

Examining the Relationship Between School Culture and Teachers' Professional Learning: A Case Study on Primary School Teachers in Phu Quoc City, Kien Giang Province

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ABSTRACT: *This study examines the relationship between school culture and teacher professional learning, among primary school teachers in Phu Quoc, Kien Giang province. Using a quantitative correlational research design, data were collected from 424 primary teachers across 11 schools through a survey. School culture was assessed using the School Culture Survey by Gruenert and Valentine (1998), which evaluates six dimensions: collaborative leadership, teacher collaboration, professional development, unity of purpose, collegial support, and learning partnership. Teacher professional learning was measured using the short form of the Expectancy-Value-Cost for Professional Development Scale by Osman and Warner (2020), covering expectancy for success, task value, and perceived cost. The instruments were translated and validated in Vietnamese, with Cronbach's alpha exceeding 0.70 for all factors. This study underscores the importance of fostering a positive school culture that supports teacher professional growth. By emphasizing professional development, collaboration, and reducing barriers, school leaders can enhance teaching quality and student outcomes. These findings contribute to the literature on teacher professional learning and offer practical implications for policymakers and educators in designing effective professional development programs.*

KEYWORDS: School culture, professional learning, primary teachers, expectancy-value-cost, Phu Quoc, Kien Giang.

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1. Introduction

Teacher professional learning has been crucial for enhancing teaching quality and improving student outcomes, serving as a catalyst for educational reforms and innovations (Bakkenes et al., 2010; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). However, teachers' engagement in professional development is significantly influenced by the prevailing school culture (Gruenert, 2005; Zahed-Babelan et al., 2019). A positive and supportive school environment can foster a sense of collective responsibility for growth and continuous improvement, while a negative or restrictive culture can create barriers to professional learning initiatives (Houtte, 2005). This study examines the relationship between school culture and teachers' professional learning among primary school teachers in Kien Giang

Province, Vietnam. Specifically, it investigates how various dimensions of school culture, such as collaborative leadership, teacher collaboration, and professional development opportunities, influence teachers' expectancy-value-cost beliefs regarding professional development (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). Understanding this relationship is essential for developing effective strategies to promote teacher professional growth and ultimately improve the quality of education in the region. This research contributes to the existing literature by exploring these dynamics within a specific Vietnamese context, offering valuable insights for policymakers, school leaders, and educators.

The relationship between school culture and teacher professional development (TPD) is inherently multifaceted, as school culture shapes

teachers' growth through various dimensions, including leadership style (Köse et al., 2024), trust and collegiality (Ardi et al., 2023), and culturally responsive practices (Te Ava, 2020; Ibrahim & Johnson, 2021). A positive and well-established school culture—grounded in shared leadership, mutual trust, and collaborative reflection—serves as a catalyst for enhancing teacher motivation, strengthening professional identity, and improving instructional practices. In contrast, the absence or weakness of these elements may hinder professional development and perpetuate disparities across diverse educational contexts.

While the relationship between school culture and professional learning has been widely studied in Western contexts (e.g., Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Opfer & Pedder, 2011), research in Southeast Asian contexts, particularly in Vietnam, remains limited. Existing studies often report mixed findings on whether collaborative leadership or teacher collaboration exerts stronger effects on professional learning (Kuru & Tabançalı, 2023; Cruse, 2021). Moreover, few studies have examined how Vietnamese socio-cultural conditions—such as collectivist traditions, rapid educational reforms, and disparities between urban and rural schools—shape this relationship. This study addresses this gap by investigating primary schools in Phu Quoc, providing context-specific insights into how school culture influences teacher professional learning.

This study seeks to answer the following research questions: (1) What is the relationship between the dimensions of school culture and teachers' professional learning in primary schools in Phu Quoc, Kien Giang? (2) Which dimensions of school culture most strongly predict teachers' expectancy, value, and perceived cost regarding professional development? (3) To what extent do contextual factors (e.g., school location, classification, years of teaching experience) moderate the relationship between school culture and professional learning?

2. Literature Review

2.1. School Culture

Culture is inherently complex and multifaceted, with diverse interpretations shaped by individuals and organizations. As an abstract concept, culture can be challenging to grasp (Schein, 2004). Culture also is defined as a phenomenon deeply rooted in human thought, belief, and behavior, shaping both perceptions and actions (Sabanci et al., 2017). This concept reflects an accumulation of cultural experiences, observable in an individual's personality and character.

Culture is elaborated by categorizing it into three levels: artefacts, espoused values, and underlying assumptions (Schein, 2004). These levels range from observable and explicit elements to deeply ingrained, unconscious beliefs. Artefacts include tangible structures, processes, norms, and customs, as well as an organization's physical attributes (Sabanci et al., 2017). Espoused values refer to the ideals, goals, and principles that serve as organizational guidelines (Schein, 2010; Sabanci et al., 2017). Finally, basic underlying assumptions represent the deeply held, taken-for-granted beliefs that guide emotions, reactions, and behavior in various situations (Schein, 2010).

In the context of schools, culture has been defined as the shared values, beliefs, symbols, and understandings among school members (Karadag & Oztekin-Bayir, 2018). Grunert (2005) described school culture as the foundational beliefs, assumptions, and expectations that inform how a school operates. The norms, traditions, and values within a school shape its identity and influence the behavior of leaders, teachers, and students (Karadag et al., 2014). School culture represents an accumulation of deeply embedded values and traditions, evolving over time to foster an environment conducive to learning and collaboration (Prokopchuk, 2016). While schools share similar structural frameworks, each possesses a unique culture defined by its symbols, customs, and traditions (Horton, 2018). Understanding an organization, therefore, requires an in-depth focus on its distinctive culture (Kalman & Balkar, 2018).

The terms “culture” and “climate” are often used interchangeably, leading to confusion among educators and researchers. While both concepts are abstract and context-dependent, they are fundamentally distinct (Parker, 2015). School culture refers to the shared norms, values, and beliefs within a school, providing it with a unique identity. Conversely, school climate encompasses the morale, atmosphere, and well-being of the organization, shaped by environmental factors (Hoy, 1990; Parker, 2015). Climate reflects organizational members’ perceptions of their environment, while culture encapsulates the underlying beliefs and assumptions guiding behavior (Houtte, 2005). Both are critical to school effectiveness, although culture has increasingly been recognized as central to defining a school’s character (Hoy, 1990; Houtte, 2005).

A positive school culture exerts a significant influence on school members, serving as a catalyst for achieving institutional goals (Van der Westhuizen et al., 2005). Such a culture fosters conditions necessary for the success of both students and teachers, impacting motivation, commitment, job satisfaction, and community-building (Kythreotis et al., 2010). Gruenert and Valentine (1998) identify six factors critical to cultivating an effective school culture: collaborative leadership, teacher collaboration, professional development, unity of purpose, collegial support, and learning partnerships.

Collaborative leadership is defined as the degree to which school leaders establish and maintain collaborative relationships with school staff, fostering a culture of trust, shared decision-making, and collective responsibility. Similarly, teacher collaboration reflects the extent to which educators engage in constructive dialogue, exchanging ideas and strategies that align with and further the educational vision of the school. This collaborative environment is strengthened by professional development, which highlights the importance of teachers valuing continuous personal growth and committing to school-wide improvement through ongoing training and reflective practices. Furthermore, a unity of purpose ensures that all teachers work

toward a common mission, creating alignment in instructional goals and fostering a shared commitment to student success. This sense of unity is reinforced by collegial support, which emphasizes the importance of teachers working together effectively, building professional relationships based on mutual respect, cooperation, and encouragement. Finally, learning partnership extends beyond the school staff, encompassing teachers, parents, and students who collaborate for the common good of the student. This partnership strengthens the support system surrounding students, enhancing their academic, social, and emotional development.

When all these elements function cohesively, they contribute to a dynamic and effective educational environment that benefits both educators and learners. Collaborative school cultures, in particular, provide an optimal environment for teaching and learning and are essential for continuous improvement (Gruenert, 2005; Zahed-Babelan et al., 2019). School culture is regarded as a framework of shared meanings that shape all aspects of the school (Ismail et al., 2022).

2.2. Teacher professional learning

Teacher professional learning is a vital component in enhancing teaching quality, improving student outcomes, and advancing educational reforms and innovations (Bakkenes et al., 2010; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Lieberman & Mace, 2008; Parise & Spillane, 2010). It is a multifaceted process, both individual and social, that evolves through continuous engagement and practice (Avalos, 2011; Lieberman & Mace, 2008).

Professional learning encompasses formal activities, such as participation in workshops and courses (Garet et al., 2001), as well as job-embedded approaches, including peer observation and mentoring (Parise & Spillane, 2010). The formal, traditional model of professional learning typically involves structured development programs led by external experts, such as university faculty and researchers. This model is rooted in the ideology of providing “knowledge

for practice” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999), whereby teachers acquire formal knowledge from research and apply it within their schools (Vescio et al., 2008).

Job-embedded professional learning, by contrast, is conceptualized as “a socially constructed process of learning and development, largely embedded in activities occurring within schools” (Hallinger & Kulophas, 2019, p. 4). This approach aligns with theoretical perspectives on situated learning (Candy, 1991; Darling-Hammond, 1998; McLaughlin, 1997; Putnam & Borko, 2000), which emphasize that teachers learn through active engagement in professional activities and interactions within their schools and occasionally beyond (Kwakman, 2003). Research demonstrates that both formal and job-embedded professional learning significantly influence teachers’ instructional practices (e.g., Buckler et al., 2009; Cordingley, 2015; Garet et al., 2001; Parise & Spillane, 2010; Shirrell et al., 2019).

Key features of effective teacher professional learning have been identified in the literature (Garet et al., 2011; Hiebert, 1999; King & Newmann, 2001; Lieberman & Mace, 2008). These include a focus on content knowledge, curriculum, and instruction (Garet et al., 2011; King & Newmann, 2001); sustained collaboration within and across schools (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Lieberman & Mace, 2008); opportunities for active, long-term engagement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Garet et al., 2011; King & Newmann, 2001); access to external expertise, such as researchers and coaches (King & Newmann, 2001); coherence across learning activities (Garet et al., 2011); and appropriately structured durations for learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Garet et al., 2011). These elements highlight the value of collaborative, ongoing learning and the benefits of drawing on both peer and external resources through professional development opportunities.

To maximize impact, teacher professional learning must be strategically planned, supported, and sustained. Multiple factors at systemic, organizational, and individual levels influence its effectiveness. In some national systems, such as

those in Russia and Singapore, formal professional development is a contractual requirement, with financial support provided for activities like workshops and courses (Harris et al., 2014). Other systems prioritize job-embedded learning by establishing formal professional learning communities in schools (Nguyen & Ng, 2020).

At the organizational level, research underscores the importance of school culture, structure, and leadership in fostering teacher professional learning (Bektas et al., 2020; Gümüs, 2013; Jurasaitė-Harbison & Rex, 2010; Kwakman, 2003; Leithwood et al., 1998; Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Parise & Spillane, 2010). For instance, Leithwood et al. (1998) emphasize that a collaborative culture characterized by mutual support and openness to innovation positively impacts teacher learning. Similarly, Jurasaitė-Harbison and Rex (2010) highlight that schools with a culture encouraging professional interactions and collaboration among teachers and leaders provide conducive environments for job-embedded learning.

Leadership also plays a pivotal role at various levels, including principals (Nguyen et al., 2020; Printy, 2008; Robinson et al., 2008), middle leaders (Bryant et al., 2020; Harris et al., 2019), and teacher leaders (Nguyen et al., 2019; Nguyen & Ng, 2020; Stoll et al., 2006). These leadership roles are crucial in promoting professional learning within schools.

On an individual level, the intensity and quality of professional learning are influenced by factors such as job satisfaction, perceived autonomy, self-efficacy, professional commitment, prior experiences, and beliefs about teaching and learning (Kwakman, 2003; Liu & Hallinger, 2018; Opfer & Pedder, 2011).

2.3. The Relationship Between School Culture and Teachers’ Professional Learning

The relationship between school culture and teachers’ professional learning has been extensively explored, emphasizing its critical role in improving educational practices and outcomes. Studies have found a strong positive correlation between school culture and professional learning, indicating that elements

such as teacher collaboration and goal alignment positively influence professional development, while collaborative leadership may have a negative effect when overemphasized (Kuru & Tabancalı, 2023). Pearson correlation analyses also reveal that factors like unity of purpose and collegial support significantly enhance teachers' motivation for professional growth, with school culture accounting for a notable percentage of variation in professional learning outcomes (Cruse, 2021). Additionally, aligning professional development plans with school goals and fostering collaborative environments were found to improve teachers' attitudes towards professional learning (Sullivan, 2010). A collaborative culture fosters teachers' engagement in integrated professional learning activities (Nguyen et al., 2021). Reflective practices, including strategies for achieving goals and analyzing outcomes, further contribute to positive perceptions of professional development processes. These findings suggest that school culture's multidimensional nature plays a vital role in shaping teachers' professional attitudes and learning experiences.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative approach to empirically examine the relationship between

school culture and teacher professional learning according to perceptions of primary teachers. In this respect, it constitutes correlational research in which the relationship between two or more variables is examined (Aslan et al., 2023; Creswell, 2018).

3.2. Participants

This study applied a convenience sample of 424 teachers from 11 primary schools in Phu Quoc city, Kien Giang province. The schools were selected based on accessibility, willingness to participate, representation of both urban and suburban contexts, and the diversity between standardized and non-standardized schools. Participation was entirely voluntary, and only teachers who consented were included in the final dataset (Creswell, 2018). The investigation focused on five demographic factors related to the participants, namely their gender, professional position, school location, school classification, and years of teaching experience. Among the participants, 80.0% (N=339) were female and 20.0% (N=85) were male. In terms of professional roles, 13.0% (N=55) held the position of subject leader and 87.0% (N=369) were classroom teachers. Regarding school location, 57.5% (N=224) were teachers in urban schools, while 42.5% (180) were from suburban schools. Additionally, 55.9% (n=237) worked in

Table1. Demographic information of the study sample

		N	%
Gender	Female	339	80.0
	Male	85	20.0
Professional role	Subject leader	55	13.0
	Teacher	369	87.0
School location	Urban schools	224	57.5
	Suburban schools	180	42.5
School classification	Standardized school	237	55.9
	Non-standardized school	189	44.1
Teaching experience	1-10 years	74	17.5
	11-20 years	90	21.2
	≥ 21 years	260	61.3

standardized schools and 44.1% (N=189) were employed in non-standardized schools.

When examining years of teaching experience, 17.5% (N=74) participants had 1 to 10 years of experience, 21.2% (N=90) had 11 to 20 years, and 61.3% (N=260) had 21 or more years of experience. These characteristics reflect the composition of the study sample and provide an overview of the participant demographics (see Table 1).

3.3. Instruments

This study applied a survey questionnaire comprising 3 sections (demographic information school culture; and teacher professional learning) to collect data on school culture and teacher professional learning.

To assess school culture, the study utilized the School Culture Survey (SCS) developed by Gruenert and Valentine (1998), which includes 35 items. The subscales of the SCS include Collaborative Leadership (11 items), Teacher Collaboration (6 items), Professional Development (5 items), Unity of Purpose (5 items), Collegial Support (4 items), and Learning Partnership (4 items). Teacher professional learning was evaluated using the short form of the Expectancy-Value-Cost for Professional Development Scale (EVC-PD), developed by Osman and Warner (2020). EVC-PD, comprising 9 items, was specifically designed to measure

teachers' motivation to integrate professional development into their practice. The subscales of the EVC-PD consist of expectancy for success (3 items), task value (3 items), and perceived cost (3 items).

Participants provided responses on a 5-point Likert scale, with scores ranging from 1 to 5, corresponding to strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, and strongly agree, respectively. The SCS and EVC-PD scales were translated into Vietnamese by two bilingual professionals with teaching experience, followed by back-translation by two others from diverse backgrounds. This process revealed a high level of linguistic similarity between the original and translated versions. The researcher cross-checked the scripts to ensure consistency. The results of the reliability test, as shown in Table 2, indicate that the Cronbach's Alpha values for all factors exceed the accepted threshold of 0.70, thereby confirming their reliability (Creswell, 2018).

3.4. Data analysis

For data analysis, R Statistical Software was utilized, incorporating descriptive statistics (e.g., frequency analysis and descriptive measures), Cronbach's alpha reliability testing, Pearson correlation analysis, and multivariate regression analysis to evaluate the extent to which the independent variables predict the dependent variable.

Table 2. Alpha Reliabilities of the Dimensions of SCS and EVC-PD

Variables	Dimensions	No. of Items	Coefficient Alpha	
			This study	Original study
SCS	Collaborative leadership (CL)	11	0.97	0.91
	Teacher collaboration (TC)	6	0.95	0.83
	Professional development (PD)	5	0.94	0.82
	Unity of purpose (UP)	5	0.95	0.87
	Collegial support (CS)	4	0.93	0.80
	Learning partnership (LP)	4	0.94	0.66
EVC-PD	Expectancy for success (ES)	3	0.96	0.88
	Task value (TV)	3	0.96	0.77
	Perceived cost (PC)	3	0.93	0.91

4. Findings

4.1. Discriptive Statistic and Correlations Results

As shown in Table 3, the mean scores of the dimensions of the school culture scale are relatively similar. These results indicate that teachers' perceptions of school culture are at a high level. Regarding the dimensions of teacher professional learning, the highest mean was observed in the "task value" dimension ($M=3.98$), while the "perceived cost" dimension had the lowest mean ($M=3.56$). Overall, it can be concluded that teachers hold positive views on teacher professional learning and its various dimensions.

Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (r), which quantitatively expresses the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables, provides a numeric value ranging from -1.00 to +1.00, where 0 indicates no relationship (Field, 2018). The bivariate correlation analysis also determined the significance values (p), which explain the statistical significance at a specific level, such as $p < 0.05$ (Creswell & Guettermann, 2019). Specific

details, including the correlation coefficients and significance values for each dimension of the SCS and the composite scores of the dimensions of teacher professional learning (EVC-PD), are presented in Table 3.

There is a significant and positive relationship at $p < 0.001$ level with all dimensions of SCS and EVC-PD. A moderate and high positive correlation was found between SCS's "collaborative leadership" dimension and "expectancy for success" ($r=0.765$, $p < 0.001$); "task value" ($r=0.790$, $p < 0.001$); "perceived cost" ($r=0.564$, $p < 0.001$) of professional learning. A moderate and high positive correlation was established between SCS's "teacher collaboration" dimension and "expectancy for success" ($r=0.764$, $p < 0.001$); "task value" ($r=0.790$, $p < 0.001$); "perceived cost" ($r=0.578$, $p < 0.001$) of professional learning. A moderate and high positive correlation was showed between SCS's "professional development" dimension and "expectancy for success" ($r=0.771$, $p < 0.001$); "task value" ($r=0.798$, $p < 0.001$); "perceived cost" ($r=0.536$, $p < 0.001$) of professional learning. A

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for SCS and EVC-PD Variables

Dimensions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. CL	-	.95**	.95**	.96**	.95**	.94**	.99**	.77**	.79**	.56**	.77**
2. TC		-	.95**	.94**	.94**	.93**	.98**	.76**	.79**	.58**	.77**
3. PD			-	.95**	.95**	.95**	.98**	.77**	.80**	.54**	.76**
4. UP				-	.93**	.94**	.97**	.75**	.78**	.53**	.75**
5. CS					-	.94**	.97**	.76**	.78**	.51**	.74**
6. LP						-	.97**	.75**	.79**	.51**	.74**
7. SCS							-	.78**	.81**	.56**	.78**
8. ES								-	.92**	.67**	.94**
9. TV									-	.64**	.92**
10. PC										-	.87**
11. EVC-PD											-
Mean	4.06	4.03	4.12	4.10	4.09	4.16	4.08	3.91	3.98	3.56	3.82
SD	.81	.80	.81	.81	.81	.83	.79	.84	.85	1.04	.82

Note: ** $p < .001$; $N=424$; CL: collaborative leadership, TC: teacher collaboration, PD: professional development, UP: unity of purpose, CS: collegial support, LP: learning partnership, SCS: school culture survey; ES: expectancy for success, TV: task value, PC: perceived cost, EVC-PD: Expectancy-Value-Cost for Professional Development.

moderate and high positive correlation was found between SCS's "unity of purpose" dimension and "expectancy for success" ($r=0.749$, $p<0.001$); "task value" ($r=0.783$, $p<0.001$); "perceived cost" ($r=0.533$, $p<0.001$) of professional learning. A moderate and high positive correlation was established between SCS's "collegial support" dimension and "expectancy for success" ($r=0.757$, $p<0.001$); "task value" ($r=0.782$, $p<0.001$); "perceived cost" ($r=0.512$, $p<0.001$) of professional learning. A moderate and high positive correlation was showed between SCS's "learning partnership" dimension and "expectancy for success" ($r=.746$, $p<.001$); "task value" ($r=0.786$, $p<0.001$); "perceived cost" ($r=0.507$, $p<0.001$) of professional learning. An analysis of the total scores revealed a high positive correlation between SCS and EVC-PD ($r =0.775$, $p<0.001$).

4.2. Multiple Linear Regression Results

Table 4 presents the results of the multiple

linear regression analysis, which examines the predictive relationships between the dimensions of the SCS and those of EVC-PD.

As illustrated in Table 4, all six dimensions of SCS are significant predictors of the expectancy for success in professional learning ($F=108.495$, $p<0.05$). Together, these six dimensions explain 61.0% of the total variance in expectancy for success. Among them, PD is identified as a significant predictor ($\beta=0.361$, $p<0.05$), whereas CL, TC, UP, CS, and LP do not significantly contribute to predicting expectancy for success ($\beta=0.215$, $p>.05$; $\beta=0.195$, $p>0.05$; $\beta=-0.038$, $p>0.05$; $\beta=0.113$, $p>0.05$; $\beta=-0.053$, $p>0.05$, respectively). The six dimensions collectively account for 65.3% of the total variance in task value. PD emerges as a significant predictor of task value ($\beta=0.279$, $p<0.05$), while CL, TC, UP, CS, and LP are not significant predictors ($\beta=0.091$, $p>0.05$; $\beta=0.190$, $p>0.05$; $\beta=0.070$, $p>0.05$; $\beta=0.065$, $p>0.05$; $\beta=0.131$, $p>0.05$, respectively). For perceived cost, the six dimensions together

Table 4. Regression Analysis Results Predicting EVC-PD Dimensions Based on SCS Dimensions

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables											
	Expectancy for success			Task value			Perceived cost			EVC-PD		
	B	t	P	B	t	p	B	t	p	B	t	p
CL	.221	1.560	.119	.095	.701	.483	.669	2.956	.003	.328	2.358	.019
TC	.203	1.674	.095	.201	1.729	.085	.865	4.452	.000	.423	3.540	.000
PD	.374	2.695	.007	.294	2.209	.028	.084	.378	.705	.251	1.834	.067
UP	-.04	-.314	.753	.073	.620	.535	-.08	-.402	.688	-.02	-.123	.902
CS	.116	.993	.321	.068	.605	.546	-.41	-2.18	.030	-.07	-.647	.518
LP	-.05	-.460	.646	.134	1.218	.224	-.39	-2.11	.035	-.10	-.907	.365
	F=108.495 p=0.000 R ² =0.610			F=130.673 p=0.000 R ² =0.653			F=38.963 p=0.000 R ² =0.359			F=109.185 p=0.000 R ² =0.611		

Note: CL: collaborative leadership, TC: teacher collaboration, PD: professional development, UP: unity of purpose, CS: collegial support, LP: learning partnership.

explain 35.9% of the total variance. CL, TC, CS, and LP are significant predictors of perceived cost ($\beta=.521$, $p<.05$; $\beta=.663$, $p<.05$; $\beta=0.317$, $p<.05$; $\beta=-0.309$, $p<.05$, respectively), whereas PD and UP do not significantly predict perceived cost ($\beta=0.065$, $p>.05$; $\beta=-0.062$, $p>.05$, respectively). Overall, for the total EVC-PD scale, the SCS dimensions explain 61.1% of the total variance. Notably, PD, UP, CS, and LP are not significant predictors ($\beta=0.245$, $p>.05$; $\beta=-0.015$, $p>.05$; $\beta=-0.073$, $p>.05$; $\beta=-0.103$, $p>.05$, respectively), whereas CL and TC are significant predictors ($\beta=0.324$, $p<.05$; $\beta=0.411$, $p<.05$, respectively). Finally, a simple linear regression analysis was performed to examine whether SCS as a predictor of teachers' professional learning. The corresponding results are presented in Table 5.

As shown in Table 5, SCS is a significant predictor of teachers' professional learning ($F=632.947$, $p<.05$). It accounts for 60.0% of the variance in professional learning. The resulting regression equation is: Teacher Professional Learning = $0.560 + 0.775 \times \text{SCS}$. This indicates that as teachers' perceptions of their school culture behaviors improve, their level of professional learning increases accordingly.

5. Discussion and conclusion

This study investigated the relationship between school culture and teachers' professional learning, guided by three research questions. The findings provide clear answers: (1) all six dimensions of school culture correlated positively with professional learning; (2) professional development, collaborative leadership, and teacher collaboration were the strongest predictors; and (3) contextual factors such as years of experience appeared to moderate these effects, with more experienced teachers

reporting higher expectancy and task value.

The regression results indicate that while multiple dimensions of school culture correlate positively with teachers' professional learning, only certain dimensions remain significant predictors once all are considered simultaneously. Specifically, professional development predicted both expectancy for success and task value, reflecting teachers' prioritization of concrete training opportunities. Meanwhile, collaborative leadership and teacher collaboration significantly predicted overall professional learning, indicating that supportive interactions with leaders and peers foster motivation. The negative associations with perceived cost suggest that when collaboration is not carefully structured, it can be seen as time-consuming or burdensome. These findings can be interpreted within the Expectancy-Value-Cost framework (Osman & Warner, 2020), where teachers balance the perceived value of learning against the effort and resources required.

These findings both confirm and extend prior literature. Similar to Gruenert (2005) and Zahed-Babelan et al. (2019), this study found strong correlations between collaborative aspects of school culture and professional learning outcomes. However, unlike studies in European contexts where unity of purpose often emerges as a strong predictor (Van der Westhuizen et al., 2005; Kythreotis et al., 2010), in this Vietnamese sample, professional development opportunities were the most significant predictor of teachers' task value. This suggests that in contexts undergoing rapid curriculum reforms (MOET, 2018), access to meaningful training may outweigh symbolic alignment around shared goals. Another novel finding is that collaborative leadership showed mixed effects, which echoes recent caution by Kuru and Tabancalı (2023) that excessive leadership involvement can raise perceived workload costs. Thus, the study not

Table 5. The Regression Analysis Results of SCS (Total) Predicting EVC-PD (Total)

	Expectancy-Value-Cost for Professional Development (Total)		
	B	t	p
School Culture Survey (Total)	0.804	25.158	0.000
	F=632.947; p=0.000; R ² =0.600; Constant=0.560; $\beta=0.775$		

only validates but also nuances international literature by highlighting Vietnamese contextual dynamics.

This study investigated the relationship between school culture and teachers' professional learning (specifically, expectancy-value-cost for professional development, or EVC-PD). The findings reveal a strong positive correlation between the two constructs, supporting existing literature that emphasizes the critical role of school culture in shaping teachers' professional growth (Kuru & Tabancalı, 2023; Cruse, 2021; Sullivan, 2010; Nguyen et al., 2021). The descriptive statistics (Table 3) indicate that teachers generally hold positive perceptions of their school culture and value professional learning opportunities. However, "perceived cost" emerged as a dimension of teachers' professional learning with the lowest mean score, suggesting that factors like time constraints, workload, or financial implications might hinder teachers' engagement in professional development. This aligns with existing literature highlighting individual-level factors like job satisfaction and perceived autonomy as influencing professional learning (Kwakman, 2003; Liu & Hallinger, 2018; Opfer & Pedder, 2011). The correlation analysis (Table 3) further reveals moderate to high positive correlations between various dimensions of school culture and teachers' professional learning. For instance, "collaborative leadership" within the school culture positively correlates with teachers' "expectancy for success," "task value," and (inversely) "perceived cost" related to professional learning. These findings echo the importance of collaborative school cultures in creating conducive environments for professional growth, as highlighted by Gruenert (2005) and Zahed-Babelan et al. (2019). The multiple regression analysis (Table 4) provides further insights into the predictive relationship between school culture dimensions and teachers' professional learning. While all six dimensions of school culture were significant predictors of "expectancy for success," only "professional development" within the school culture emerged as a significant predictor for both "task value" and overall teachers' professional

learning. Interestingly, some dimensions like "collaborative leadership" had a non-significant or even negative predictive relationship with "perceived cost," suggesting that excessive emphasis on collaboration might inadvertently increase the perceived burden on teachers. This nuanced finding highlights the complex interplay of factors within school culture and warrants further investigation.

Implications

School leaders should prioritize fostering a positive school culture that values collaboration, continuous improvement, and teacher professional growth. Specifically, they should focus on providing meaningful professional development opportunities aligned with their school goals, reducing perceived barriers like workload and time constraints, and ensuring that collaborative initiatives are implemented thoughtfully to avoid increasing teacher burden.

Limitations

This study relied on self-reported data, which might be subject to social desirability bias. The cross-sectional design limits causal inferences. Further, the study focused on a specific aspect of teacher professional learning, specifically regarding their expectancy-value-cost beliefs about professional development and may not generalize to other forms of professional growth. The context of the study should also be considered when interpreting the results.

Future Research

Future studies should employ mixed-methods approaches, including qualitative data like interviews and observations, to gain deeper insights into mechanisms through which school culture influences teachers' professional learning. Longitudinal studies could explore the causal relationship between these constructs over time. Research should also investigate the role of other factors, such as teacher characteristics, leadership styles, and policies, in shaping teachers' professional learning experiences within different school cultures. Further research is also needed to explore the impact of specific professional development interventions on teacher outcomes within varying school cultures. Examining how different facets of school culture

interact and influence other dimensions of teacher professional learning is also recommended.

Conclusion

This study confirms the significant positive relationship between school culture and teachers' professional learning, specifically regarding their expectancy-value-cost beliefs about professional development. A supportive and collaborative school culture, with a strong emphasis on

professional development opportunities, can enhance teachers' perceived value of and expectancy for success in professional learning, while potentially mitigating perceived costs.

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