Received: 28 February 2024, Accepted: 31 March 2024 DOI: <u>https://doi.org/10.33282/rr.vx9il.164</u>

Relationship between Leadership Behaviour and School Climate at Secondary Level

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Abstract

Leadership behavior (LB) significantly shapes school climate (SC) by fostering a positive, inclusive, and collaborative atmosphere. Effective leaders build trust and respect through clear communication and empathy. This positive climate enhances student engagement, teacher satisfaction, and overall school performance. The objective of the study was to find out the effect and relationship between leadership behaviour and school climate at secondary level. The population was comprised of all public and private secondary schools of Lahore district. Multistage sampling technique was used in this study. The sample was comprised of 520 teachers. Questionnaire was used to analyze the data. The validity of the questionnaire was found through experts' opinions and reliability through pilot testing. SPSS was used to analyze the data. Pearson r and regression analysis was used to analyze the data. The findings of the study revealed that there was highly significant effect and relationship between leadership behaviour and school climate at secondary level.

Keywords: Leadership behaviour, school climate, secondary level

Introduction

The relationship between leadership behavior and school climate is profoundly interconnected, with leadership playing a crucial role in shaping the overall atmosphere and environment within a school. Effective leadership behavior, characterized by clear communication, empathy, support, and ethical conduct, directly influences the morale, motivation, and engagement of both staff and students. Principals and school leaders who demonstrate strong, positive leadership behaviors create a sense of trust and respect, fostering a collaborative and inclusive culture. This, in turn, leads to a positive school climate where students feel safe, valued, and motivated to learn, and where teachers feel supported and empowered to innovate and grow professionally. According to Kilaga et al. (2023), the school climate is a complex concept that includes the social, emotional, and physical elements of the school setting. It has a significant impact on the academic performance and general well-being of students, teachers, and administrators. School climate is a reflection of norms, objectives, values, interpersonal interactions, instructional strategies, organisational structures, and patterns of people's experiences with school life (Forfang, & Paulsen, 2024).

The attitude and sentiments of those who work in schools are referred to as the "school climate" (Angtud, Groenewald, Kilag, Cabuenas, Camangyan, & Abendan, 2023). It plays a big role in communities and schools that function well (Yada, & Savolainen, 2023). According to Higgins-D'Alessandro (2011), a healthy school atmosphere is crucial in influencing teachers' perspectives, which can therefore have a favourable impact on students' learning. It is evident that a supportive school environment lowers teachers' feelings of depersonalization, low self-actualization, and emotional tiredness (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008). According to the authors, educators demonstrate a greater dedication to their work when they receive support from both the principal and their colleagues (Zynuddin, Kenayathulla, & Sumintono, 2023). The impact of school environment on teachers' job satisfaction, teacher burnout (e.g., Klik, Cárdenas, & Reynolds, 2023), and self-efficacy is widely recognised (Simbre, Buenaventura, Aquino, Vera, & Vera, 2023).

Collie et al. (2012) looked studied how teaching efficacy, stress levels, and job satisfaction were affected by teachers' perceptions regarding the school atmosphere. They discovered that teaching effectiveness, job satisfaction, and stress levels were all highly impacted by teachers' attitudes towards the motivation and behaviour of their students. While perceived stress about workload had a direct impact on job satisfaction, perceived stress about student behaviour had a negative predictive power on teaching efficacy. The association between job satisfaction and school climate was found to be mediated by teacher self-efficacy, as proven by Katsantonis (2019) in a study including teachers from several nations. Emotional tiredness has a negative link with a positive school climate, but it has a positive correlation with teachers' mental and overall wellbeing (Gray, 2017; Yang, Chen, Zhou, Yang, & Xu, 2022). Teachers' well-being and the perceived school atmosphere are positively correlated, according to recent research by Yang et al. (2022). Numerous research have also found a connection between job satisfaction and school atmosphere among EFL teachers (e.g., Oder & Eisenschmidt, 2018; Razavipour & Yousefi, 2017). Although teacher self-efficacy, psychological health, and school climate have all been the subject of recent empirical studies, no research has looked into how these factors relate to FLTE because the field is still relatively new and has not received enough attention. We tried testing a FLTE model among EFL teachers in an effort to bridge these research gaps.

Remittances Review January, 2024 Volume: 9, No: 1, pp. 3715-3728

ISSN: 2059-6588(Print) | ISSN 2059-6596(Online)

For an organisation, leadership is crucial (Yukl, 2006). Two dimensions developed from factor analysis have historically been incorporated in the idea of leadership behaviour. Relationand structure-orientation are these two aspects (Arvonen, & Pettersson 2002; Yukl, 2006). For numerous decades, researchers have debated how to strike a balance between these aspects in relation to various desirable organisational outcomes in various contexts. According to some, the most successful businesses always exhibit high-high (also known as 9.9) conduct in both dimensions. This is a universal viewpoint. Some argue that a contingency viewpoint is necessary to adapt leadership action to situational factors and desired goals (Arvonen, 2002). It was unable to determine with certainty which theory—a universal theory or a contingency theory—is more successful (Andersen, 2010). As a growing shift pressure in organisations and society became apparent in the 1990s, the third dimension of change-orientation was established. This dimension has not been extensively studied (Yukl, 2006). A theoretical review of leadership behaviour and its relationships to effectiveness, productivity, quality, health, and job satisfaction is provided in this article. The leadership behaviour theory and its two or three dimensions as they relate to these five outcomes are the primary subjects of this summary (Zen, Siminto, Harahap, Prasetya, & Ausat, 2023).

Leadership behavior involves guiding and influencing others to achieve common goals, characterized by qualities such as effective communication, empathy, decisiveness, and integrity. Effective leaders inspire and motivate their teams, foster collaboration, and create an environment where individuals feel valued and empowered. They demonstrate adaptability and resilience in the face of challenges, set clear visions, and lead by example. Leadership behavior also includes the ability to make tough decisions, provide constructive feedback, and recognize and celebrate achievements, thereby cultivating a positive and productive organizational culture (Kaluza, Boer, Buengeler, & van Dick, 2020). Leadership behavior encompasses a wide range of actions and attitudes that are crucial for steering an organization or group toward success. A key aspect of leadership is the ability to articulate a clear and compelling vision that aligns with the organization's goals and values, motivating team members to commit to and work toward that vision. Leaders must exhibit strong interpersonal skills, such as active listening, empathy, and emotional intelligence, which enable them to connect with their team members, understand their needs, and foster a sense of trust and loyalty (Tran, 2021).

Additionally, effective leadership behavior involves strategic thinking and the ability to anticipate and respond to changes and challenges in the environment. Leaders must be decisive, capable of analyzing complex situations, and making informed decisions, often under pressure. They also need to be adaptable, open to new ideas, and willing to take calculated risks to drive innovation and growth (Velarde, Ghani, Adams, & Cheah, 2022). A significant part of leadership is also about developing and nurturing talent within the team. This includes providing opportunities for professional development, mentoring, and coaching team members to help them reach their full potential. Leaders should recognize and leverage the diverse strengths and abilities

of their team, encouraging collaboration and fostering an inclusive culture where everyone feels valued and heard (Gningue, Peach, Jarrah, & Wardat, 2022).

Furthermore, ethical behavior and integrity are fundamental to leadership. Leaders must act with honesty and transparency, set a positive example, and hold themselves and others accountable to high standards of conduct. By embodying these principles, leaders build credibility and earn the respect and trust of their team and stakeholders. In summary, leadership behavior is multifaceted, involving a blend of vision, communication, emotional intelligence, strategic thinking, talent development, adaptability, and ethical conduct. These behaviors collectively contribute to the effectiveness of a leader in guiding their team and organization toward achieving their goals (Sanchez, Paul, & Thornton, 2022).

Furthermore, leadership behavior impacts school climate through the establishment and reinforcement of norms, values, and expectations. Leaders who prioritize open communication, provide constructive feedback, and recognize achievements contribute to a positive and proactive school culture. They set the tone for interactions, model desired behaviors, and create an environment where positive relationships can flourish. When leadership is supportive and responsive, it encourages a culture of continuous improvement and accountability. This positive school climate enhances student academic performance, reduces behavioral issues, and promotes overall well-being, making the school a more effective and nurturing place for education.

Objectives

- 1- To find the relationship between leadership behaviour and school climate at secondary level.
- 2- To investigate the effect of leadership behaviour on school climate at secondary level.

Research gap

In the Pakistani context, the relationship between leadership behavior and school climate presents a unique area for research with several potential gaps. One significant gap is the limited empirical studies that focus specifically on how leadership behaviors in Pakistani schools influence the school climate. Much of the existing research tends to be generalized or focused on Western contexts, which may not fully capture the socio-cultural and economic nuances specific to Pakistan. Additionally, the diversity of school types in Pakistan—ranging from urban private schools to rural public schools—necessitates a more nuanced understanding of how leadership practices vary across these different settings and how they uniquely impact the school climate (Tan, Dimmock, & Walker, 2024). Another research gap lies in the exploration of gender dynamics and their influence on leadership behavior and school climate in Pakistan. Given the cultural context, gender plays a crucial role in educational leadership, yet there is insufficient research examining how male and female leaders might differently influence school climate (Bada, Tengku Ariffin, & Nordin, 2024). Further, the impact of leadership training and professional development

programs on improving leadership behaviors and subsequently the school climate is underexplored. Studies that investigate the effectiveness of such programs in the Pakistani context can provide insights into best practices and strategies for developing more effective school leaders, ultimately enhancing the educational environment. Addressing these gaps could contribute significantly to the body of knowledge and inform policies and practices aimed at improving school climates through better leadership in Pakistan.

Methodology

In order to investigate the association between LB and SC, the researcher used a quantitative study methodology and the positivist paradigm. The population is made up of all male and female secondary school students enrolled in public and private institutions in the Lahore district that have ten or more branches. Eight private school systems, for instance (stem, city, allied, KIPS, Unique, Smart, Dar-e-argam, and educator) were selected as an example. In the Lahore area, there are 710 public secondary schools, and 3115 instructors are employed by those establishments (SIS, 2022). There are 1137 private schools in all, and 7822 private school teachers work for all of these establishments (PEPRIS, 2022). Consequently, a large representative sample of teachers was contacted for the research. Techniques for multistage sampling were employed. The entire population was divided into five groups (Tehsils) by the researcher using the cluster sampling technique. Male/female and public/private were the two strata that the researcher was able to distinguish using the stratified sample technique. Five male and five female schools from each tehsil in Lahore were chosen as a sample from the private sector. Ten public schools in Lahore ten male and ten female-two from each tehsil were selected as a sample. Ten randomly selected teachers from public schools and four teachers from private schools, each representing a different type of school, made up the sample. 520 teachers were chosen as a sample as a result. The school climate questionnaire adapted by the researcher Domínguez, Ruiz, Huertas, & Alonso-Tapia, (2020) and leadership behaviour questionnaire was adapted by Shaw, Erickson, & Nassirzadeh, (2014) for data collection. The validity of the questionnaires was found through experts' opinions and reliability through pilot testing. The Cronbach's alpha value of SC was 0.882. The leadership behaviour questionnaire Cronbach's alpha value was 0.921.

Data Analysis and Interpretation Relationship between Leadership behaviour and school climate

Table 1

	Correlations				
		Leadership			
		behaviour	School climate	Mean	Std. Deviation
Leadership behaviour	Pearson Correlation	1	226**	4.3770	.34769
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000		
	Ν	520	520		
School climate	Pearson Correlation	226**	1	1.7151	.27968
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			

Relationship between Leadership behaviour and school climate

The above table illustrates that relationship between leadership behaviour and school climate at secondary level. The mean of leadership behaviour is 4.3770, SD=0.34, school climate (M=1.71; SD= 0.27). The Pearson correlation (r<-.226) indicates that there was weak negative significant relationship between leadership behaviour and school climate at secondary level.

Factor wise analysis (SC factors) Table 2

	Correlations				
		Leadership	Social_Environ		
		behaviour	ment	Mean	Std. Deviation
Leadership behaviour	Pearson Correlation	1	163**	4.3770	.34769
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000		
	Ν	520	520		
Social_Environment	Pearson Correlation	163**	1	1.6958	.32389
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
	Ν	520	520		
**. Correlation is signif	ficant at the 0.01 level (2-tai	led).			

Relationship between Leadership behaviour and Social_Environment

The above table illustrates that relationship between leadership behaviour and Social_Environment at secondary level. The mean of leadership behaviour is 4.3770, SD=0.34, Social_Environment (M=1.69; SD= 0.32). The Pearson correlation (r<-.163) indicates that there was very weak negative significant relationship between leadership behaviour and Social_Environment at secondary level.

Table 3

	Correlations				
		Leadership	Physical_Env		
		behaviour	ironment	Mean	Std. Deviation
Leadership behaviour	Pearson Correlation	1	178**	4.3770	.34769
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000		
	Ν	520	520		
Physical_Environment	Pearson Correlation	178**	1	1.7250	.33867
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
	Ν	520	520		
**. Correlation is signific	cant at the 0.01 level (2-tai	led).			

Relationship between Leadership behaviour and Physical_Environment

The above table illustrates that relationship between leadership behaviour and Physical_Environment at secondary level. The mean of leadership behaviour is 4.3770, SD=0.34, Physical_Environment (M=1.72; SD= 0.33). The Pearson correlation (r<-.178) indicates that there was very weak negative significant relationship between leadership behaviour and Physical_Environment at secondary level.

Table 4

	Correlations				
		Leadership	Learning_Envir		Std.
		behaviour	onment	Mean	Deviation
Leadership behaviour	Pearson Correlation	1	229**	4.3770	.34769
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000		
	Ν	520	520		
Learning_Environment	Pearson Correlation	229**	1	1.7246	.33400
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
	Ν	520	520		
**. Correlation is signific	cant at the 0.01 level (2-taile	ed).			

Relationship between Leadership behaviour and Learning_Environment

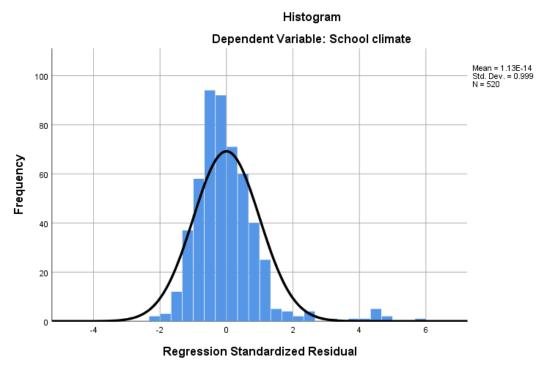
The above table illustrates that relationship between leadership behaviour and Learning_Environment at secondary level. The mean of leadership behaviour is 4.3770, SD=0.34, Learning_Environment (M=1.72; SD=0.33). The Pearson correlation (r<-.229) indicates that there was weak negative significant relationship between leadership behaviour and Learning_Environment at secondary level.

Effect on Leadership behaviour on School climate

Table 5

Effect on Leadership behaviour on School climate

			Coefficients ^a			
				Standardized		
		Unstandardiz	ed Coefficients	Coefficients		
Mode	el	В	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.510	.151	226	16.607	.000
	Leadership behaviour	182	.034	226	-5.278	.000
a. Dej	pendent Variable: School cli	mate				

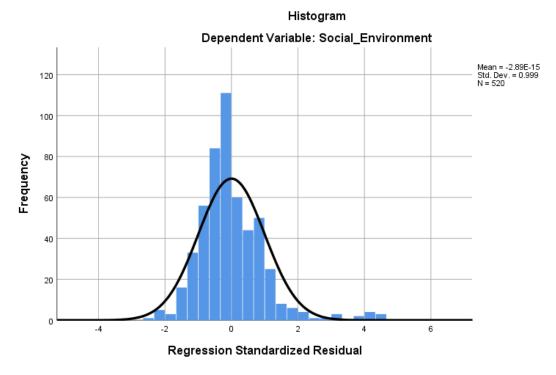


The above table illustrates that the effect of Leadership behaviour on school climate at secondary level. The leadership behaviour *B-value*=-0.182, t=-5.278 and the *p*-value>.000 which indicates that there was strongly highly significant effect of leadership behaviour on school climate at secondary level.

Factor wise analysis (SC factors) Table 6

Effect on Leadership behaviour on Social_Environment

		(Coefficients ^a			
				Standardized		
		Unstandardiz	zed Coefficients	Coefficients		
Mode	1	В	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.361	.177	163	13.316	.000
	Leadership behaviour	152	.040	105	-3.764	.000
a. Dep	pendent Variable: Social_En	vironment				

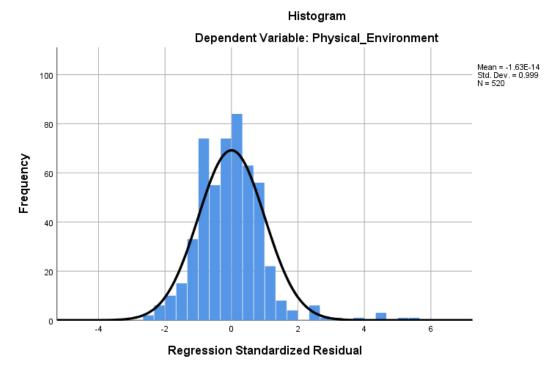


The above table illustrates that the effect of Leadership behaviour on social environment at secondary level. The leadership behaviour *B-value*=-0.152, t=-3.764 and the *p*-value>.000 which indicates that there was strongly highly significant effect of leadership behaviour on social environment at secondary level.

Table 7

Effect on Leadership behaviour on Physical_Environment

		C	Coefficients ^{as}			
				Standardized		
		Unstandardiz	ed Coefficients	Coefficients		
Mode	1	В	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.483	.185	170	13.427	.000
	Leadership behaviour	173	.042	178	-4.112	.000
a. Dep	pendent Variable: Physical_	Environment				

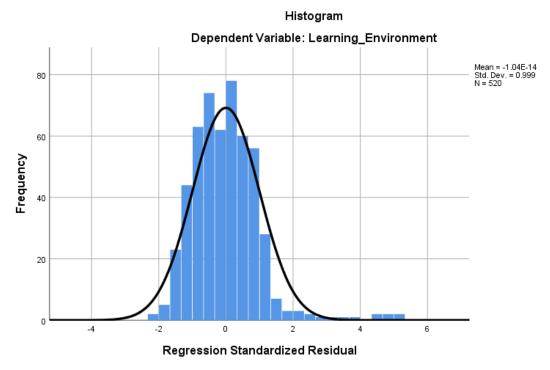


The above table illustrates that the effect of Leadership behaviour on physical environment at secondary level. The leadership behaviour *B-value*=-0.173, t=-4.112 and the *p*-value>.000 which indicates that there was strongly highly significant effect of leadership behaviour on physical environment at secondary level.

Table 8

Effect on Leadership behaviour on Learning_Environment

		(Coefficients ^a			
				Standardized		
		Unstandardiz	ed Coefficients	Coefficients		
Mode	1	В	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.687	.180	220	14.897	.000
	Leadership behaviour	220	.041	229	-5.354	.000
a. Dep	pendent Variable: Learning_	Environment				



The above table illustrates that the effect of Leadership behaviour on learning environment at secondary level. The leadership behaviour *B-value*=-0.220, t=-5.354 and the *p*-value>.000 which indicates that there was strongly highly significant effect of leadership behaviour on learning environment at secondary level

Discussion and conclusion

There was highly significant effect and relationship between leadership behaviour and school climate at secondary level. Leadership behavior significantly influences school climate. Effective leaders create a positive, supportive environment that fosters collaboration, motivation, and a sense of belonging among staff and students. Their behaviors, such as clear communication, encouragement, and responsiveness, help build trust and respect, which in turn enhance the overall school climate (Fonseca, Santos, & Santos, 2024). A positive school climate, supported by strong leadership, leads to better student outcomes and teacher satisfaction.

There was highly significant effect and relationship between leadership behaviour and social environment at secondary level. Leadership behavior has a profound impact on the social environment within an organization or community. Effective leaders who demonstrate empathy, transparency, and inclusivity foster a positive social environment characterized by trust, cooperation, and mutual respect (Ersozlu, Karakus, Karakas, & Clouder, 2024). Their ability to address conflicts constructively and promote open communication helps build strong interpersonal

relationships. Consequently, a healthy social environment enhances overall morale, productivity, and well-being among members.

There was highly significant effect and relationship between leadership behaviour and physical environment at secondary level. Leadership behavior directly affects the physical environment of an organization. Leaders who prioritize a well-maintained, safe, and functional physical space create an atmosphere that supports productivity and well-being. By ensuring that resources are adequately allocated for maintaining and improving facilities, leaders demonstrate a commitment to their team's comfort and efficiency (Bantilan, Sombilon, Regidor, Mondoyo, & Edig, 2024). This attention to the physical environment can boost morale, reduce stress, and enhance overall organizational performance.

There was highly significant effect and relationship between leadership behaviour and learning environment at secondary level. Leadership behavior plays a crucial role in shaping the learning environment. Effective leaders foster a culture of continuous improvement, innovation, and support, which enhances the overall learning experience (Aldridge, & Blackstock, 2024). They encourage professional development, provide necessary resources, and create an atmosphere of trust and collaboration. This positive learning environment promotes student engagement, academic achievement, and teacher effectiveness, leading to better educational outcomes.

It was concluded that leadership behavior is closely intertwined with school climate, as the actions and attitudes of leaders set the tone for the entire school. Effective leaders who communicate clearly, show empathy, and foster inclusivity create a positive and supportive atmosphere. Their ability to manage conflicts constructively and promote professional development builds trust and collaboration among staff and students. This positive school climate, characterized by safety, respect, and a sense of belonging, directly impacts student motivation, teacher satisfaction, and overall school performance. Consequently, strong leadership behavior is essential for cultivating a thriving educational environment.

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