
Evaluation of Participatory Leadership, Organizational Commitment, Organizational Culture on Teacher Retention Interest

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Abstract

Teacher retention is a strategic issue in educational human resource management because it affects the stability of school organizations and the sustainability of learning quality. Low teacher retention rates are often influenced by internal organizational factors, such as leadership style, level of organizational commitment, and the work culture that develops in the school environment. This study aims to determine how a leadership approach centred on participation, dedication to the institution, and values established by the institution influences a teacher's desire to continue working there. This study adopted a qualitative methodology through a descriptive framework, gathering information through comprehensive conversations with teachers who were specifically selected for their insights, reinforced by several observations and document review. Data analysis was conducted using a methodology that focused on condensing information, presenting relevant findings, and formulating conclusions using inductive reasoning. The results of the study indicate that participatory leadership can increase teacher retention interest through active involvement in decision-making and open communication. Organizational commitment acts as an internal reinforcement that encourages teachers to remain in their positions due to their emotional attachment and sense of responsibility towards the institution. In addition, a positive and supportive organizational culture creates a comfortable and meaningful work environment that strengthens teachers' desire to continue serving. This study enriches the theoretical framework of educational management studies and suggests practical steps that school administrators can take to create leadership and organizational management approaches that focus on maintaining a stable teaching staff over time

Keywords

Organizational Commitment; Organizational Culture; Participatory Leadership;; Teacher Retention Interest



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INTRODUCTION

Teacher retention is a strategic issue in educational human resource management because it directly affects the quality of learning and school stability, where teachers who have a high interest in staying tend to show consistent performance, emotional involvement, and long-term contributions (Sutrisno, 2017). However, retention challenges still occur due to weak organizational support, less participatory leadership, and a work culture that is not yet conducive (Hery, 2018). In this case, the leadership of the principal plays a central role, especially a participatory leadership style that involves teachers in decision-making, planning, and evaluation, thereby increasing teachers' motivation, sense of belonging, and psychological attachment to the organization (Fajrin, 2018). In addition to leadership, organizational commitment is also an important determinant that is formed through job satisfaction, organizational justice, leadership support, as well as institutional culture and support, which significantly influence teachers' loyalty and decisions to remain in educational organizations (Hery, 2018; Effendi Tanjung, 2020).

School organizational culture plays a strategic role in shaping the work climate that influences teacher retention, especially when supported by values of togetherness, open communication, and appreciation for professionalism that can create a sense of security and comfort at work (Hardjana, 2019). Empirical findings show that organizational culture contributes significantly to improving teacher performance Harini et al., (2021) and is closely related to job satisfaction (Pratiwi et al., 2020). In addition, the leadership style of the principal together with the organizational culture has been proven to influence the strengthening of teachers' work commitment Herlina et al., (2020) ; Husnah et al., (2021), which ultimately has an impact on increasing loyalty and the tendency of teachers to remain in the school organization.

Although previous studies have provided valuable insights, most have focused on performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment, while teacher retention interest is often treated implicitly or as a derivative variable, despite its strategic role in reflecting teachers' long-term decisions to remain in the organization rather than temporary responses to working conditions (Ratnasari, 2019). Research gaps are evident in the limited integration of participatory leadership, organizational commitment, and organizational culture into a comprehensive framework of teacher retention interest; prior studies often position job satisfaction as a mediating variable (Julaeha et al., 2020; Lestari & Honor Satrya, 2023) without explicitly examining how these three factors are simultaneously interpreted by teachers in their decision to stay. Consequently, a qualitative approach is necessary to capture the relational dynamics and social context of school organizations more deeply (Sugiyono, 2019).

The urgency of this research is underscored by the challenges faced by educational

organizations in maintaining sustainability amid increasing demands for teacher professionalism, as high teacher turnover disrupts learning continuity and affects school management effectiveness and organizational culture in the long term. Ratnasari et al. (2020) highlight that organizations failing to foster commitment and involvement among human resources risk declining institutional performance. Therefore, assessing internal organizational factors influencing teacher retention is crucial. This study aims to comprehensively examine the role of participatory leadership, organizational commitment, and organizational culture in shaping teacher retention using a qualitative approach, with the expectation of contributing to theoretical development in educational management and providing practical guidance for school principals and policymakers in formulating effective leadership and organizational strategies to support sustainable teacher retention.

METHODS

This study applies a qualitative approach with a descriptive design to analyze the role of participatory leadership, organizational commitment, and organizational culture in shaping teacher retention interest. This approach was chosen because it is able to explore in depth the meanings, perceptions, and subjective experiences of teachers in the context of a complex and contextual school organization (Sugiyono, 2019). Within the framework of organizational behavior, retention interest is understood as a social construct that is formed through continuous interaction between individuals and their organizational environment (Hery, 2018).

The data sources for this study include primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained from teachers as the main informants because they directly experience participatory leadership practices and the dynamics of commitment and organizational culture in schools (Sutrisno, 2017). Secondary data was collected through institutional documents, school policies, and literature relevant to human resource management and educational organizations to strengthen the basis of the research analysis (Ratnasari, 2019). The informant selection technique was carried out using purposive sampling with certain criteria, including teachers who had worked for at least several years, were actively involved in school activities, and had direct experience in decision-making or organizational communication processes. This technique was chosen because it can produce information-rich cases, as explained by (Sugiyono, 2019). Through purposive sampling, this study sought to capture the variety of teachers' views on participatory leadership, organizational commitment, and organizational culture that influence their interest in remaining in educational institutions.

Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews using a semi-structured format, in which researchers used open-ended questions that still allowed room for exploration of informants' responses. This approach allowed for flexible deepening of information in accordance with the

teachers' experiences and perspectives. This interview method was considered effective in revealing teachers' perceptions of participatory leadership, their understanding of organizational commitment, and their experiences in the school's organizational culture (Hardjana, 2019). As complementary techniques, limited observation of organizational interactions and document analysis were used to enrich the context of the findings and increase the validity of the research data.

Data analysis in this study was conducted systematically and continuously through interconnected stages comprising data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, in which the researcher selected, coded, and focused on information relevant to participatory leadership, organizational commitment, organizational culture, and teacher retention interest, followed by presenting the organized data in theme-based narrative forms to facilitate the identification of patterns, trends, and interrelationships among emerging concepts. Conclusions were then drawn inductively by integrating empirical findings with the theoretical frameworks of human resource management and organizational behavior to ensure strong conceptual grounding (Ratnasari et al., 2020; Hery, 2018).

To ensure the validity of the findings, this study employed source triangulation by comparing information from multiple informants and technique triangulation through the combined use of interviews, observations, and document analysis, thereby enhancing the credibility and consistency of the results in line with qualitative validity principles Sugiyono, (2019), so that the findings reliably represent organizational factors influencing teacher retention.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Evaluation of Participatory Leadership in Promoting Teacher Retention Interest

The results of the study show that participatory leadership is perceived by teachers as an important factor that influences their comfort and desire to remain in the school organization. Teachers believe that their involvement in the decision-making process, particularly in relation to learning and school activities, creates a sense of being valued and recognized as an important part of the organization. Leadership practices that open up space for dialogue and accept input from teachers create a more equal working relationship between leaders and teachers, thereby reducing the structural distance within the organization. One informant revealed that *"when the principal is willing to listen to our opinions and involve teachers in important meetings, I feel more comfortable because I am considered to have a role, not just an executor."* A similar view was expressed by another informant who stated that *"leadership that encourages discussion makes us feel that we own this school, so there is a desire to stay despite the challenges at work."*

These findings show that participatory leadership not only functions as a managerial

mechanism but also builds psychological bonds between teachers and the organization. Less participatory leadership, on the other hand, is perceived as a source of discomfort at work. Teachers who feel that their voices are not heard tend to show apathy and consider alternative workplaces. Therefore, participatory leadership plays a fundamental role in shaping teacher retention by creating an inclusive and democratic work climate. Participatory leadership has proven to be an important factor in increasing teacher retention because it creates a sense of appreciation, emotional involvement, and ownership of the school organization.

Organizational Commitment as the Basis for Teachers' Desire to Stay

The findings show that teachers' organizational commitment is formed through meaningful work experiences and alignment between personal values and school vision, which encourages loyalty and a desire to stay for the long term. This commitment is not only reflected emotionally, but also in professional responsibility and teachers' willingness to contribute more to the school's progress. This is reflected in the statements of informants who said, *"I stay because I feel that this school is like my own home, there is an emotional bond and a responsibility to help it grow,"* and another informant who said, *"even though the workload is quite heavy, my commitment to the school and students makes me want to continue serving here."* In addition, consistency in policy and fairness in teacher management strengthen this commitment, so that organizational commitment functions as a psychological buffer that restrains the desire to leave the organization and becomes the main foundation for the formation of teacher retention interest in schools.

Organizational Culture and Its Influence on Teacher Retention Interest

The results of the study show that school organizational culture plays a significant role in shaping the work atmosphere that affects teachers' comfort and job sustainability, especially when the values of togetherness, mutual respect, and open communication are internalized in daily practices. This is reflected in the statements of informants who mentioned that *"the atmosphere at this school is like a family, teachers support each other, so I feel comfortable and don't think about leaving,"* and another informant who emphasized that *"a work culture of mutual respect makes me feel valued as a teacher, not just as an employee."* Conversely, a rigid and unsupportive organizational culture is perceived to weaken retention interest because it creates work pressure and limits collaboration space. Therefore, it can be concluded that organizational culture functions as a social context that strengthens or weakens the influence of leadership and organizational commitment on teachers' long-term decisions to stay.

DISCUSSION

Participatory Leadership and Its Implications for Teacher Retention Interest

Research findings indicate that participatory leadership strategically enhances teacher

retention by fostering feelings of appreciation and active involvement in school organizational life, as it recognizes professional autonomy and encourages participation, thereby increasing motivation and work loyalty (Fajrin, 2018). In education, this leadership style functions not only as a managerial mechanism but also as a means to build equal, trusting, and collaborative relationships between principals and teachers, aligning with Hardjana's (2019) emphasis on two-way organizational communication to create a healthy, inclusive work climate. By accommodating teachers' aspirations through open dialogue, participatory leadership strengthens emotional attachment, reduces psychological distance between leaders and teachers, and demonstrates that teacher retention is shaped not only by structural factors but also by the quality of relational experiences, ultimately supporting the sustainability of educational organizations through enhanced human resource loyalty (Sutrisno, 2017).

Organizational Commitment as a Factor Strengthening Teacher Retention

The discussion results indicate that organizational commitment is a crucial internal factor influencing teachers' decisions to remain at school, formed through the alignment of values between teachers and institutions and meaningful work experiences, with commitment understood as a psychological condition motivating individuals to maintain membership when personal and organizational goals align (Hery, 2018). This aligns with Effendi et al. (2020), who found that organizational support and fairness significantly strengthen teachers' commitment, fostering loyalty and service continuity, while leadership style and organizational culture also shape long-term work experiences (Herlina et al., 2020). In human resource management, organizational commitment acts as a buffer against work pressures and uncertainties, as highly committed teachers exhibit strong emotional attachment and responsibility toward the organization, making it a key determinant in enhancing teacher retention (Ratnasari, 2019).

Organizational Culture in Shaping Teacher Sustainability

The research results indicate that organizational culture serves as a social framework shaping how teachers experience, interpret, and perform their work, with values of togetherness, respect, and collective support fostering a work atmosphere that sustains teachers' professional roles (Hardjana, 2019). Positive organizational culture enhances job comfort, performance, long-term satisfaction, and commitment (Harini et al., 2021; Pratiwi et al., 2020), while interacting dynamically with leadership and organizational commitment to influence teacher retention. Strengthening a collaborative work culture increases teacher satisfaction and loyalty (Julaeha et al., 2020) and aligns with Ratnasari et al. (2020), who note that constructive work cultures better retain human resources. Thus, organizational culture underpins the effectiveness of participatory leadership and organizational commitment, creating an environment that encourages teachers to remain and contribute consistently to the school.

Integration of Participatory Leadership, Organizational Commitment, and Organizational Culture on Teacher Retention Interest

Further discussion shows that participatory leadership, organizational commitment, and organizational culture form an interrelated relationship in influencing teacher retention interest, rather than standing as separate factors. Participatory leadership serves as a starting point that opens up space for engagement and two-way communication, thereby encouraging the growth of organizational commitment among teachers. The active involvement of subordinates in organizational processes has been shown to increase emotional attachment and work loyalty Fajrin, (2018), while participatory communication practices form the basis for healthy and sustainable working relationships in educational organizations (Hardjana, 2019). Under these conditions, teachers tend to feel that their roles are recognized and that they are involved as an important part of the school organization.

Organizational commitment then acts as an internal mechanism that connects the influence of leadership and organizational culture to teachers' decisions to stay. When teachers experience fair leadership and a supportive and collaborative organizational culture, organizational values are more easily internalized as part of their professional identity (Hery, 2018). Organizational support and a positive work climate have also been shown to strengthen teachers' commitment in the long term Effendi et al., (2020), while a constructive organizational culture contributes to teachers' comfort at work and their attachment to the school (Harini et al., 2021; Pratiwi et al., 2020). The integration of these three aspects confirms that teacher retention is the result of a multidimensional organizational process, in which human resource sustainability is greatly influenced by the alignment between leadership, organizational value systems, and individuals' perceived work experiences (Ratnasari, 2019 ; Ratnasari et al., 2020), so that efforts to improve teacher retention require a holistic and integrated managerial approach.

CONCLUSION

Teacher retention interest is formed through a close relationship between participatory leadership, organizational commitment, and organizational culture that influence each other. Participatory leadership creates space for dialogue and teacher involvement in the school process, thereby encouraging a sense of appreciation, emotional attachment, and work loyalty. Within this dynamic, organizational commitment develops as a result of meaningful work experiences and alignment of values between teachers and the institution. A collaborative and supportive organizational culture further strengthens psychological safety and job comfort, thereby increasing teachers' attachment to the school. Thus, the sustainability of teacher retention is largely determined

by the alignment of leadership practices, commitment strengthening, and the continuous development of a positive organizational culture.

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