dissatisfied with extrinsic factors like pay and promotion policies. In Pakistan, the sector faces chronic resource constraints, overcrowded classrooms, and administrative instability. While policy debates often focus on physical infrastructure, empirical evidence suggests that the interpersonal dynamics within the school play an arguably more significant role in determining whether a teacher stays or leaves.

1.2. The Psychological Landscape: Leadership and Deviance

This research identifies two opposing forces that shape the psychological landscape of Pakistani schools: a positive resource, identified as the leadership style of the Principal (specifically Authoritative/Democratic leadership), and a negative stressor, identified as the prevalence of Deviant Workplace Behavior (DWB) among staff.

The study aims to dissect these forces by merging the study of leadership (a top-down influence) with workplace deviance (a bottom-up or lateral influence). It addresses a critical gap in the literature: while leadership and workplace behavior have been studied in isolation, there is a scarcity of research integrating them into a single predictive model for school teachers in Pakistan. Specifically, it remains unknown to what extent a supportive leader can buffer the negative effects of a deviant work environment, and whether leadership style itself serves as a root cause for the prevalence of deviant behavior among staff.

2. Theoretical Framework

To fully understand the mechanisms by which leadership and behavior impact satisfaction, this study is grounded in three prominent psychological theories: Self-Determination Theory (SDT), Social Exchange Theory (SET), and Social Learning Theory.

2.1. Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Proposed by Deci and Ryan (1985), Self-Determination Theory acts as a macro-theory of human motivation. It posits that all employees, including teachers, have three innate psychological needs that must be satisfied to experience well-being: Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness.

- **Autonomy:** In a school, this translates to a teacher having the freedom to choose teaching methods or classroom management styles.
- **Competence:** This need is supported when leaders provide constructive feedback rather than criticism, helping teachers feel effective.

- **Relatedness:** This involves feeling connected to others and belonging to a community, a factor heavily influenced by the behavior of colleagues.

This study theorizes that Authoritative (Democratic) leadership is the most effective style because it nurtures these needs by involving teachers in decision-making (Autonomy) and providing structure (Competence). In contrast, deviant behavior attacks the need for Relatedness, leading to distress.

2.2. Social Exchange Theory (SET)

Social Exchange Theory views social relationships as a series of interactions that generate obligations. It operates on the "Reciprocity Norm": when a Principal treats teachers with respect and fairness (Authoritative Leadership), teachers feel an obligation to reciprocate through higher job satisfaction and loyalty. Conversely, workplace deviance represents a "Breach of Contract". When a teacher is a victim of incivility or observes colleagues wasting resources, the psychological contract is broken, leading to withdrawal behaviors.

2.2.1. Social Learning Theory

Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory posits that individuals learn behaviors by observing others, particularly authority figures. In schools, Principals are the primary role models. The "Trickle-Down Effect" suggests that ethical leadership flows downwards; if a leader is punctual and respectful, they set a normative standard that discourages deviance. Therefore, this study hypothesizes that strong Authoritative leadership will not only increase satisfaction directly but also indirectly by reducing the prevalence of deviant behavior.

3. Review of Study Variables

3.1. Job Satisfaction: The "Psychological Salary"

Job satisfaction is defined as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job. In the context of developing countries like Pakistan, extrinsic rewards such as salary and benefits are often perceived as insufficient. Consequently, teachers rely heavily on the "psychological salary", the intrinsic rewards of the job. While teachers may love the act of teaching (intrinsic satisfaction), they are often highly dissatisfied with the context of teaching, specifically poor administrative support and toxic school politics. This study focuses on Job Satisfaction as the ultimate outcome variable because it is a predictor of teacher retention; a satisfied teacher stays, while a dissatisfied one leaves.

3.2. Authoritative Leadership in a High Power-Distance Culture

School leadership is distinct from corporate leadership; the Principal is a "Head Teacher" expected to provide pedagogical guidance and emotional support. This study focuses on the Authoritative (Democratic) style, described as "firm but fair". This style balances high responsiveness (warmth) with high expectations (demandingness). Key behaviors include shared decision-making, clear communication, and individual consideration.

In Pakistan, a "high power-distance" society where hierarchy is respected, a purely democratic leader might be seen as weak. However, the Authoritative leader retains final decision-making power while soliciting input, making it a more culturally appropriate model than purely Western models of shared leadership. It serves as a "middle ground" between the stifling Autocratic style and the chaotic Laissez-Faire style.

3.3. Deviant Workplace Behavior: The "Silent Killer"

Deviant Workplace Behavior (DWB), or Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB), is voluntary behavior that violates organizational norms and threatens well-being. Bennett and Robinson (2000) categorize this into Interpersonal Deviance (e.g., incivility, gossip, exclusion) and Organizational Deviance (e.g., lateness, wasting supplies).

In Pakistani schools, while major violence is rare, low-intensity deviance is endemic. Spector et al. (2010) describe this as "death by a thousand cuts". A toxic climate characterized by gossip ("leg-pulling") and laziness forces high-performing teachers to either leave or reduce their efforts. This study posits DWB as a "silent killer" of school climate and a potent negative predictor of satisfaction.

4. Methodology

4.1. Research Design and Philosophy

This study employed a quantitative, predictive correlational research design grounded in the Positivist research philosophy. Positivism assumes that constructs like "job satisfaction" and "leadership behavior" are objective realities that can be measured using standardized instruments. The correlational nature allows for the investigation of natural associations without intervention, while the predictive capability allows for forecasting how changes in the school environment impact teacher well-being. A cross-sectional time horizon was used to provide a snapshot of current trends in the sector.

The target population comprised secondary school teachers in the urban districts of Lahore and Faisalabad. A sample of $N = 300$ full-time school teachers was recruited using non-probability convenience sampling. This sample size is consistent with similar regional studies and sufficient for regression analysis. Strict inclusion criteria were applied: participants had to be full-time teachers with a minimum of one year of experience to ensure they had formed stable perceptions of the school culture. Visiting faculty and those holding administrative roles were excluded to avoid bias.

4.2. Assessment Measures

Three standardized, internationally validated instruments were utilized:

1. **Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS):** Developed by Spector (1985), this 36-item scale measures nine facets of satisfaction. In this study, it demonstrated high internal consistency ($\alpha = .80$).
2. **Leadership Style Questionnaire:** The Democratic (Authoritative) subscale from Northouse (2009) was used. It consists of 6 items measuring shared decision-making and support, showing excellent reliability ($\alpha = .82$).
3. **Deviant Workplace Behavior Checklist (CWB-C):** The 10-item short version by Spector et al. (2010) measured the frequency of toxic behaviors. It demonstrated robust reliability ($\alpha = .78$).

Table 1: Internal Consistency Reliability Coefficients for Study Measures ($N = 300$)

Scales	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Interpretation
Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS)	36	.80	Good Reliability
Authoritative Leadership Scale	6	.82	Good Reliability
Deviant Workplace Behavior (CWB-C)	10	.78	Acceptable Reliability

Note. JSS = Job Satisfaction Survey; CWB-C = Deviant Workplace Behavior Checklist. The α values represent Cronbach's alpha coefficients of internal consistency.

4.3. Procedure

Data collection occurred in three phases over twelve weeks. Authorization was first secured from school administrations, a challenging process requiring persuasion regarding

data anonymity. Questionnaires were distributed during break times to minimize disruption. The researcher provided verbal briefings to clarify that the "Deviance" scale was for research purposes, not disciplinary action, to reduce social desirability bias. Of 350 distributed questionnaires, 320 were returned, and 300 were deemed valid after screening for missing data.

5. Results

5.1. Demographic Profile

The final sample ($N = 300$) was diverse, comprising 56% male and 44% female teachers. The average age was 36.64 years ($SD = 9.28$), and the average teaching experience was 8.45 years, indicating a stable and experienced workforce. The sample included teachers from both public (60%) and private (40%) sectors.

Table 2: *Demographic Characteristics of Participants ($N = 300$)*

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	168	56.0
	Female	132	44.0
School Type	Public Sector	180	60.0
	Private Sector	120	40.0
Qualification	Bachelor's Degree	175	58.3
	Master's or Above	125	41.7
Age (Years)		$M = 36.64$	$SD = 9.28$
Teaching Experience (Years)		$M = 8.45$	$SD = 6.32$

Note. $N = 300$. M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation. Participants were full-time school teachers recruited from Faisalabad.

Descriptive Statistics

The data followed a normal distribution.

Table 3: *Descriptive Statistics and Normality Indicators (N = 300)*

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis
Job Satisfaction	155.85	24.52	-0.42	0.15
Authoritative Leadership	19.84	4.57	-0.31	-0.22
Deviant Workplace Behavior	25.72	8.64	0.28	-0.45

Note. *N* = 300. *M* = Mean; *SD* = Standard Deviation. Skewness and Kurtosis values within the range of ± 2 indicate normal distribution

The mean Job Satisfaction score was 155.85 (*SD* = 24.52), reflecting a moderate level of satisfaction. Item-wise analysis revealed that teachers scored highest on "Nature of Work" (*M* = 4.8), indicating intrinsic love for teaching, but lowest on "Pay" (*M* = 2.1) and "Fringe Benefits" (*M* = 1.9), highlighting extrinsic dissatisfaction. Regarding deviance, "Organizational Deviance" (e.g., lateness) was more common than "Interpersonal Deviance" (e.g., bullying), suggesting a culture of "laziness" is more prevalent than hostility.

5.2. Correlation Analysis

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analysis confirmed the associations between variables:

Table 4: *Pearson Correlation Matrix among Study Variables*

Variables	1	2	3
1. Job Satisfaction	—		
2. Authoritative Leadership	.55**	—	
3. Deviant Workplace Behavior	-.49**	-.38**	—

Note. *N* = 300. ***p* < .01 (2-tailed)

- **H1 (Leadership & Satisfaction):** A significant positive relationship was found between Authoritative Leadership and Job Satisfaction ($r = .55$, $p <$

.01). This implies that as principals become more inclusive and supportive, teacher satisfaction rises significantly.

- **H2 (Deviance & Satisfaction):** A significant negative relationship was found between Deviant Workplace Behavior and Job Satisfaction ($r = -.49$, $p < .01$). Higher frequencies of toxic behavior correlate with lower satisfaction.
- **H5 (Leadership & Deviance):** A significant negative correlation was found ($r = -.38$, $p < .01$), supporting the "trickle-down" theory that supportive leadership reduces staff deviance.

5.3. Regression Analysis

To test predictive power, a Multiple Linear Regression analysis was conducted.

Table 5: *Multiple Linear Regression Predicting Job Satisfaction*

Model	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
(Constant)	67.43	4.92		13.70	.000
Authoritative Leadership	3.03	0.26	.56	11.65	.000
Deviant Workplace Behavior	-1.07	0.14	-.38	-7.64	.000

Note. $N = 300$. B = unstandardized regression coefficient; SE = standard error; β = standardized regression coefficient. $R^2 = .40$, $F(2, 297) = 99.85$, $p < .001$

The model was statistically significant ($F(2,297) = 99.85$, $p < .001$) and explained **40% of the variance** in job satisfaction ($R^2 = .40$). This is a substantial finding, suggesting nearly half of a teacher's satisfaction is determined by these two psychosocial factors.

- **H3 (Predictive Effect of Leadership):** Authoritative Leadership was the strongest positive predictor ($\beta = .56$, $p < .001$). For every unit increase in supportive leadership, satisfaction rises significantly.
- **H4 (Predictive Effect of Deviance):** Deviant Workplace Behavior was a significant negative predictor ($\beta = -.38$, $p < .001$). Even when controlling for leadership, toxic behavior independently reduces satisfaction.

Table 6: *Summary of Hypotheses Testing*

Hypothesis	Statement	Status
H1	Significant positive relationship between Authoritative Leadership and Job Satisfaction.	Accepted
H2	Significant negative relationship between Deviant Behavior and Job Satisfaction.	Accepted
H3	Authoritative Leadership significantly positively predicts Job Satisfaction.	Accepted
H4	Deviant Behavior significantly negatively predicts Job Satisfaction.	Accepted
H5	Significant negative relationship between Authoritative Leadership and Deviant Behavior.	Accepted

Note. H = Hypothesis. Hypotheses were tested using Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression analyses.

6. Discussion

The primary objective of this study was to empirically investigate the psychosocial predictors of job satisfaction among school teachers in Pakistan. The results unequivocally show that Authoritative Leadership acts as a powerful resource, while Deviant Workplace Behavior acts as a significant stressor.

6.1. The Buffer of Authoritative Leadership

The finding that Authoritative Leadership predicts satisfaction ($\beta = .56$) aligns with Self-Determination Theory. By soliciting input (Autonomy) and providing clear structure (Competence), these leaders fulfill the teacher's intrinsic needs. In the Pakistani context, this finding is magnified by the cultural dimension of "Power Distance". Teachers are accustomed to autocratic, distant authority figures. When a leader breaks this mold and adopts a democratic style, treating teachers as partners, they become a unique resource that buffers the stress of low salaries. This validates local research suggesting the

"psychological salary" provided by a good boss is often more valued than financial compensation.

It is notable that in Pakistan, this "Democratic" style often takes a "Paternalistic" twist. Unlike the Western concept of equality, Pakistani teachers may view the principal as a benevolent "father figure" who cares for them, aligning with findings from China and Turkey where Paternalistic Leadership is highly effective.

6.2. The Cost of Deviance

The study confirmed that workplace deviance is a significant negative predictor of satisfaction ($\beta = -.38$). This supports Social Exchange Theory; when the "psychological contract" of a professional workplace is breached by incivility or laziness, teachers withdraw. The prevalence of "low intensity" deviance (incivility rather than violence) confirms the "silent killer" effect. In Pakistani schools, where teamwork is often required for exam invigilation and events, organizational deviance (e.g., colleagues arriving late) creates immediate logistical stress for conscientious teachers, leading to emotional exhaustion.

6.3. Leadership as an Antecedent to Behavior

The negative correlation between leadership and deviance ($r = -.38$) supports Social Learning Theory. Principals serve as primary role models. An authoritative leader who is punctual and fair sets a normative standard that makes deviance unacceptable. Conversely, Laissez-Faire or Autocratic leadership can allow a "culture of incivility" to take root. This implies that investing in good leadership is a preventative measure; a good leader stops toxic behavior before it starts.

6.4. Implications and Recommendations

6.4.1. Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model literature by positioning Authoritative Leadership as a crucial "Job Resource" and Deviant Behavior as a "Job Demand". Furthermore, it validates Western theories of democratic leadership and workplace deviance within the South Asian cultural context, adding diversity to organizational psychology literature.

6.4.2. Practical Implications for School Administrators

School boards must move away from appointing principals based solely on seniority or teaching experience. Recruitment must assess "soft skills," emotional

intelligence, and conflict resolution abilities. There is an urgent need for professional development programs that help principals transition from "Autocratic" controllers to "Democratic" facilitators. Additionally, schools must establish zero-tolerance policies for "micro-deviance" like gossiping or chronic lateness, which should be addressed in performance reviews.

6.5. Policy Recommendations

The government should introduce a mandatory "School Management Certification" for future principals, focusing on democratic decision-making and conflict resolution. Policymakers should also consider the "Third Tier" of leadership by empowering Academic Coordinators to act as bridge leaders, acting as buffers for teachers. Schools should adopt a "Charter of Professional Conduct" that explicitly prohibits incivility.

6.5.1. For Teachers

Teachers must recognize that their behavior toward colleagues impacts the collective mental health of the school. Mechanisms should be established for teachers to safely report toxic behavior without fear of retaliation.

6.6. Limitations and Future Research

This study utilized a cross-sectional design, which allows for prediction but not strict causality. It is theoretically possible that dissatisfied teachers judge their leaders more harshly. Self-report bias is another limitation, as teachers may have under-reported their own deviant behavior due to social desirability.

Future research should employ longitudinal designs to track schools before and after leadership changes to establish causality. Researchers should also explore mediating variables, such as "Teacher Self-Efficacy," to understand the mechanisms linking leadership to satisfaction. Comparative studies between public and private schools could also highlight unique sectoral challenges regarding job security and leadership dynamics.

7. Conclusion

This research concludes that the psychosocial environment of a school is a decisive factor in teacher retention and happiness. The findings reveal that nearly half of the variance in job satisfaction is explained by the combination of leadership style and workplace behavior. Ideally, a school should not just be a place of academic instruction for students but a place of professional fulfillment for teachers.

The data suggests this can be achieved by promoting leaders who are democratic and supportive and by actively curbing deviant behaviors such as rudeness and chronic lateness. For the Pakistani educational sector, shifting the focus from purely administrative control and physical infrastructure to supportive leadership and a healthy psychological climate could yield significant dividends in teacher quality, retention, and ultimately, student success.

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