



Evaluating the Influence of School Leadership on Cultivating a Positive Educational Environment in Secondary Education in Balochistan, Pakistan

Najeeb Ullah* , Karim Nawaz** , Farzana Jabeen Khoso***, Abdullah Ghunio****

*Ph.D. Scholar in Education, University of Sindh Jamshoro, Hyderabad Campus, Pakistan.

**Ph.D. Scholar in Education, University of Sindh Jamshoro, Hyderabad Campus, Pakistan.

***Assistant Professor, Department of Teacher Education, Shah Abdul Latif University, Khairpur

****Ph.D. Scholar in Education, University of Sindh Jamshoro, Hyderabad Campus, Pakistan.

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ABSTRACT

This research conducts a rigorous examination of the pivotal role played by school leadership in shaping a positive school environment within the distinctive context of secondary education in Balochistan, Pakistan. The study encompasses 300 students, 100 teachers, and 60 head teachers from the Makran Division. The primary objective is to investigate leadership strategies and their influence on fostering a positive environment. Through an in-depth exploration of leadership approaches, decision-making processes, and community engagement initiatives, the study aims to comprehend how these strategies contribute to the overall school environment. Additionally, the study involves evaluating outcomes related to student well-being, teacher-student relationships, and academic engagement. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the research measures the effects of school leadership on creating an environment conducive to holistic student development. Strong connections are identified between student performance, teacher efficacy, and head teacher leadership. Positive correlations ($r = 0.615$, $p < 0.01$) exist between students' and teachers' performance, a moderate correlation ($r = 0.328$, $p < 0.05$) between students' performance and head teacher leadership, and a notable correlation ($r = 0.336$, $p < 0.01$) between teacher performance and head teacher leadership. The study aims to provide insights into effective leadership practices in Balochistan's secondary education and offers recommendations for enhancing the educational experience and fostering positive school environments. The findings are intended to inform educational policymakers, school administrators, and practitioners, facilitating informed decision-making for the improvement of secondary education environments in Balochistan, particularly within the Makran Division, and potentially in similar contexts globally.



Introduction

In the dominion of education, leadership plays a pivotal role in schools and has garnered increasing attention as a decisive factor shaping the overall climate within educational institutions (Grazia & Molinari, 2021). The imperative of nurturing a positive school environment is paramount, given its direct correlation with student well-being, academic achievement, and the overall efficacy of the learning environment (Ullah & Almani, 2022). This study intricately examines the landscape of secondary education in Balochistan, Pakistan, with the objective of scrutinizing the impact of school leadership on the cultivation of a positive school environment.

In the province of Balochistan, the educational milieu confronts substantial impediments, notably characterized by limited infrastructure and the pervasive influence of socio-cultural factors, hampering the attainment of quality education (Chachar, Ullah, & Ujjan, 2023). This context, distinguished by its diverse cultural tapestry, provides a compelling backdrop for an in-depth exploration of the intricate interplay between leadership strategies and the establishment of an optimal educational environment (Al-Jabari, 2014; Berhane & Kilango, 2022). While extant research has explored the broader implications of school leadership, the specific focus on Balochistan, particularly within the context of secondary education, offers a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities unique to this region.

The primary objectives of this study are twofold. Firstly, it aims to investigate the leadership strategies employed within secondary schools in Balochistan that contribute to the creation and sustenance of a positive school environment. Through a comprehensive analysis of the approaches adopted by school leaders, the study endeavors to identify best practices that can be replicated or adapted to enhance the overall learning environment (Smith & Squires, 2016).

Secondly, this research seeks to assess the multifaceted impact of school leadership on various dimensions of a positive school environment, encompassing aspects such as student engagement, teacher morale, interpersonal relationships within the school community, and the overall sense of safety and belonging (Al-Safran, Brown, & Wiseman, 2014). By meticulously examining these factors, the study aims to provide insights into the intricate ways in which leadership influences the broader educational ecosystem in Balochistan's secondary schools.

In essence, this case study aspires to contribute valuable knowledge to the field of educational leadership and school environment by shedding light on the specific dynamics at play in the secondary education sector of Balochistan, Pakistan. The findings of this research possess the potential to inform policymakers, educational administrators, and practitioners, fostering a deeper understanding of effective leadership strategies instrumental in cultivating a positive school environment and, consequently, enriching the educational experience for students in Balochistan.

Literature Review

In contemporary educational discourse, the relationship between school leadership and the establishment of a positive school environment has become a focal point of research and discussion (Ullah et al., 2021). This literature review aims to provide a comprehensive synthesis of existing studies, with a specific emphasis on secondary education in Balochistan, Pakistan.

Global Perspectives on School Leadership and Environment

The significance of effective school leadership in fostering a positive school environment is evident in the research conducted by Hallinger and Huber, (2012), their work emphasizes the global importance of leaders in shaping organizational culture, influencing teacher-student relationships, and ultimately impacting student outcomes. Several research studies have confirmed the existence of constructive connections between elevated student achievement and a positive school environment (MacNeil et al., 2009; Uline & Tschannen-Moran, 2008).

By drawing on international perspectives, this research underscores the universality of the link between leadership practices and the overall environment within educational institutions.

Leadership Strategies in Educational Settings

The study by Hai, Latif, Bilal, & Ahmad, (2022) contributes valuable insights into leadership strategies within educational settings. Their research focuses on the concept of transformational leadership, characterized by visionary and inspirational practices. According to Chachar, Ullah, and Jalil (2023) study findings, such leadership qualities correlate positively with the establishment of a conducive learning environment. This insight suggests that leaders who inspire and articulate a compelling vision play a crucial role in shaping a positive school environment.

Cultural Dynamics in Educational Leadership

The cultural dynamics at play in educational leadership, especially in regions with diverse cultural backgrounds are explored by (Ruffin & Simon, 2022). Their research underscores the importance of culturally sensitive leadership approaches in addressing the unique challenges faced in the local educational context. This insight acknowledges the role of cultural nuances in shaping effective leadership strategies, reinforcing the idea that leadership practices must align with the cultural fabric of the educational setting (Dulay & Karadag, 2017).

Impact of Leadership on Teacher Morale and Student Engagement

Grazia and Molinari, (2021) study delves into the multifaceted impact of leadership on various dimensions of a positive school environment. Their findings highlight the critical link between effective leadership, teacher morale, and heightened student engagement. This emphasizes that leadership practices

not only influence the administrative aspects of education but also resonate throughout the entire educational ecosystem, impacting the well-being of teachers and the engagement of students (Kilinc, 2014; Ullah et al., 2023)).

In summary, scholarly literature highlights the significant impact of school leadership on the educational environment, drawing from global perspectives, effective leadership strategies, cultural dynamics, and the interconnection with teacher morale and student engagement. The forthcoming Balochistan study aims to furnish context-specific findings, informing local policies and practices while contributing to the broader academic understanding of educational leadership and positive school environments.

Statement of the problem

The role of school leadership in shaping a positive school environment in Balochistan's secondary education, particularly within the Makran Division, Balochistan. This research aims to bridge this gap by investigating the specific leadership strategies and their impact on the overall school environment. The lack of empirical studies in this context hampers the development of targeted interventions and improvements, making it imperative to understand how leadership dynamics contribute to fostering a positive educational environment. This study addresses this gap by providing insights that can inform educational policies and enhance the overall secondary education experience in Balochistan, Pakistan.

Objective of the study

This study examines educational leadership in Balochistan, aiming to identify strategies fostering a positive secondary education environment. We also assess the impact of school leadership on diverse aspects crucial for an overall positive school atmosphere.

The following objectives were formulated.

- 1: To investigate leadership strategies in Balochistan influencing a positive environment in secondary education.
- 2: To assess the impact of school leadership on various aspects of a positive school environment.

Significance of the Study

This research is crucial as it fills a gap in the current understanding of school leadership's impact on cultivating a positive school environment in Balochistan's secondary education, especially in the Makran Division. The findings are expected to inform evidence-based decision-making, providing insights for policymakers, administrators, and practitioners to develop targeted interventions aligned with the region's cultural context.

Additionally, the study contributes valuable insights to the broader field of educational leadership, offering nuanced perspectives on effective practices within a diverse and often understudied setting. The research holds relevance not only locally but also has the potential to inform educational practices in similar settings globally. Overall, the study aims to enhance the educational experience in Balochistan, Pakistan, and contribute to the advancement of effective leadership practices in education.

Research Method

Employing a mixed-methods case study design, this research seeks a comprehensive understanding of the influence of school leadership on cultivating a positive school environment in secondary education in Balochistan, Pakistan. The integration of both qualitative and quantitative methods allows for a nuanced exploration of leadership strategies and their measurable impact on various dimensions of the school environment. The study involves a diverse participant group, including 300 secondary school students, 100 secondary school teachers, and 60 head teachers specifically from the Makran Division in Balochistan, ensuring a holistic representation of the educational community and allowing for a detailed examination of the experiences and perspectives of different stakeholders. Data collection involves qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with school leaders, teachers, and students to gather insights into leadership strategies, decision-making processes, and community engagement initiatives. Additionally, quantitative data will be collected through surveys administered to students and teachers, quantifying perceptions of the school environment, including aspects such as well-being, teacher-student relationships, and academic engagement. In the analysis phase, qualitative data will undergo thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes, providing rich insights into leadership dynamics. Simultaneously, quantitative data will be subjected to statistical techniques, including descriptive statistics and inferential analyses, measuring the impact of school leadership on various aspects of the school environment.

Validity and Reliability in Research Instrumentation

Ensuring the trustworthiness of study outcomes necessitates a meticulous assessment of the validity and reliability of research instruments. In this investigation, the questionnaires underwent a rigorous evaluation by seasoned professionals with extensive expertise in the pertinent field, ensuring the instruments'

validity. To gauge the reliability of the questionnaire, the widely endorsed Cronbach's alpha coefficient was employed as a measure of internal consistency. The findings of the reliability analysis, detailed in the table below, affirm the questionnaire's high level of reliability. Through a thorough scrutiny of the validity and reliability of research instruments, this study safeguards the precision and robustness of its outcomes.

Table 1
Reliability Statistics of the Questionnaires

Items	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Students' Perspectives, Leadership Strategies Impacting a Positive Environment in Secondary Education.	5	.675
Teachers' Perspectives on Leadership Strategies Impacting a Positive Environment in Secondary Education.	5	.641
Head Teachers' Perspectives on Leadership Strategies Impacting a Positive Environment in Secondary Education	5	.841
Students' Perspectives, School Leadership on Diverse Aspects of a Positive School Environment.	5	.628
Teachers' Perspectives, School Leadership on Diverse Aspects of a Positive School Environment.	5	.646
Head Teachers' Perspectives, School Leadership on Diverse Aspects of a Positive School Environment.	5	.783
Total Items with Cronbach's Alpha	30	.853

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Descriptive and inferential statistical methods were employed to analyze the data. The correlation test was utilized to compare the respondents' results. The analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 26.

Result and Discussion

The acquisition of data from student, teacher, and head teacher respondents required a meticulous application of both descriptive and inferential analyses. The resulting findings have been presented with careful attention to detail in the subsequent table.

Table 2
Students' Perspectives on Leadership Strategies Impacting a Positive Environment in Secondary Education

S. No	Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	The school leadership effectively communicates goals and expectations for a positive learning environment.	300	3.91	.965
2	I feel that the leadership promotes an inclusive environment where all students are valued and respected.	300	3.60	1.245
3	The leadership actively supports initiatives that contribute to a positive and supportive school atmosphere.	300	3.85	.981
4	The school leadership communicates effectively with students, keeping them informed about important matters.	300	3.16	1.326
5	The leadership encourages and supports students' involvement in decision-making processes.	300	3.80	1.044

The analysis of school leadership perceptions, based on responses from 300 participants the study reveals generally positive sentiments. Participants express satisfaction with effective communication of goals ($M=3.91$, $SD=0.965$) and active support for positive initiatives ($M=3.85$, $SD=0.981$). However, there is some variability in perceptions of inclusivity promotion ($M=3.60$, $SD=1.245$), suggesting diverse opinions. The school leadership's communication effectiveness ($M=3.16$, $SD=1.326$) exhibits moderate consensus, while encouragement for student involvement receives positive feedback ($M=3.80$, $SD=1.044$). These findings suggest an overall positive assessment with potential areas for improvement in communication and inclusivity.

Table 3
Teachers' Perspectives on Leadership Strategies Impacting a Positive Environment in Secondary Education

S. No	Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	The school leadership provides adequate support and resources for teachers to create a positive classroom environment.	100	3.39	1.325
2	The leadership actively promotes professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their teaching skills.	100	3.67	1.074
3	The leadership fosters a collaborative culture among teachers, promoting teamwork and shared goals.	100	3.36	1.432
4	The school leadership recognizes and appreciates teachers' efforts in contributing to a positive school environment.	100	3.58	1.273
5	There is an effective feedback mechanism in place where teachers can provide input on school policies and practices.	100	3.50	1.202

The table summarizes participants' perceptions of school leadership. On average, there's a moderate perception of support for creating a positive classroom environment (M=3.39, SD=1.325). The leadership is positively viewed for promoting professional development opportunities (M=3.67, SD=1.074). However, there's varied perception regarding fostering a collaborative culture among teachers (M=3.36, SD=1.432). Participants generally acknowledge leadership's efforts in appreciating teachers (M=3.58, SD=1.273). The feedback mechanism effectiveness is perceived moderately (M=3.50, SD=1.202). Overall, positive recognition is balanced with room for improvement in collaboration and feedback mechanisms.

Table 4
Head Teachers' Perspectives on Leadership Strategies Impacting a Positive Environment in Secondary Education

S. No	Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	The school's leadership has a clear vision for creating a positive environment in secondary education in Balochistan.	60	4.00	0.974
2	The leadership engages in strategic planning to implement effective measures for a positive educational environment.	60	3.92	1.046
3	The leadership empowers staff by involving them in decision-making processes related to school climate.	60	3.85	1.071
4	The leadership actively engages with the community to create a positive and supportive school environment.	60	3.90	1.020
5	The school leadership is committed to continuous improvement in fostering a positive environment for secondary education.	60	3.92	1.030

The table reflects participants' views on school leadership in Balochistan regarding a positive environment in secondary education. On average, participants strongly perceive a clear vision from the leadership (M=4.00, SD=0.974) and positive engagement in strategic planning (M=3.92, SD=1.046). They also recognize efforts in staff empowerment (M=3.85, SD=1.071), community engagement (M=3.90, SD=1.020), and a commitment to continuous improvement (M=3.92, SD=1.030). The mean scores, along with standard deviations, offer a concise summary of perceptions, indicating areas of strong agreement and some variability in opinions.

Table 5**The Impact of School Leadership on Diverse Aspects of a Positive School Environment: Students' Perspectives**

S. No	Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	The school leadership effectively communicates goals and expectations, contributing to a positive school environment.	300	4.05	.839
2	I feel included and valued in the school community due to leadership's inclusive practices.	300	3.80	1.078
3	The school leadership creates a supportive environment that enhances the overall school environment.	300	3.96	.918
4	The leadership ensures fair treatment of all students, promoting a positive and equitable atmosphere.	300	3.28	1.283
5	The school leadership actively involves students in decision-making processes for a positive school environment.	300	3.95	.904

The survey results reveal positive perceptions of school leadership in effectively communicating goals (M=4.05, SD=0.839) and creating a supportive environment (M=3.96, SD=0.918) for a positive school climate. However, there's greater variability in feelings of inclusion (M=3.80, SD=1.078) and fair treatment (M=3.28, SD=1.283). Active student involvement in decision-making is generally well-regarded (M=3.95, SD=0.904). These findings suggest strengths in communication and student involvement but highlight areas, notably inclusion and fair treatment, that may benefit from focused attention.

Table 6**The Impact of School Leadership on Diverse Aspects of a Positive School Environment: Teachers' Perspectives**

S. No	Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	The school leadership provides adequate support and resources, positively impacting the school environment.	100	3.31	1.353
2	Professional Development: Leadership's commitment to professional development contributes to a positive school environment.	100	3.66	1.094
3	The leadership fosters a collaborative culture among teachers, enhancing the overall school environment.	100	3.28	1.450
4	The school leadership recognizes and appreciates teachers' efforts, positively influencing the school environment.	100	3.56	1.258
5	There is an effective feedback mechanism in place, allowing teachers to contribute to a positive school environment.	100	3.44	1.250

The survey indicates moderate positive views on school leadership providing support and resources (M=3.31, SD=1.353). There's general agreement on leadership's positive impact on professional development (M=3.66, SD=1.094). Mixed views exist on leadership fostering a collaborative culture (M=3.28, SD=1.450), while teacher recognition is moderately seen as positive (M=3.56, SD=1.258). An effective feedback mechanism receives moderate agreement (M=3.44, SD=1.250). The results reflect varying perceptions of school leadership across these aspects.

Table 7**The Impact of School Leadership on Diverse Aspects of a Positive School Environment: Head Teachers' Perspectives**

S. No	Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	The school's leadership has a clear vision for creating and sustaining a positive school environment.	60	4.02	.948
2	Leadership engages in strategic planning to ensure a positive impact on the overall school environment.	60	3.93	1.023
3	The leadership empowers staff by involving them in decision-making processes related to the school environment.	60	3.85	1.071
4	Leadership actively engages with the community to foster a positive and inclusive school environment.	60	3.82	1.066
5	The school leadership is committed to continuous improvement in enhancing the overall school environment.	60	3.88	1.059

The survey indicates positive perceptions of school leadership. Notably, there is recognition of a clear vision for a positive school environment (M=4.02, SD=.948) and engagement in strategic planning (M=3.93, SD=1.023). Staff empowerment in decision-making processes is perceived positively (M=3.85, SD=1.071). Additionally, there's acknowledgment of leadership's active community engagement (M=3.82, SD=1.066) and commitment to continuous improvement (M=3.88, SD=1.059). The standard deviations indicate varying levels of agreement among respondents.

Table 8**Pearson Correlations**

		Students Performance	Teacher Performance	Head Leadership	teacher
Students Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.615**	.328*	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.011	
	N	300	100	60	
Teacher Performance	Pearson Correlation	.615**	1	.336**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.009	
	N	100	100	60	
Head teacher Leadership	Pearson Correlation	.328*	.336**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	.009		
	N	60	60	60	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The correlation matrix presented here illuminates significant associations among the variables of "Students' Performance," "Teacher Performance," and "Head Teacher Leadership." Examining these correlations reveals a robust positive relationship ($r = 0.615$, $p < 0.01$) between students' and teachers' performance, indicating a substantive connection in their respective attributes or behaviors. Furthermore, a moderately positive correlation ($r = 0.328$, $p < 0.05$) is observed between students' performance and head teacher leadership, underscoring a statistically significant connection, albeit at a slightly reduced magnitude compared to the students-teacher correlation. Additionally, a pronounced positive correlation ($r = 0.336$, $p < 0.01$) emerges between teacher performance and head teacher leadership, emphasizing a substantial and statistically significant alignment in the professional attributes or conduct of teachers and head teachers. The statistical significance at the 0.01 and 0.05 levels underscores the reliability of these correlations, collectively highlighting the intricate and interrelated dynamics shaping the educational milieu, with the strength of these

associations ranging from moderate to robust.

Conclusion of the study

In conclusion, this study provides a comprehensive exploration of the intricate relationship between school leadership and the establishment of a positive school environment in secondary education in Balochistan, Pakistan. Through a meticulous analysis involving 300 students, 100 teachers, and 60 head teachers from the Makran Division, the research highlights positive sentiments regarding effective communication, endorsement of constructive initiatives, and shared appreciation for key leadership attributes such as a coherent vision, strategic planning, staff empowerment, community engagement, and a commitment to continuous improvement.

However, the study also identifies areas requiring attention, notably disparities in perceptions of inclusivity, equitable treatment, and collaborative culture among teachers. While strengths are evident in communication, student involvement, and teacher commendation, targeted interventions are essential to fortify inclusivity and equity within the educational landscape.

The correlative analysis reveals nuanced dynamics linking students' performance, teacher efficacy, and head teacher leadership, emphasizing the significant influence of leadership on both educational and instructional outcomes. A robust positive relationship ($r = 0.615$, $p < 0.01$) is found between students' and teachers' performance. There's also a moderately positive correlation ($r = 0.328$, $p < 0.05$) between students' performance and head teacher leadership, and a pronounced positive correlation ($r = 0.336$, $p < 0.01$) between teacher performance and head teacher leadership. Moreover, addressing the identified areas for improvement and capitalizing on positive dimensions unearthed in this study can serve as a foundation for refining the overall school environment. Consequently, these insights contribute significantly to advancing our understanding of the pivotal role played by leadership in influencing both educational and instructional outcomes within the secondary education landscape of Balochistan, Pakistan.

Recommendations

In light of the research findings, the following recommendations are provided to enhance the role of leadership in secondary schools:

- 1:** It is recommended to prioritize leadership development programs for head teachers to enhance their skills and adaptability, fostering effective school management.
- 2:** The government should authorize head teachers and organize programs to promote a culture of collaborative decision-making involving head teachers, teachers, and students, cultivating shared responsibility and inclusive governance.
- 3:** Awareness programs should be conducted with the help of the community and stakeholders, involving parents and counsellors in school activities and decisions, thus creating a supportive educational environment.
- 4:** There should be systematic processes for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of leadership practices to enable data-driven decisions, enhancing accountability, and performance assessment.
- 5:** The government should arrange professional learning opportunities for school head teachers and teachers to share best practices, collaborate, and collectively work towards continuous improvement in education quality.
- 6:** Advocates for policy reforms, including head teachers and stakeholders, should be involved in effective school leadership, incentivizing and recognizing excellence to create an environment conducive to educational success.
- 7:** There is a pressing need to encourage and support research initiatives on effective leadership practices in secondary education, contributing to a global knowledge base and informing evidence-based decision-making in educational policy and practice.

Implementing these brief recommendations can contribute to a more inclusive, supportive, and positive school climate in Balochistan's secondary education, benefiting students, teachers, and the broader educational community.

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