

Institutional Climate and Its Impact on Teachers' Retention: Mediated by Transformational Leadership: A Comprehensive Study of Public Sector Educational Institutions of Pakistan

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ARTICLE DETAILS

History

Received: May 2022

Available online: June 2022

Keywords

Institutional climate
Recognition of efforts
Workplace Incivility
Career Development
Reward Management
Transformational Leadership
Teacher's Retention

ABSTRACT

Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of institutional climate on teachers' retention mediated by transformational leadership.

Methodology:

A total of 230 participants were randomly selected from public sector educational institutions in Pakistan using a random sampling technique. The study used a quantitative research methodology. Institutional climate has been composed of four sub-variables including recognition of efforts, workplace incivility, career development, and reward management. The data was analyzed using statistical software (SPSS)

Findings:

The results of the study indicated that there was a significant relationship between institutional climate and teachers' retention. The findings of the study showed that transformational leadership had a significant impact on teachers' retention. There has also been identified that there is an existence of mediation in the model which indicates that transformational leadership mediates the relationship between institutional climate and teachers' retention at public sector universities in Pakistan.

Conclusion:

The study concludes and recommends that the government should take steps to improve the institutional climate to retain talented teachers.

Practical Implications:

Teachers' retention is a concern for educational institutions. The findings of this study suggest that leaders who create a supportive and stimulating environment for their employees are more likely to retain them. Leaders can use this information to cultivate a culture of innovation and creativity in their institutions, which in turn, would help to improve teacher retention.

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1. Introduction

Higher education institutions are in a search of people who can lead to better teaching ability and techniques (Chappell, 2005; Goldberg, 2005; Ezati, 2017). This is where transformational leadership comes into the picture (Anderson & Sun, 2015). Leaders at these institutions must be able to create an institutional climate that encourages teachers to stay with the institution and improve their teaching skills. Furthermore, they must be able to provide the necessary resources and support that will help teachers reach their full potential (Peachey, et al., 2014; Wang, et al., 2005).

A study by Wang, et al., (2005) found that transformational leadership is correlated with improved staff retention. The study found that transformational leadership is the key factor that leads to increased staff retention rates by 34%. This suggests that if an institution wants to improve its staff retention rate, it would require to improve factors that highly influence the institutional climate as well as the ability and approach of teachers who are often recognized as leaders in the workplace (Shirley, et al., 2020). Hence, it is clear that an institution's leadership has a big impact on the retention rate of its teachers. To ensure that their staff remains motivated and committed to their work, institutions would be well served to implement leadership strategies that emphasize the importance of staff retention (Shurbagi, 2014; Fessehatsion & Peng, 2021).

Overall, it is clear that transformational leadership has a significant impact on the retention rate of a talented workforce. Meanwhile, considering the fact of the significance of the institutional climate, it is clear that factors such as Recognition of efforts, Workplace Incivility, Career Development, and Reward Management are highly attached which can significantly influence workload and teachers' retention at public sector universities (Shirley, et al., 2020; Fessehatsion & Peng, 2021).

Recognition of efforts: Leaders should be able to recognize the hard work and dedication of their staff and reward them for their efforts. This can motivate staff to continue working hard, even in a complex working environment (Fessehatsion & Peng, 2021). Because the recognition of efforts is highly appreciated by public sector organizations around the globe (Kinman, 2019).

Workplace Incivility: Leaders can work to create an environment that is respectful and cooperative (Young, et al., 2021). This will help to foster a positive work environment, which in turn will encourage staff retention. In addition, leaders need to be able to handle difficult situations constructively. This will help to prevent them from becoming a negative force in the work environment and lead to greater productivity among staff (Walsh, et al., 2018).

Career Development: Leaders make an effort to provide their staff with opportunities for career development (Shaukat, 2022; Fikarlo, et al., 2019). This can help ensure that staff are both skilled and knowledgeable enough to meet the challenges of their work and can progress within their organization (Fikarlo, et al., 2019).

Reward Management: Leaders should provide adequate rewards for good performance. This can help to motivate staff and keep them focused on their goals (Murlis & Armstrong, 2004; Hassan, et al., 2021; Sulistiyani & Rahardja, 2018).

Public sector universities have a heightened sense of responsibility which in turn influences workload and teachers' retention rates. Employees at public sector universities are typically reluctant to the available job description and always stacked to their routine

workload. Workplace incivility, low career development opportunities, and lack of adequate rewards create a challenging work environment for teachers (Chappell, 2005). Some solutions to this problem could be increasing the available job description, providing career development opportunities, and awarding adequate rewards for good performance. Leaders at public sector universities should make an effort to create an environment that is supportive and cooperative to retain staff and promote productivity (Fessehatsion & Peng, 2021).

2. Literature Review

Pakistan is a developing country and faces many challenges, including a lack of resources, a rapidly growing population, and an education system in need of reform (Larik, 2021). These challenges have a significant impact on teachers' retention, as teachers are often the first to leave an institution due to a lack of job satisfaction or because they find other opportunities (Murtaza & Hui, 2021).

A study conducted by Moin & Hassan (2021), found that almost half of all teachers who left their jobs in the past year cited unsatisfactory working conditions as a major factor. Teachers also reported low morale and a lack of respect from management as reasons for leaving their jobs. In addition, countries with high population density and unemployment rates make it difficult for teachers to find new positions in the city (Moin & Hassan, 2021; Hassan, et al., 2021).

According to the researchers, the factors that highly influence institutional climate include Recognition of efforts, Workplace Incivility, Career Development, and Reward Management. Teachers' retention is a major issue in Pakistan, and the factors that influence it are complex. Institutions that manage teachers' retention well can help mitigate the challenges faced by teachers, such as a high population density and unemployment rates. Recognition of efforts, workplace incivility, career development, and reward management are all important factors in influencing teacher retention (Ezati, 2017).

However, despite these efforts, teachers in cities even with the larger population continue to leave in large numbers. This is a significant challenge from the perspective of public universities in Pakistan, as the country lacks the resources to replace these educators. Additionally, Pakistan's rapidly growing population places even more strain on the education system. A lack of resources and an education system that needs reform will continue to be major factors in teacher retention in Pakistan (Murtaza & Hui, 2021; Moin & Hassan, 2021)

2.1. Link between Institutional Climate and Teachers' Retention

Researchers have found that teachers who perceive their institution as supportive and collegial are more likely to remain in the profession will help enhance their self-belief and motivation to pay for the services (Suárez & Wright, 2019). In addition, another study showed that teachers who feel they have control over their teaching environment are less likely to leave (Justice, 2018). These findings suggest that improving institutional climate can be an important strategy for retaining quality teachers (Suárez & Wright, 2019; Miller, et al., 2020).

Based on these studies, it can be inferred that improving the institutional climate could help to retain quality teachers (Justice, 2018). However, more research is needed to fully understand the relationship between institutional climate and teachers' retention (Miller, et al., 2020). It would also be helpful to explore how other factors such as salary and

workload contribute to this relationship (Suárez & Wright, 2019; Miller, et al., 2020). Additionally, further studies are needed to identify effective strategies for improving institutional climate. Ultimately, this information will help policymakers and educators make informed decisions about how to best retain teachers in this fast-trending working environment (Young, 2018).

The factors of the Institutional climate including recognition of efforts, workplace incivility, career development, and reward management have been identified to have a positive impact on teachers' retention (Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018). The following factors have been found to hurt teachers' retention: low salary, lack of job security, classroom control, and workload (Miller, et al., 2020).

Based on the findings of the research, it can be inferred that improving the institutional climate could help to retain quality teachers (Young, 2018; Suárez & Wright, 2019). Therefore, we develop hypothesis 1 of the study which claims that:

H₁: There is a positive impact of institutional climate on teacher retention at public sector universities in Pakistan.

2.2. Link between Institutional Climate and Transformational Leadership (IC & TL)

Transformational leadership is often associated with high levels of organizational trust and engagement, which in turn can be linked to an organization's institutional climate. In a study by Liu (2021), it was found that when employees perceive their leader as supportive and dedicated to their development, they are more likely to engage in innovative behaviors and develop transformational leadership qualities in their personality. Conversely, when employees feel like their leader is not supportive or does not care about their development, they are more likely to be less engaged in their work (Zhang, et al., 2018).

Similarly, a study by Anderson & Sun (2015), found that when leaders create an environment that is supportive of change, employees are more likely to embrace new ideas and initiatives. Conversely, when leaders do not encourage change, employees are less likely to embrace new ideas. These findings suggest that an organization's institutional climate plays an important role in influencing how transformational leadership is used and perceived by employees (Anderson & Sun, 2015).

Based on these studies, it can be inferred that an organization's institutional climate can greatly influence the use of transformative leadership and its overall effectiveness (Anderson & Sun, 2015; Zhang, et al., 2018). It is therefore assumed that:

H₂: Institutional climate has a positive impact on transformational leadership at public sector universities in Pakistan.

2.3. Link between Transformational Leadership and Teachers' Retention

Transformational leadership has been linked to teachers' retention through several different means. Transformational leadership has been shown to increase teachers' job satisfaction and motivation, which in turn leads to increased teaching effectiveness (Bush, 2018; Phulpoto, et al., 2021).

Additionally, transformational leaders have also been found to be more likely to develop relationships with their staff that are supportive and caring (Peachey, et al., 2014). These

relationships are key to teacher retention because they can create a sense of community among teachers and provide a foundation for continued professional development (Miller, et al., 2020). Finally, transformational leaders are more likely to identify and address teachers' concerns early on in their careers (Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018; Peachey, et al., 2014). These interventions can help to build trust and confidence in the teacher-leader relationship, which can lead to increased teacher retention (Peachey, et al., 2014).

There is some evidence that transformational leadership may also play a role in teachers' attrition rates. One study found that teachers who reported feeling engaged by their leaders were less likely to contribute to the workplace. Additionally, another study found that teachers who felt valued by their leaders were more likely to remain in the classroom (Miller, et al., 2020). These findings suggest that transformational leadership may be an important factor in retaining high-quality teachers (Peachey, et al., 2014; Miller, et al., 2020). Overall, there is evidence that transformational leadership can play a role in teacher retention. Thus, we assume that:

H₃: Transformational leadership has a positive impact on teachers' retention at public sector universities in Pakistan.

2.4. Link between Institutional Climate and Teachers' Retention Mediated by Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership has been found to play an important role in teacher retention (Boyd et al., 2016; Dillon, 2012). Boyd et al. (2016) proposed that transformational leadership is a key factor in contributing to teacher retention and professional development. They argued that transformational leaders establish a climate that supports innovation and change, which can support teachers' creativity and drive their professional development. In addition, Shurbagi (2014), found that a transformational leader's willingness to experiment and take risks is also associated with teacher retention. This suggests that a transformative leader creates an environment where teachers feel appreciated and supported in their efforts to innovate and change (Judeh & Abou-Moghli, 2019).

Transformational leadership is highly associated with the institutional climate in particular the factors including recognition of efforts, workplace incivility, career development, and reward management support a positive image of the institutional climate and teacher retention (Zhang, et al., 2018; Liu, 2021). These findings suggest that a good institutional climate is critical for teacher retention and that transformational leadership can play an important role in creating a positive environment that supports innovation and change. In addition, it appears that other factors such as career development and reward management support may also contribute to the positive impact of the institutional climate on teacher retention (Zhang, et al., 2018).

The findings support the existence of the mediation of transformational leadership between institutional climate and teachers' retention. Thus, the fourth hypothesis of the study states that:

H₄: Transformational leadership mediates the relationship between institutional climate and teachers' retention at public sector universities in Pakistan.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Model

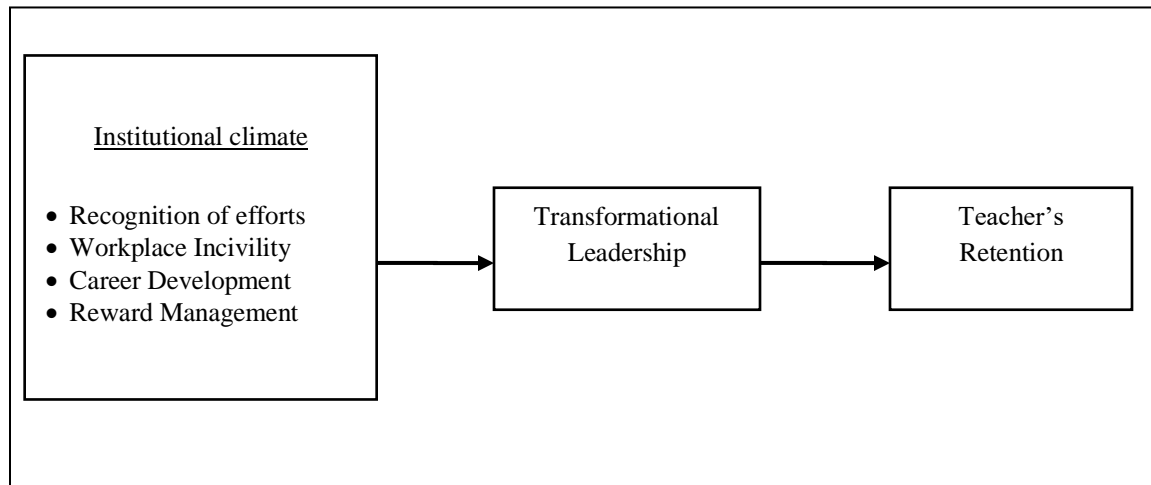


Figure.1. Research Model
Source: Author's own Elaboration

3.2. Research Methods

This research paper is comprehensive and will comprise three parts: A literature review, a study of the research methodologies employed by various scholars in this field, and an empirical study.

A literature review was conducted to identify the various studies that have been conducted on the impact of institutional climate on teachers' retention. Furthermore, different research methodologies employed by scholars in this field will be examined in depth. Finally, an empirical study was conducted to analyze the impact of institutional climate on teachers' retention in a public sector educational institution in Pakistan.

The positivism philosophy has been used as the research methodology in this study. The tenets of positivism state that all knowledge is constructed by humans and that there are no objective truths (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). Consequently, the findings of this study should be interpreted as tentative and subject to further revision.

This is a quantitative research study and the data was collected with the help of a self-explanatory questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to measure the constructs of institutional climate, transformational leadership, and teachers' retention. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis.

The target population was public sector universities of Pakistan and the random sampling technique was used to collect the data. The sample size of the study is 230 teachers from the public sector universities in Pakistan.

The scale was adopted from the previous studies and it was found that the data was reliable and valid. For identifying the reliability in the scale, a test was applied using SPSS named 'Cronbach's Alpha'. Which indicated that the scale is reliable. Furthermore, all important findings of the study are given and discussed in the section as follows.

4. Results and Analysis

The findings of this study were carried out using statistical software (SPSS). The findings, starting with discussing the demographic section of the questionnaire, have been given and explained as follows.

Table.1. Demographics

| Item | Option | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------|-------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Gender | Male | 168 | 73.0 |
| | Female | 62 | 27.0 |
| Education | Masters | 53 | 23.0 |
| | M.Phil. / MS degree | 124 | 53.9 |
| | PhD. | 53 | 23.0 |
| Age | 25-30 | 39 | 17.0 |
| | 31-36 | 85 | 37.0 |
| | 37-44 | 84 | 36.5 |
| | 45 above | 22 | 9.6 |
| Designation | Teaching Assistant | 20 | 8.7 |
| | Research Associate | 36 | 15.7 |
| | Visiting Faculty Member | 57 | 24.8 |
| | Lecturer | 80 | 34.8 |
| | Assistant Professor | 13 | 5.7 |
| | Associate Professor | 18 | 7.8 |
| | Professor | 6 | 2.6 |
| Total | | 230 | 100.0 |

Source: Author's own Elaboration

Table 1 shows the findings of the demographics of the sample of study participants. It shows that the total number of participants was 230, among them 168 were male and 62 were female. That is 73 and 27 percent respectively. The majority of the participants of this study are having minimum educational degree M.Phil. or MS degree (18 years) of education. That is 124 in numbers and 53.9% of the total sample of the study. 85 participants of the study had an age of 31-36 years whereas, the second maximum category is participants having age group of 37-44 years and that is 36.5% of the total sample of the study. 34.8% of the sample of study are lecturers by designation and the second-largest proportionate includes visiting faculty members and that is 24.8% of the total sample of the study.

Table.2. Reliability Statistics

| Scale | Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items | Reference |
|-----------------------------|------------------|------------|----------------------|
| Institutional Climate | .849 | 12 | (Goldberg, 2005) |
| Transformational Leadership | .876 | 05 | (Wang, et al., 2005) |
| Teacher's Retention | .864 | 04 | (Justice, 2018) |
| Total | .861 | 21 | |

Source: Author's own Elaboration

The reliability statistics suggest that the scale is validated and reliable. As it has been adapted from the previous studies as well as the Cronbach's Alpha value of the scale is more than 70% criteria (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010) in all three cases i.e. Institutional climate (84.9%), transformational leadership (87.6%), and teacher's retention (86.4%).

Table.3. Correlation Matrix

| | Mean | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|------|------|---|
| Gender | 1.27 | .445 | | | |
| Age | 2.39 | .878 | | | |
| Education | 2.00 | .680 | | | |
| 1 Institutional Climate | 51.3522 | 6.13689 | 1 | | |
| 2 Transformational Leadership | 21.3435 | 2.36778 | .520 | 1 | |
| 3 Teacher's Retention | 16.8957 | 2.10167 | .146 | .511 | 1 |

Source: Author's own Elaboration

Table 3 is showing the correlation between all three variables of the study. The findings are in line with the previous research studies which claim that there is a positive correlation between institutional climate and transformational leadership i.e. (Bush, 2018; Peachey, et al., 2014) and teachers' retention i.e. (Justice, 2018; Fessehatsion & Peng, 2021; Moin & Hassan, 2021). In this study, we identified that the highest correlation is between institutional climate and transformational leadership which is 52%, whereas, the correlation between transformational leadership and teachers' retention is also much stronger and more significant as it is 51.1%. But there is particle correlation has been identified between institutional climate and teachers' retention and that is only 14.6%. That is probably because the public sector universities have less influence on the institutional climate on the retention of teachers. This will also be seen and confirmed with the values of the linear regression analysis to see how teachers' retention has been influenced by the institutional climate in this case. The findings of the regression analysis are stated as follows.

Table.4. Regression Analysis

| Path | | R Square | Beta | T-Test | Sig | Conclusion |
|------------------|----------|----------|------|--------|------|-------------|
| H1: IC → TR | | .220 | .263 | 2.926 | .000 | H1 Accepted |
| H2: IC → TL | | .271 | .520 | 9.199 | .000 | H2 Accepted |
| H3: TL → TR | | .220 | .341 | 4.041 | .000 | H3 Accepted |
| H4: IC → TL → TR | Direct | .2707 | .529 | 9.126 | .000 | H4 Accepted |
| | Indirect | .221 | .362 | 4.562 | .000 | |

Note: IC = Institutional Climate, TL = Transformational Leadership, TR = Teacher's Retention

Source: Author's own Elaboration

There are total of four assumptions developed in the literature review section. This assumption includes four paths of the research model i.e.

H₁: A positive impact of institutional climate on teachers' retention.

H₂: Institutional climate has a positive impact on transformational leadership.

H₃: Transformational leadership has a positive impact on teachers' retention.

H₄: Transformational leadership mediates the relationship between institutional climate and teacher retention at public sector universities in Pakistan.

The findings suggest that the model fitness in the path of the impact of institutional climate on teachers' retention is 22% whereas, the value of the coefficient (Beta) is 26.3% and the T-test value is also outside of the region of 1.8 to -1.8 that shows that there is a positive and significant impact of institutional climate on teachers' retention in the case of public sector universities in Pakistan. Thus, hypothesis one is accepted. These findings are also in line with the findings of previous studies i.e., Justice (2018), who found that teachers who feel they have control over their teaching environment are less likely to leave. Whereas, Geiger & Pivovarov (2018) also identified that the factors of the Institutional climate including recognition of efforts, workplace incivility, career development, and reward management have a positive impact on teachers' retention in workplace.

Institutional climate has also been identified to have a positive impact on transformational leadership. The model fitness is .271, coefficient value is .520 which shows a strong influence. Meanwhile, the T-test is 9.199 and the alpha is .000. These values suggest that the institutional climate has a strong, positive, and significant impact on transformational leadership at public sector universities in Pakistan. Previously, researchers have also found that institutional climate has a positive impact on transformational leadership. In a study by Liu (2021), it was found that when employees perceive their leader as supportive and dedicated to their development, they are more likely to engage in innovative behaviors and develop transformational leadership qualities in their personality. Similarly, a study by Anderson & Sun (2015), found that when leaders create an environment that is supportive of change, employees are more likely to embrace new ideas and initiatives.

The third hypothesis of the study assumed that transformational leadership influences positively teachers' retention. The findings suggest that model fitness (.220), beta is .341, t-test value is 4.041, and significance value is .000 which shows that there is evidence of a strong and positive impact of transformational leadership on teachers' retention at public sector universities in Pakistan. The empirical evidence is well supported by the theoretical evidence as stated in the second section of the study i.e. literature review.

Table 4 also suggests that there is an existence of mediation in the model. As the indirect coefficient value is diluted by the direct impact of the institutional climate in transformational leadership, which dilutes from 52.9% to 36.2%. Both direct and indirect impacts in the path show an alpha value of .000 which indicates that the path is significant. The findings are in line with the previous research studies as they have been discussed in the literature review, the second section of the study.

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of institutional climate on teachers' retention: mediated by transformational leadership - A comprehensive study of public sector educational institutions of Pakistan. It was found that Pakistan is a developing country and faces many challenges, including a lack of resources, a rapidly growing population, and an education system in need of reform (Larik, 2021). These challenges have a significant impact on teachers' retention, as teachers are often the first to leave an institution due to a lack of job satisfaction or because they find other opportunities (Murtaza & Hui, 2021).

This is a quantitative research study and the data was collected with the help of a self-explanatory questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to measure the constructs of institutional climate, transformational leadership, and teachers' retention. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis. The target population was public sector universities of Pakistan and the random sampling technique was used to collect the data. The sample size of the study is 230 teachers from the public sector universities in Pakistan.

The findings of the study indicated that there was a significant relationship between institutional climate and teachers' retention. In addition, the results showed that there was a significant relationship between transformational leadership and teachers' retention. The findings also suggest that there is an existence of mediation in the model. As the indirect coefficient value is diluted by the direct impact of the institutional climate in transformational leadership, which dilutes from 52.9% to 36.2%. Both direct and indirect impacts in the path show an alpha value of .000 which indicates that the path is

significant. The findings are in line with the previous research studies as they have been discussed in the literature review, the second section of the study.

5.1. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations can be made:

1. Public sector universities should create an institutional climate that is supportive of teachers' retention. This will help to ensure that talented educators remain in the education sector.
2. Leaders who can promote transformational change within an institution are likely to have a positive impact on teacher retention. These leaders need to demonstrate a clear commitment to innovation and reform, as well as a genuine interest in their employees' well-being.
3. Policies and practices that support teacher mobility are also likely to be beneficial in terms of retention. This includes initiatives that offer competitive salaries and benefits, as well as opportunities for professional development.
4. To create an environment that is conducive to retaining talented educators, institutions should focus on developing a culture of collaboration and continuous learning among all stakeholders.

Overall, the findings of this study suggest that institutional climate and transformational leadership can play a critical role in influencing teacher retention. By creating an institutional climate that is supportive of educators, leaders who can promote reform and innovation, and policies and practices that support teacher mobility, public sector universities can help to ensure that talented educators remain in the education sector.

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