

Relationship between School Culture and Teachers' Well-being at Secondary School Level

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ABSTRACT: Present study aimed to examine the relationship between school culture and teachers' well-being at secondary school level. A correlation research design was employed to examine the relationship between variables of the study. Population of the study was comprised of all male and female secondary school teachers from Multan division. A sample of 1090 (Male=450, Female=640) were selected as sample of the study. Present study adapted two instruments as school culture and well-being to measure the variables. Three experts ensured the validity of the instruments and reliability was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha. The reliability of school culture is .952 and workplace well-being is .945 respectively. Data were analysed by using inferential statistics (Pearson's r, Independent samples t-test and one-way ANOVA). Findings of the study revealed that a significant moderate correlation between school culture and teachers' well-being at secondary school level. Findings further indicated a significant difference between male and female teachers' school culture and well-being existed, however an insignificant difference was found regarding school culture and teachers' well-being at secondary school level. Study recommended to adopt strategies of positive school culture to enhance teachers' well-being at secondary school level.

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Introduction

School culture forms the foundation of school life by shaping the shared beliefs, values, traditions, and experiences of teachers, students, and the wider school community. It is reflected not only in visible features such as the school environment, behavioural expectations, rules, uniforms, and overall climate, but also in less visible elements including shared values, assumptions, rituals, stories, symbols, and norms that influence everyday practices and relationships (Peterson & Deal, 2009). Although these underlying aspects of culture are not immediately observable, they play a defining role in shaping the identity and functioning of a school.

More contemporary research further reinforces the need for leadership in galvanizing schools around innovation and professional development. Shamasneh (2022) found that motivational leadership enhances teachers' creativity by increasing their motivation and encouraging innovative practices. Similar findings were reported by Pažur et al. (2020), who showed that democratic leadership contributes to the development of a democratic school culture that encourages teacher participation, creativity, and student learning. Mutohar et al. (2021) further observed that principals' leadership behaviour, positive teacher role models, and a supportive school culture play an important role in developing students' character and preparing them to succeed in an increasingly global society. Likewise, Nelianti

and Puspita (2021) concluded that principal leadership and school work culture directly contribute to teacher professionalism by creating conditions that support teachers' continuous development and improved performance.

Recent research by Fullan (2001) has found common traits of school cultures that value professional learning and strong commitment to improving student outcomes. These characteristics are that they have a common sense of purpose and values, norms that support continuous learning and improvement, relationships between colleagues, and opportunities for collective problem-solving and the exchange of professional experiences. Within the literature, some important dimensions in school culture are emphasized, especially in Western contexts, including goal orientation, leadership, participative decision-making, formal and informal relationships among teachers, and an orientation to innovation. The school organization, by being grounded in broader organizational culture, holds a central position in the field of education. School administrators have a critical role in shaping and sustaining a strong school culture by strengthening the employees' commitment to the institution, being responsive to individual expectations, and developing a positive Organizational environment. Lee and Louis (2019) reported that research often makes a distinction between strong and weak school cultures. Schools characterized by strong cultures have high levels of motivation on the part of both teachers and students and promote sincere relationships and a collective responsibility. In such environments, administrators show a definite sense of purpose, develop good relationships with staff, and move the school to achieve its goal of becoming a sustainable learning organization through inclusion and participation (Simsek, 2003). School culture has a significant influence on the image that schools project and contributes to the behavior of all stakeholders, especially teachers and students. Shared leadership practices play an important part in this process. School culture has both an impact and is indicative of the nature of interpersonal relationships that exist in educational organizations. Shared assumptions, values, beliefs, and behaviour norms that constitute the collective identity of organizational members are the core elements of school culture (Aslan et al., 2009, p. 271).

Empirical research shows that leadership behaviors displayed by school administrators are linked to organizational commitment and quality of work life (Akan et al., 2014), while styles of leadership have a strong relationship with organizational health and job satisfaction (Korkmaz, 2008). Further evidence suggests a full mediation of organizational climate and working conditions between leadership style and job satisfaction (Moslehpour et al., 2019).

Well-being

Teacher well-being has become an important area of educational research because of its far-reaching influence on both educators and the overall quality of education. The well-being of teachers affects not only their personal and professional lives but also student learning, school effectiveness, and the broader educational environment. Despite growing interest in this topic, there is still no universally accepted definition of teacher well-being. Scholars have approached the concept from different perspectives, resulting in a variety of interpretations and measurement approaches (Hascher & Waber, 2021)

Employee well-being has been linked to a variety of important organizational outcomes, including workplace safety, attendance, job performance, employee retention, and overall organizational success (Erdogan et al., 2012). A substantial body of research indicates that poor well-being can have adverse consequences for both individuals and organizations. Employees experiencing low levels of well-being are more likely to show reduced motivation, lower commitment to the organization, increased absenteeism, and weaker job performance. These outcomes not only affect employees' professional effectiveness but can also undermine organizational productivity and long-term sustainability (Holland et al., 2013).

Teacher well-being is at the center of the emotional climate of the classroom. Research has determined that teacher stress affects students' emotional and physiological reactions, including the levels of cortisol (Oberle & Schonert-Reichl, 2016). The quality of relationships between teachers and students is strongly related to students' socio-emotional development and their overall well-being (Ramberg et al., 2020). These findings contribute to our understanding of the link between higher levels of teacher well-being being associated with better student well-being (Harding et al., 2019). Jamal et al. (2013) stressed that a sense of safety and supportive relationships are crucial to student well-being, which are challenging to create in classrooms where teachers feel overwhelmed or unsupported. This shows the importance of considering teacher well-being not just for improving student outcomes but also for understanding how schools can be better supported in their work. Teacher well-being is also a critical factor that affects retention in the profession. High teacher turnover rates are a global problem and are one of the reasons for school organisations being unstable (Cano et al., 2017). Frequent staff turnover destroys continuity and cohesion that affect student achievement negatively. These effects are especially damaging to disadvantaged students who are more vulnerable to instability among staff (Allen et al., 2018). In England, the Department for Education identified teachers leaving as a continual issue, and we know that the major reason for leaving the profession is workload.

Teachers' Well-being

Some scholarship frames TWB through physiological or somatic symptoms (Blumhardt, 2020); other work adapts general well-being concepts specifically to work contexts under the heading of occupational well-being (Sandilos & DiPerna, 2022). A further strand folds the particular demands of teaching directly into the construct linking well-being, for instance, to the quality of teacher-student interaction (Collie et al., 2015). Measurement scales reflect this variety, capturing dimensions such as workload well-being, organizational well-being, and student-interaction well-being, or self-efficacy and a sense of connectedness (Renshaw et al., 2015). Reviewers repeatedly flag this conceptual sprawl as a problem to the point that TWB has earned a reputation as a genuinely tangled construct. One consequence is that findings across studies become difficult to compare. And even though several critical reviews already exist, none has yet worked through theory-grounded concepts and their connotations together with TWB's dimensional structure and determinants in a single, thorough treatment (Dreer, 2023).

Jena (2021) frames employee well-being as a state combining physical and mental health with emotional response, satisfaction, and an overall sense of how one's life is going. Given how much of an employee's time work consumes, Nikolajevaite and Sabaityte (2016) argue that workplace well-being deserves particular weight; it feeds into individual success and, more broadly, societal outcomes by building competence, cutting stress, and lifting job satisfaction. Employees with stronger workplace well-being tend to show more creativity, higher productivity, greater loyalty and trust, and better service quality (Dicke et al., 2020). Where organizations once leaned mainly on extrinsic motivators to drive engagement, evidence now points toward workplace well-being as a fuller route to the same goal, built on a sense of strength and pride employees take in their roles (Cooper & Dewe, 2008).

This echoes a fairly common distinction between hedonic well-being, how the person feels (happiness, anxiety); eudaimonic well-being, how physiological needs are fulfilled, and meaning found (Kimiecik, 2010); and evaluative well-being, which provides a third dimension capturing how people judge the overall life and job satisfaction of their lives. Eudaimonic well-being has six elements: purpose in life; environmental mastery; positive relations with others; personal growth; autonomy and self-acceptance (Ryff, 2013), a framework also at the core of the eudaimonic orientation utilized in research on spiritual leadership (Amholt et al., 2020). The job satisfaction concept itself originates from Hoppock in 1935 by writing that job, when able to say truthfully he/she is satisfied with the work. That satisfaction would rely on internal components such as psychological and physiological requirements, along

with external ones such as organizational policy, working conditions, opportunities for career advancement, relationships with coworkers, and the physical work environment (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020).

According to Wekelo (2018) and Huppert and So (2013), employee care is less about the bottom line and more about empathy, doing what needs to be done for a workforce. When management recognizes employees and their emotions, dignity, and self-respect, positive behavioral shifts usually follow; employees tend to perform well in empathetic workplaces where staff and management partner toward common goals (Rahman et al., 2019). Other aspects flow into workplace well-being, which are what expectations can feel more important than wages, safety, health, facilities, relationships, opportunities to learn and grow, and access to information.

Organizational Respect

Respect functions as a cross-disciplinary foundational social principle that a lot of disciplines explore. This has often been described in philosophical terms as a two-way duty, either a right that is owed or given, something returned, which holds any relationship together for the long haul. Organizationally, respect involves granting employees their socioemotional needs, effort, and contributions (Ismail et al., 2013), paired with the expectation that employees return respect to leadership, workforce members, policy, and institutional norms. Many organizations treat respect as a value that belongs to everyone, not just select individuals (Ramarajan et al., 2008).

Autonomy Need

Autonomy, as derived from the Greek roots of *auto* and *nomos*, "self" and "law," respectively, implicates self-rule (Hsu et al., 2019), a capacity molded both by genetics and culture (Colbert et al., 2016). Based on Self-Determination Theory, alongside relatedness and competence, autonomy is recognized as one of the three basic psychological needs (Deci et al., 2000), and therefore fulfilling these needs supports both satisfaction and optimal functioning (Abun et al., 2019). Autonomy at work is being able to act autonomously, with self-direction and personal agency; however, overall well-being depends a lot on whether or not the environment provides support for this need.

Competence Need

Competence refers to a basic need of wanting to be able and competent (Theurer et al., 2018), allowing employees the ability to cope with challenges and have opportunities to use their skills. When this need is satisfied, it promotes adaptation and well-being (Helzer & Kim, 2019), while its absence offers fewer opportunities to develop competencies, which leads to frustration that undermines motivation and self-confidence (Deci et al., 2000). In contrast, a supportive organizational climate actually does the opposite, fostering both competence and intrinsic motivation (Eilström & Kock, 2008).

Relatedness Need

Relatedness is the desire to be connected to and accepted by others, built on trust, empathy, and mutual esteem, and fulfilling it is compulsory for healthy psychological functioning and high job performance (Hussain et al., 2020). Despite the pressing demands of the profession, teacher well-being has historically attracted less attention than it deserves, and career incentives, recognition, and support are now common themes in policy discussions. Retention thus ties closely to how teacher authority and motivation are nurtured and, as role expectations and workload continue to increase, paying attention to well-being is all the more pressing (Kiuru et al., 2020). Supportive teacher workplace conditions are associated with retention in the profession, and TWB is positively related to student outcomes and educational quality (Thomas et al., 2020). For example, in Pakistan, in particular, evidence as

documented by Adil and Kamal (2020) identifies that teacher well-being is particularly low there, suggesting an urgent need for greater investment in both working conditions and professional supports to counter alarming rates of leave to teach (p. 48), which is significantly compromising the quality of education being delivered, leading to further slippage of educational outcomes.

Objective of the Study

The present study aimed to examine the relationship between school culture and teachers’ well-being at the secondary school level

Methodology

The present study adopted a correlation research design to examine the relationship between variables of the study. The population of the study comprised all male and female secondary school teachers from Multan Division. A sample of 1090 (Male=450, Female=640) was selected for the study. The present study adapted two instruments, school culture and well-being, to measure the variables. Three experts ensured the validity of the instruments, and reliability was calculated using Cronbach’s Alpha. The reliability of school culture is .952, and workplace well-being is .945, respectively. Data were analysed using inferential statistics.

Results

Table 1

Correlation between School culture and teachers’ Well-being at Secondary School Level

Variables	M	SD	r-value	Sig.
School Culture	124.00	13.31	.469**	.000
Workplace Well-bieng	110.11	15.42		

A correlation between school culture and teachers’ well-being was found by applying Pearson’s r. Findings show a significant moderate correlation between school culture and teachers’ well-being at the secondary school level.

Table 2

Effect of School Culture on Teachers’ Well-being at Secondary School Level

	Unstandardized Co-efficient	standardized Co-efficient						
	β	Std. Error β	β	T	P	Df	F	R ²
Model	42.80	3.87	.46	17.49	.000	1088	306.11	.22
School Culture	.543	.031						

Findings of the above table show that school culture was a statistically significant predictor, explaining 22% of the variance in teachers’ well-being (R² = .22, p < .000) at the secondary level.

Table 3

Difference of Male and Female Secondary School Teachers’ Perception about School

Variables	Gender	N	M	Sd	Df	t-value	Sig.
School Culture	Male	450	130.12	13.69	839.55	13.30	.000
	female	640	119.70	11.19			

Findings in Table 3 show a significant difference in male and female teachers' perception regarding school culture at $p \leq .05$ level of significance.

Table 4

Difference of Male and Female Teachers' Well-being at Secondary School Level

Variables	Gender	N	M	Sd	Df	t-value	Sig.
Workplace Well-being	Male	450	115.18	18.09	721.78	8.853	.000
	female	640	106.54				

Results in the above table show a significant difference in male and female teachers' well-being at $p \leq .05$ level of significance.

Table 5

Qualification-wise Difference of School Culture at Secondary School Level

Variables	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
School Culture	770.153	3	256.718	1.450	.227
	192241.832	1086	177.018		
	193011.985	1089			

Findings calculated by applying one-way ANOVA were found to be insignificant among secondary schools' culture at the $p \leq .05$ level of significance based on their qualification.

Table 6

Qualification-wise Difference of Teachers' Well-being at Secondary School Level

Variables	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Teachers' Well-being	2121.562	3	707.187	2.990	.030
	256858.783	1086	236.518		
	258980.345	1089			

Qualification-wise difference of secondary school teachers' well-being was found to be significant at $p \leq .05$ level of significance.

Discussion

The present study aimed to examine the relationship between school culture and teachers' well-being at the secondary school level. Findings of the study revealed that a significant moderate correlation was found between school culture and teachers' well-being at the secondary school level. Employee well-being has been linked to a variety of important organizational outcomes, including workplace safety, attendance, job performance, employee retention, and overall organizational success (Erdogan et al., 2012). A substantial body of research indicates that poor well-being can have adverse consequences for both individuals and organizations. Employees experiencing low levels of well-being are more likely to show reduced motivation, lower commitment to the organization, increased absenteeism, and weaker job performance. These outcomes not only affect employees' professional effectiveness but can also undermine organizational productivity and long-term sustainability (Holland et al., 2013). Findings further indicated that a significant difference between male and female teachers' school culture and well-being existed; however, an insignificant difference was found regarding school culture and teachers' well-being at the secondary school level.

The school organization, by being grounded in broader organizational culture, holds a central position in the field of education. School administrators have a critical role in shaping and sustaining a strong school culture by strengthening the employees' commitment to the institution, being responsive to individual expectations, and developing a positive Organizational environment. Lee and Louis (2019) reported that research often makes a distinction between strong and weak school cultures. Schools characterized by strong cultures have high levels of motivation on the part of both teachers and students and promote sincere relationships and a collective responsibility.

Conclusion

Findings of the study revealed that a significant moderate correlation existed between school culture and teachers' well-being at the secondary school level. Findings further indicated that a significant difference between male and female teachers' school culture and their well-being existed; however, an insignificant difference was found regarding school culture and teachers' well-being at the secondary school level.

Recommendations

1. School leaders' motivational leadership enhances teachers' creativity by increasing their motivation and encouraging innovative practices, which may enhance their well-being.
2. A supportive school culture plays an important role in developing teachers' character and preparing them to succeed in an increasingly global society
3. School administrators have a critical role in shaping and sustaining a strong school culture by strengthening the employees' commitment to the institution, being responsive to individual expectations and well-being at the secondary school level

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