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**Leadership Styles, Decision-making Styles,  
and Teacher Job Satisfaction:  
An Indonesian School Context**

**Thesis submitted by**

**Hasan Hariri, BA, MBA**

**October 2011**

**for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
School of Business  
James Cook University**

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I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in any form for another degree or diploma at any university or other institution of tertiary education. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text and a list of references is given.

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## **Statement of the Contribution of Others**

I have received full financial support from the Directorate General of Higher Education, the Ministry of National Education, the Republic of Indonesia, through my home university, the University of Lampung (Unila), to pursue this PhD Program. Additional financial support has also been received from James Cook University for the field research and for editorial assistance.

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Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Declaration on Ethics

The research presented and reported in this thesis was conducted within the guidelines for research ethics outlined in the *National Statement on Ethics Conduct in Research Involving Human* (1999), the *Joint NHMRC/AVCC Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice* (1997), the *James Cook University Policy on Experimentation Ethics, Standard Practices and Guidelines* (2001), and the *James Cook University Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice* (2001).

The proposed research methodology received clearance from the James Cook University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval Number H3464) (see Appendix 18).

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



## **Abstract**

Education is essential for Indonesia to improve its human resources and to help increase economic growth. However, education standards primarily depend on education leaders, in particular, effective school principals. Effective school principals tend to involve teachers in decision-making and help teachers achieve their job satisfaction. Effective school principals and satisfied teachers can significantly contribute to effective school leadership. Although these ideas are well understood, the literature demonstrating these ideas is extremely little in the Indonesian school context.

This thesis examines the relationships between principal leadership styles and principal decision-making styles, and their possible use as indicators to predict teacher job satisfaction in the specific context of public junior secondary schools in Lampung Province, Indonesia. This thesis has a strong theoretical and empirical background for four reasons: contributing to closing a few of important gaps in the literature of school leadership in Indonesia, helping enhance the quality of Indonesia's education, addressing neglect in using the three comprehensive standard questionnaires together in research in Indonesia, and highlighting academic/theoretical, practical and policy implications for Indonesian schools.

A quantitative research design is used in this thesis to address the research problem and the nine research questions that are linked to some important gaps identified in the literature. The three standard survey questionnaires (MLQ Form 5X-Short, GDMS, and JSS) and demographic questionnaire (see Appendix 10 to Appendix 13) were completed by 36 principals and 475 teachers (a 92% response rate) in 36 schools from six districts. The data were analysed using SPSS Version 18 using descriptive statistics, multiple regression, ANOVA, and t-test.

Key findings are:

- Principals exhibited mostly transformational leadership style and rational decision-making style.
- Teachers were just slightly satisfied.
- Teacher job satisfaction preferences were identified as: co-workers, nature of work, supervision, and communication.
- The relationships between principal leadership styles (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire), principal decision-making styles (rational, dependent, intuitive, spontaneous, and avoidant), and teacher job satisfaction were mostly significant.
  - In particular, among these principal leadership styles and principal decision-making styles, five variables (transformational leadership style, laissez-faire leadership style, rational decision-making style, intuitive decision-making style, and avoidant decision-making style) were significant predictors of teacher job satisfaction, with transformational leadership style and rational decision-making style identified as the best predictors.
  - These five variables were still able to predict teacher job satisfaction even after controlling for last education, tenure with current principal, and school location.
  - Principals perceived themselves to be more transformational, more transactional, and less laissez-faire than teachers perceived.

Most findings are consistent with those of prior studies. In particular, the patterns of relationships between principal leadership styles, principal decision-making styles, and teacher job satisfaction are consistent with those of prior studies (Ejimofofor, 2007; Elpers & Westhuis, 2008; Erkutlu, 2008; Griffith, 2004; Kao & Kao, 2007; Walumbwa, Orwa, Wang, & Lawler, 2005). However, findings in terms of teacher job satisfaction relative to education and tenure are inconsistent with prior findings (Boeve, 2007). Finally, findings comparing self-perceived and teacher-perceived principal leadership styles have not been previously described in the literature.

These findings suggest that, to enhance teacher job satisfaction, stakeholders (particularly policy-makers/government district education leaders) could consider ways to help the principals, in collaboration with their staff to:

- exhibit much more transformational leadership style and rational decision-making style,
- exhibit less transactional leadership style and dependent decision-making style,
- exhibit much less intuitive and spontaneous decision-making styles,
- avoid laissez-faire leadership style and avoidant decision-making style, and
- improve all the facets of job satisfaction.

This thesis has provided a significant contribution to the body of knowledge in at least four areas:

- academic/theoretical contribution to methodology,
- academic/theoretical contribution to leadership studies,
- practical contribution to an Indonesian school context, and
- policy contribution to an Indonesian school context.

In particular, In particular, the findings will extend the literature on these issues. The findings will be of practical use to help achieve effective school leadership in Indonesian schools. The limitations of this thesis are particularly in scope and site, and these are avenues for possible further research.

Keywords: Leadership, Decision-making, Job satisfaction, Schools, Principals, Teachers, Indonesia

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