

INTEGRITY IN THE CLASSROOM: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORKPLACE ETHICS AND TEACHERS' JOB SATISFACTION IN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract

The ethical climate experienced at work is an important determinant of the health of the institution, employee performance and satisfaction in organizations of the modern era. The present empirical study was conducted to explore the direct effect of workplace ethical climate on job satisfaction of school teachers in Public Sector Elementary Schools of District Pakpattan, Punjab, Pakistan. This study quantitatively explored the relationship between shared perceptions of systematic and casual ethical boundaries and the contentment of early educators through a theoretical lens that builds on the ethics climate paradigm of Victor and Cullen and the value-percept theory of Locke. The approach used was positivist paradigm with descriptive-correlational survey research design, and the population of the study was primary school teachers in both public and managed schools in both rural and urban areas, randomly sampled of 400 primary school teachers. Two research instruments specifically designed to measure data were used: The Multi-Dimensional Ethical Climate Scale (MDECS) with dimensions Self-interest, Personal Morality, School Profit, Team Interest, Efficiency, and Social Responsibility and the Job Satisfaction Scale (JSS) by Steven W. Schmidt (focus: Satisfaction with Training, and Employee Feelings about Development). Descriptive analytic, Cronbach's alpha reliability indices, independent samples t-tests, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, and simple linear regression analysis were used to analyze the data. The factor-wise internal consistency values were found to be very high ranging from 0.670 to 0.876. Results showed that there was a statistically significant, strong positive correlation between school ethical climate and teachers' job satisfaction ($r = 0.636, p < 0.001$). Moreover, the results of linear regression analytics show that the ethical atmosphere is a strong positive predictor of teachers' job happiness, explaining a high amount of variance in teachers' satisfaction profiles ($B = 0.635, t = 14.824, p < 0.001$). Remarkably, independent samples t-test analysis revealed that there were no significant differences between the overall teachers' perception of the institutional ethical climate between males and females suggesting that a clear and ethical environment is beneficial to both male and female scholars. School leaders, policy makers, and primary education leaders need to design caring, organized, collaborative work environments and to intentionally establish clear leadership guidelines and strategies for involving and engaging peers to ensure optimal use of institutional resources, high-quality teaching staff, and improved teaching results.

Keywords: *Ethical Climate, Job Satisfaction, District Pakpattan, Primary School Teachers, Educational Management, Quantitative Evaluation*

1. Introduction

Pedagogy requires a practitioner who not only understands the context and pedagogy but also has the psychological assurance to completely form, mould and nurture the impressionable minds of youth. Teaching is the noblest of all the professions globally and is the foundation of the society's development and moral reproduction. Teachers are not just transmitters of mainstream curriculum but rather are important catalyst characters of the deep change in society, socioeconomic mobility, and civic responsibility in contemporary societies. Socially and historically, a teaching profession in developing areas is cloaked in sophisticated imagery, from historical connections with institutional oppression to socio-structural classism to traditional understanding of localized intellectual royalty. It is a profession, in a way, that is very much an ethical one where the interactions of a day-to-day nature in the institution require conscious decisions in order to ensure that the learning process is improved, equitable and

aligned to the context. The multifaceted drivers behind teachers' choice to take this challenging journey uncover a tapestry of professional aspirations, self-actualisation goals and subsequent moral obligations (Mallillin, 2021).

In generic terms, ethics relate comprehensively to the foundational choices, principles, and frameworks determining right from wrong actions within human interactions. In situations of an organizational or corporate setting, however, ethics is an issue of strict adherence to a set of institutional rules and regulations, of transparency within the structure, and of proper, respectful interaction with other members, supervisors and peripheral parties. Professional workplace ethics include the basic elements of personal value systems internalized, institutionalized practices in place, and shared moral frameworks that govern an organization's behavioral patterns in close alignment with its core purpose and societal needs (Dewey & Tufts, 2022). Important point: A clear code of conduct in the workplace gives employees some extra independence and professional freedom. It helps to set boundaries and explain fundamental operating assumptions, which enables people to make decisions with confidence when there is uncertainty. As a result, in the presence of clear ethical boundaries, employees' higher-order cognitive thinking skills are improved, and they gain much greater awareness, analysis, and responsibility in their administrative and professional decisions.

When there are explicit ethical requirements embedded in a systematic way, any academic institution that does so succeeds in generating a sustainable ethic, one in which employees do their complicated work, in a highly supportive, non-threatening and conducive workspace environment (Bryndin, 2021). The major idea of the organizational ethical climate, as clearly defined by today's organizational architects, is the split consciousness of overt strategies and covert approaches—both formal and informal, both systematized and casual—that together shape the behavioral presumptions and normative expectations for ethical conduct in an organization or corporate enterprise that is doing something (Sheather et al., 2023). The ethical climate is not a simple trait of one member, but a multi-dimensional phenomenon of an organization. It covers a wide range of institutional sizes, from strictly legalistic compliance with legal laws and formal codes to careful compliance with internal administrative rules, a balance of utilitarian outcomes, professional autonomy of employees and a genuine and integral concern for the welfare of others (Christensen, Lee, & Bingham, 2022).

In the primary educational context, the primary school teachers' ethical conduct, commitment to teaching, and the mindset are deeply shaped by the prevailing educational atmosphere in the school. Research findings confirm that an educational institution with a positive, cooperative, transparent and conducive ethical climate has significantly reduced the likelihood of organizational members engaging in negative, counterproductive and unethical behavior. At the same time, they are very willing to model high-standards of pro-social and ethical behavior (McCorvey & Woehr, 2022). Teachers naturally exhibit considerable professional integrity when they feel their parent organisation is supportive, recognising and valuing strong values and values-driven practice. These institutional contexts are well developed by proactive ethical leadership, transparent decision making and management of external workplace pressures with compassion. A stable, positive ethical climate directly correlates to the actual manifestation of school citizenship behaviors (OCB) and results in a lasting feeling of general job satisfaction and personal health and well-being. In addition, the institutional moral climate has an impact on, and reinforces, the individual moral climate over time, creating a synergistic cycle to optimize moral behaviour and employment retention. Thus, it is imperative to create a positive ethical climate to promote continued ethical behavior and overall wellness in educational institutions.

On the other hand, employee satisfaction is a basic pillar of organizational psychology, as it is the overall feeling of comfort, contentment, and obvious joy felt by employees in their

work environment. Teacher job satisfaction is a summary of some of the aspects of a teacher's daily work that are most enjoyable and rewarding. An important measure that reflects an individual's intrinsic attraction to the occupation and some external aspects of the occupation (Pool & Pool, 2007). The intrinsic/extrinsic factor configuration on which a person's unique job satisfaction profile is constantly effected is dynamic (Goetz et al., 2012). Intrinsic factors have a deep and inherent link to the actual content, intellectual demands and psychological feedback elements of the task itself, while extrinsic factors relate to the socio-physical work environment, administrative systems and structures. The key principles that regulate job satisfaction are active support from family members, local existential conditions, the procurement of the job and its normal remuneration, and the realization of personal self-actualization, according to contemporary empirical categorizations (George & Zakariya, 2018). Inspiration through intrinsic parameters forces them to go a bit deeper in their unique profession and to make the most of their performance in the classroom on a daily basis, while inspiration through extrinsic parameters is important for inspiring them to stay in the specific organization for a longer term (Dou, Devos, & Valcke, 2017).

Primary school teachers find localized activities in the classroom to be intrinsically rewarding, and they experience meaningful, transformative relationships with students, see students' mental development, and have pedagogical autonomy and independence in the classroom (Donavan, Brown, & Mowen, 2004). By contrast, factors that are outside of the teacher's immediate sphere of responsibility, like pay scales, how supervisors treat teachers, how much work is required from teachers, or how society views them, form the extrinsic framework (Ilham, 2018). There is educational literature that provides clear evidence of the harmful effect that poor physical working conditions, poor relations with other staff members, and poor leadership and management of the school has on teacher satisfaction. In addition, modern teachers encounter a flow of disruptive external factors such as fast organizational changes, large amounts of paperwork to be reported, high pressure from political power structures, lack of classroom discipline in schools, constant conflict between work and family responsibilities, and negative criticism in the media (Genu, 2019). It is clear from the above that relationships with co-workers and similar moral values are a major factor in job satisfaction and if employees have cooperative, supportive and ethically sound working relationships with their co-workers, they are likely to be satisfied; but if they have negative working relationships with other employees, they will soon become unhappy (Arekar, Jain, Desphande & Sherin, 2016).

1.1 Workplace Ethics and Teachers' Job Satisfaction: The Missing Link

Although extensive independent research has been conducted on the unique paths of institutional moral climates and individual employee actions, there is still significant need to thoroughly integrate the precise relationship between institutional ethical climate and primary teachers' job satisfaction in evolving public education systems. Studies conducted before this one have clearly shown that there is a strong positive connection between a school principal's ethical leadership style and the job satisfaction of teachers at a local level, and that there exists a strong correlation between the school principal's ethical leadership and the overall school's ethical climate (Cansoy, Parlar, & Türkoğlu, 2021). Based on the parallel empirical research, it is found that ethical leadership is active which in turn helps to systematically increase the level of job satisfaction of the people who work in the grassroots units. This network of relationships points to the fact that the role of workplace spirituality is partially mediating and individual self-efficacy is significantly moderating the long-term effect of ethical leadership on satisfaction indicators. Thus, in the workplace, ethics and psychological self-efficacy profiles of workers are primary and interrelated predictors of organizational satisfaction. The establishment of a collaborative, supportive, and communicative teaching relationship between

colleagues in the teaching training process can be used as a good teaching model to directly reduce the occupational stress of teachers, buffer the occupational risks, and eliminate the negative structural factors that frequently affect teachers' career stability (Mallillin, 2021). The well-being of teachers in their work is an inseparable component of overall teacher job satisfaction and contributes to teacher retention in the institution as teachers often experience positive emotions in the workplace (Dreer 2024). In addition, it can be seen that the performance models of the organizations suggest that not all dimensions of a multidimensional work ethic profile are directly connected to the performance of the tasks, but some special dimensions such as the orientation towards hard work have a strong direct statistically significant effect on task performance, and the job satisfaction variable plays a powerful role as a mediator between the different dimensions of the multidimensional work ethic profile and the performance of the tasks themselves (Wahyudi, Haryono, Riyani & Harsono, 2013). The systemic outcomes of a school's goals and missions are directly influenced by a school's ethical climate. If all constituent members openly adhere to a clear ethical standard, the collaborative process is much more productive, and the amount of work that is done increases by a factor of many times. On the other hand, failing to address these core climate factors may result in dramatic losses of institutional productivity, and a rapid degradation of employee job satisfaction (Moore, 2012). Service quality by educators will be inherently better if they are very satisfied with their jobs, and only a positive ethical climate will create that satisfaction. The maintenance of a high ethical climate is a necessary structural condition if educational managers want to achieve the highest quality of pedagogical delivery and service quality (Chao, Ku, Wang, & Lin, 2016). The findings indicated a strong connection between job satisfaction and the ethical climate, and that within a safe ethical context, all educators enjoy high levels of professional comfort in their pedagogical work, which consequently enhances the motivation, interest, and excitement that educators feel in their pedagogical roles. The education sector, being the main pillar of a nation's socio-economic development, makes any localized issue with teachers become an isolated issue. Rather, it is a critical situation for the whole country. Inadequate educational outcomes are the inevitable consequence of dissatisfied teachers, who are tasked with educating and training the youth, on a systemic level (Burak, 2022).

1.2 Problem Statement

Educational institutions in public elementary schools in Pakistan are heavily constrained in socio-economic, administrative and structural terms, especially in rural-urban districts of the country such as District Pakpattan. These primary institutions experience a number of difficult challenges, such as teachers having too much to do, not having enough resources, rigid and top-down bureaucratic structures, little support from parents and parents having very few opportunities to advance themselves professionally. These chronic stressors are often expressed as job burnout, falling classroom scores, high teacher turnover and persistent dissatisfaction with the job. Access to material inputs or top-down accountability regimes are still the focus of the administrative solutions that have traditionally been used, but they leave out the essential socio-psychological and moral aspects of the educational workspace. Organizational ethical climate is a key, but under-attention, factor in the institutional development and teacher psychological well-being. It is critically important to identify and assess which variables can be effective in reducing stress and systematically increase the job satisfaction of primary school teachers. It is important to point out however that there is little empirical, local research that investigates the impact of the internal moral climate on the professional satisfaction of primary teachers in this particular geographical context. As a direct result of this, the clear empirical purpose of this study was to present a diagnostic model of the

role of workplace ethical climate on job satisfaction of primary school teachers in District Pakpattan, to fill the void in educational management literature.

1.3 Research Objectives

Based on this, the following explicit research objectives were formulated for the empirical investigation:

1. To find out the direct effect of ethical climate of the workplace on teacher's job satisfaction of Primary Schools of District Pakpattan.
2. To explore the statistical nature and importance of the relationship between S.E.I. and teacher job satisfaction.
3. To find out and assess the existing level of teacher satisfaction in primary school in District Pakpattan.
4. To investigate if there are statistically significant differences between the perceptions of the institutional ethical climate and job satisfaction profiles of male and female primary school teachers.

1.4 Research Questions

This study aimed to answer the following critical research questions in detail:

1. What is the exact quantitative effect of ethical climate in the workplace on the job satisfaction of primary school teachers in District Pakpattan?
2. Do primary school teachers' job satisfaction and the institutional ethical climate have a statistically significant positive relationship?
3. Teacher job satisfaction at present and prevalence in Primary schools of District Pakpattan?
4. Is there a significant difference between the perceptions of the school ethical climate and/or job satisfaction of the male and female primary school teachers?

2. Literature Review

Two variables of particular interest—workplace ethical climate and employee job satisfaction—are explored in this section using a detailed and thorough examination of the theoretical approaches and previous empirical studies to these concepts. A thorough search of the literature enables the researcher to develop a solid understanding of past organizational issues, understand the competing theoretical viewpoints, and place the present research study in the context of past administrative frameworks. The idea of the organizational ethical climate has been a subject of great academic interest for the last few decades in the field of corporate and educational management literature. It is generally understood as a set of organizational members' shared perceptions of the moral nature of behavior and the systematic means by which organization members deal with moral issues (Newman, Round, Bhattacharya, & Roy, 2017). A school's moral climate is not a one-way street; rather, it is a powerful and pervasive phenomenon that sets out clear moral rules and expectations for everyday school life (Simha & Cullen, 2012).

2.1 Theoretical Framework of Ethical Climate

The basic model for examining organizational ethical climates was originally developed by Victor and Cullen (1992), who created a model based on two polar constructs: the dominant ethical philosophy used (Egoism, Benevolence, and Principle) and the locus of analysis or commitment (Individual, Local, and Cosmopolitan). Based on this conceptual cross-classification, nine potential variants of organizational climates can be created, with five distinct ones being empirically predominant in the literature at hand: Instrumental climates (which focus primarily on maximizing self-interest and financial parameters), Caring climates (which focus on the overall well-being and development of the collective community), Rule climates (which are bound strictly to the rigid and meticulous enforcement of institutional

regulations and policies), Law/Code climates (which are aligned completely with external legal statutes and professional codes of conduct), and Independence climates (which foster professional autonomy and empower employees to make decisions based on deeply internalized moral values) (Fritzsche, 2000). In schools, the common mix of these climates helps shape the kind of environment teachers have, either a supportive, highly inclusive or a high stress, deeply alienating one. A number of empirical studies using Victor and Cullen's work in different organisation contexts demonstrate the strong regularity of the behavioral patterns found in varying climates. For example, negative and unethical behaviours in workplaces are often started in instrumental climates because people focus on personal benefit rather than on group values. On the other hand, caring and principled climates produce the highest organizational commitment baseline index, which maximizes the alignment of employees and minimizes destructive conflict within the workplace (Najafi, Karimi, Ghahramani Fard, & Rezvani, 2010). There are several different models of modern organizational research that operationalize these dynamics, such as the procedural model which conceptualizes the ethical climate as a dynamic process that evolves continuously and is tightly connected with other inputs of the structure, psychological well-being of employees and the subsequent behavioural consequences (Dalmolin, Lanes, Bernardi, & Ramos, 2022). At the same time, the shared perception model highlights that when the team shares perception of ethical norms, it creates clear and unquestionable boundaries for acceptable day-to-day professional conduct (Essex et al., 2023). Additionally, using a social identity perspective enables researchers to compare the responses of employees to an ethical climate based on interest with one based on a strong sense of professional friendship and collaboration (Teresi et al., 2019).

2.2 Core Dimensions of Workplace Ethical Climate

A workplace ethical climate as a guide for assessing the moral climate in primary schools is a contemporary research that combines the workplace ethical climate into six operational dimensions as described below:

Self-Interest: This dimension rates how strong organizational members' focus is on their own interest or their personal security and self-serving results as compared to the overall welfare or primary mission of the institution. Such a hyper-competitive and protective pedagogical approach by teachers in the instrumental self-interest orientation of the school is severely limiting the collaborative pedagogical development (Verma & Biswas, 2023).

Personal Morality: The extent to which employees use their deeply internalized personal values, individual conscience and personal moral codes as guides when making complex moral decisions and making everyday administrative decisions in a school environment (Bryndin, 2021).

School Profit and Interest: When the dimension is transposed to the public educational sectors, it is the collective emphasis on efficiency at the school, reducing waste in the resources, maximizing standardized performance measures, and ensuring the broader socio-structural and economic interests of the school organization (Moore, 2012).

Team Interest: This dimension measures the degree of team unity, support and alignment among teachers. A high level of team interest brings together a very co-operative working environment in which teachers may collaborate with one another towards common teaching objectives, willingly transfer valuable resources and address systemic issues together (Verma & Biswas, 2023).

Efficiency: It assesses the streamline, optimization of resources and competence of pedagogical and administrative work performed daily. High institutional efficiency empowers

teachers not to be overwhelmed by repetitive bureaucratic procedures, and helps them concentrate their main energy on classroom performance (Chao et al., 2016).

Social Responsibility: This dimension assesses how actively the school engages in wider community involvement, the level of compliance with the law and the development of ethical values that have direct impact on the country's long-term socio-economic development and moral improvement (Auzoult & Mazilescu, 2021).

2.3 Contextualizing Teacher Job Satisfaction

Teacher job satisfaction is a key multi-faceted construct, which directly impacts the emotional stability of an educator, job commitment, and everyday teaching practice. Job satisfaction is defined as a pleasurable or positive emotional state that occurs when individuals evaluate their job experiences relative to what they desire and/or value from the profession (Locke's value-percept theory). In the primary education context, this satisfaction profile is strongly influenced by the intricate interplay of internal professional aspirations and external institutional constraints (Pool & Pool, 2007). It is important to analyze the multifaceted nature of teacher satisfaction and to distinguish between intrinsic, extrinsic and interpersonal dimensions. Intrinsic satisfaction is found within the very act of the pedagogy, for instance, deep delight in mentoring young students, having control over classroom teaching or realizing a sense of professional self-actualization. By contrast, extrinsic satisfaction is completely reliant on external inputs, such as salary bands, advancement opportunities, fringe benefits, and physical conditions of school facilities, which are all governed by administrative systems (Goetz et al., 2012; Dou et al., 2017).

One of the main sub-areas that affect teacher satisfaction today is specifically linked to the satisfaction of institutional training and professional development. Continual pedagogical adaptation in primary education, and teachers' increasing sense of competence and efficacy in their profession that can be encouraged by the provision of high-quality and accessible training programs, has a powerful impact on overall career satisfaction (Schmidt, 2007). On the other hand, if teachers do not feel their school gives them sufficient professional development or actively neglects their own professional development, they have strong feelings of professional stagnation and emotional exhaustion. In addition, a teacher's personal emotions about his/her potential can be a key emotional indicator. In the eyes of teachers, a sense of being valued, supported and rewarded for their involvement with professional development shows to be a clear indicator of organizational commitment and workplace happiness, with teachers exhibiting significantly higher levels of these when they feel valued, supported and rewarded for their participation (Dreer, 2024). In conclusion, the development of an internal school climate that is transparent, moral and ethically supportive is likely the best way to support the mental health of primary school teachers and enhance job satisfaction, considering the many severe external stressors teachers are faced with, such as excessive workload, strict structures, insufficient infrastructure and poor perceptions of teachers from society (Hefny, 2021; Genu, 2019).

3. Research Methodology

Research methodology is the systematic, organised plan that investigators carefully use to investigate their hypotheses, solve their research problems and develop valid generalisable knowledge. It involves the systematic procedures of drawing out target population, representative sampling engineering, designing of research instrument, validation procedures, administration of data collection procedures, and data statistical analysis after collection (Bhattacharyya, 2006). This empirical investigation was based on positivist research paradigm that states that social phenomena can be quantified, measured and tested and analyzed empirically and statistically in a concrete and object manner. The study used a quantitative,

descriptive-correlational survey research design to achieve the stated objectives. This method is very useful in collecting primary data from a large number of people who are spread out in a wide area, and can accurately determine the baseline data for the variables and the nature of the statistical relationship between the institutional ethical climate and the primary teacher satisfaction profiles (Holton, 2008).

This study's conceptual framework places the ethical climate of the workplace as the main independent variable (IV) and teacher job satisfaction as the focus dependent variable (DV). The independent variable is represented on six different dimensions: Self-interest, Personal Morality, School Profit, Team Interest, Efficiency, and Social Responsibility. The dependent variable is operationalized in the domain of Satisfaction with Training and Employee Feelings about Development within the framework of the standard paradigm offered by Steven W. Schmidt. The study seeks to quantify the direct statistical relationship between the IV and the DV, and to determine if any demographic variables (gender) are statistically significant in terms of differentiating the perception of the organizational dynamics experienced by the primary school educators. The respondents of this empirical research are all the male and female primary school teachers who are involved in pedagogical activities in both public sector primary schools and government managed academic institutions of a district in Punjab, Pakistan, during the academic year 2024-2025. A probability-based stratified sampling technique was used to obtain a highly representative and unbiased sample that would provide generalizable conclusions. The population was initially sorted by geographical areas (rural and urban areas) and by gender. Primary institutions were randomly selected and then individual teachers were approached using official district education department directories. A sample size of 400 primary school educators was targeted to ensure a strong dataset to support advanced parametric analysis. To minimize missing data or non-response bias, the researcher sent a total of 345 physical and electronic questionnaire packages. Finally, 301 complete and valid responses to the questionnaires were recovered, which gave an excellent and very satisfactory response rate of 87%. The Data collection was carried out with a detailed and structured survey package including three sections: Demographic Information Profile, Multi-Dimensional Ethical Climate Scale and the normal Job Satisfaction Scale. The Demographic Profile collected key demographic data such as current profession, gender, age, institutional location, total length of service, academic and professional qualifications, and total teaching experience. The Multi-Dimensional Ethical Climate Scale included 25 structured items that assessed the six essential characteristics of the school's ethical climate. The Job Satisfaction Scale used was a well validated one developed by Steven W. Schmidt with 12 basic items that have a specific emphasis on satisfaction with institutional training frameworks and developmental feelings. Permission to use and adapt the Job Satisfaction Scale was specifically obtained from the original author by means of professional electronic mail. Both primary instruments were instrumented using a standardized 5 point Likert type scale (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree) which gave a systematic approach to the respondents to express their actual level of agreement or disagreement with each statement (Khan, Khan & Saleem, 2015).

3.4 Validity and Reliability Protocols

Both instruments were carefully validated and tested for reliability to guarantee high psychometric quality. The items were thoroughly evaluated for content and face validity by a panel of five senior experts in Educational Research who reviewed the items for contextual relevance, linguistic clarity and cultural appropriateness in the context of public schooling in Pakistan. After some minor recommendations from the experts, the pilot study took place with a small number of 40 primary school teachers who were not included in the final research sample. Data collected in the pilot study were analyzed on SPSS and Cronbach's alpha

coefficient was calculated to determine the internal consistency of the data. The reliability indices obtained in the factor-wise method of the Ethical Climate Scale showed high alpha values as Self-interest (0.832), Personal Morality (0.805), School Profit (0.789), Team Interest (0.765), Efficiency (0.770) and Social Responsibility (0.781). At the same time, the internal consistency of the Job Satisfaction Scale factors was good, with Satisfaction with Training showing an α of 0.887 and Employee Feelings about Training of 0.876. The internal consistency and reliability of all the psychometric calculations were greater than the criterion of 0.60, demonstrating acceptable reliability and internal consistency.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

After completion of data collection phase, the raw data were systematically tabulated, cleaned and coded in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Windows v28.0) for comprehensive analysis of the collected data. All the incomplete records with missing values were completely dropped during the data cleaning process to ensure strict statistical integrity. Data was analyzed on two stages: descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation) were calculated to describe demographic characteristics and investigate baseline variables, while parametric inferential statistics (Pearson correlation, simple linear regression, and independent samples t-tests) were used to test the core research hypotheses. In this section, the detailed statistical tables and the corresponding empirical interpretation are given.

Table 4.1: Relationship connecting workplace ethics and teacher satisfaction

| Focal Construct Variables | Statistical Index | Institutional Ethical Climate | Teacher Satisfaction | Job |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|-----|
| Institutional Ethical Climate | Pearson Correlation (r) | 1.000 | 0.713** | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | <.001 | |
| | Sample size (N) | 301 | 301 | |
| Teacher Job Satisfaction | Pearson Correlation (r) | 0.713** | 1.000 | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | <.001 | | |
| | Sample size (N) | 301 | 301 | |

Table 4.3 shows a significant and high positive correlation between institutional ethical climate and primary school teachers' job satisfaction profile ($r = 0.0.713, p < 0.001$). The coefficient is very robust and offers strong empirical evidence for the main hypothesis of the study: positive changes in the school's workplace ethical climate are significantly related to higher levels of job satisfaction among teachers. If an elementary school can create an environment based on mutual respect, ethical leadership, peer cooperation, and social responsibility, teachers say they can see their professional happiness and their comfort in the practice increase. On the other hand, the teacher satisfaction indices drop significantly when the internal moral atmosphere is not good or is present for personal gain. The results of this study highlight the importance of workplace ethics as a structural factor of teacher's psychological well-being that is not material.

Table 4.2: Simple Linear Regression Parameter Estimates to determine whether the institutional ethical climate acts as a significant positive predictor of teacher satisfaction

| Predictor Variable Model | Unstandardized B | Std. Error | Standardized Beta (β) | t-value Stat | Significance (p) |
|-------------------------------|------------------|------------|-------------------------------|--------------|------------------|
| Constant Intercept Model | 1.443 | 0.170 | --- | 8.671 | <.001 |
| Institutional Ethical Climate | 0.635 | 0.043 | 0.713 | 13.784 | <.001 |

The linear regression analysis in Table 4.4 further supports the hypothesis that the workplace ethical climate is a strong positive predictor of teacher job satisfaction ($B = 0.713$, $t = 13.784$, $p < 0.001$). The unstandardized regression coefficient ($B = 0.635$) shows the change in the teacher's job satisfaction when the score on ethical climate of the school changes by 1 unit (all other factors kept constant). The intercept for the model is 1.443 ($p < 0.001$), and the standardized coefficient of the model ($\beta = 0.713$) is high. The t value of this model is 13.784, which is far higher than the standard critical t values, meaning that the predictive power of this model is very robust and is entirely free of random sampling error. The results of this study support the thesis that it is highly effective management to intentionally create a positive and ethical environment and culture within the school district to maximize the career satisfaction and retention of all primary educators.

Table 4.3: Independent Samples t -Test by Gender

| Construct Scale Measure | Gender Category | Mean (M) | t-value Stat | Significance (p) |
|---------------------------|-----------------|----------|--------------|------------------|
| Perceived Ethical Climate | Male Teachers | 3.89 | 0.744 | 0.543 |
| | Female Teachers | 3.91 | | |
| Overall Job Satisfaction | Male Teachers | 4.34 | -0.897 | 0.234 |
| | Female Teachers | 4.21 | | |

Table 4.5 shows that no statistically significant difference was obtained from the independent samples t -test analysis between male and female primary school teachers in terms of the perception of the school's ethical climate ($t = 0.744$, $p = 0.543$) and the overall satisfaction profile ($t = -0.897$, $p = 0.234$). The mean scores for Perceived Ethical Climate were 3.89 for female educators and 3.91 for male educators, with scores being very similar across the two groups. By comparison, mean job satisfaction profiles were fairly similar: 4.34 for women and 4.21 for men. The calculated p -values are both greater than the commonly used value of 0.05, so the null hypotheses are not rejected. The results prove that institutional ethical requirements, administration transparency, and positive moral climate have a consistent and strong positive effect on teachers of primary schools, regardless of their gender.

5. Discussion

The main aim of this empirical study was to extensively analyse the quantitative contribution of the ethical climate of the workplace on job satisfaction profile of primary school teachers working in public schools of the elementary section in District Pakpattan of Punjab, Pakistan with a strict focus. The parametric results obtained through the empirical analysis show that there is indeed a highly positive relationship between these two critical organizational constructs, which is known to be statistically significant. Moreover, simple linear regression analysis showed that the institutional ethical climate appeared as a strong positive predictor for educator satisfaction with their careers, accounting for a large proportion of the variance in satisfaction scores. According to these findings, the main hypothesis of this study, that is, that the creation of a positive moral climate with high ethical leadership, clear management procedures and supportive policies by the educational institution associated with primary teachers' career comfort and increased job satisfaction, is supported. On the other hand, a self-serving or instrumental workplace quickly eats away at educator commitment and contributes to a lack of buy-in at the system level. In this study an extremely positive relationship was found between the two variables which is very similar to the ones found in the literature of organizational psychology. In particular, the findings in this study validate the baseline research of Cansoy, Parlar and Türkoğlu (2021) which showed that the ethical leadership of

the school principal has a significant direct effect on teachers' localized job satisfaction and that it can play a role in developing an ethical climate in the school. School leaders who lead by example with integrity, open communication and fairness to staff, create an environment where the school is working together and where teachers are not subjected to professional stress, raising their levels of satisfaction at work. Likewise, Aftab et al. (2023) found that across organizational levels, the implementation of ethical policies fosters a strong sense of workplace spirituality that ultimately contributes to maximizing job satisfaction among employees. Within the educational context, workplace spirituality assists primary educators to understand and embrace the essence of their profession, which goes beyond administration and is recognized as a form of national service, thus safeguarding them from environmental pressures and burnout (Dreer, 2024). Moreover, the empirical models derived in this study indicate that certain dimensions of the ethical climate (Social Responsibility, Personal Morality, and Team Interest) were reported by the respondents with very high baseline mean ratings. Multi-dimensional work ethic profiles are complex, as suggested by Wahyudi, Haryono, Riyani, and Harsono (2013) but certain dimensions such as a particular focus on hard work and cooperation with peers immediately and statistically significantly influence task performance, with job satisfaction as a key mediating factor. Primary teachers feel more confident when they are given the opportunity to collaborate, are explicitly encouraged to do so, and are structurally rewarded for doing so, leading to greater instructional self-efficacy and the ability to confidently tackle difficult classroom tasks and maximize pedagogical outcomes (Moore, 2012; Chao et al., 2016). Cooperative, sympathetic and communicative working relationship with fellow teachers is a great management practice that will help to minimize administrative tension, emotional exhaustion and generally, the productivity of institutions (Mallillin, 2021; Hefny, 2021). One of the most interesting and useful results of this localized study is that there were no statistically significant difference between the means for the perceived ethical climate indices or overall job satisfaction profile for any primary educator across gender. Independent historical studies conducted in different urban contexts (Lahore, Karachi etc.) and in different socio-cultural settings of India often show that female teachers exhibit much higher job satisfaction as a result of certain socio-cultural issues or expectations regarding their career; however, this study shows a very coherent pattern for the entire District of Pakpattan. The support for transparent ethical guidelines, institutional equity, and professional development support were equally high among male and female primary school teachers. This alignment is a key support for the central tenet of the theoretical proposition that the emotional advantages of a supportive work culture in an ethical framework are universal and do not vary by demographic. Primary school managers and head teachers thus need to defy the gender-segregated assumptions of educators. Rather, they should invest their administrative manpower and resources in creating high-inclusiveness, transparency, care, and empowerment organizational climates that enable all teachers to manifest their instructional potential to the fullest, which will, in turn, lead to the socio-economic development and moral progress of the nation (Burak, 2022).

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

This study is empirical and offers critical, scientific validation that the ethical climate in the workplace is an important and irreplaceable influence on primary school teachers' job satisfaction in a public sector education context. The statistical data show a very strong positive correlation between the two primary constructs and simple linear regression models indicate that the supportive and transparent ethical climate is a strong positive predictor of educator career satisfaction. Teachers working in schools with explicit moral dimensions, accessible management transparency and high levels of group solidarity within the school state that they

are very happy, highly motivated to teach and feel good about their profession. On the other hand, the study proves that the negative atmosphere and lack of concern toward the moral issues inside the school cause a significant drop in teachers' satisfaction, thus increasing their stress and their chances of burnout at work. Importantly, the independent samples t-test measures do not reveal significant differences in these positive organizational patterns for primary teachers across gender, suggesting that they are equally applicable to both men and women. This confirmation reinforces the notion that an institutional environment that is transparent, equitable, and caring has positive impacts on everyone who works in the institutions. As primary education is the cornerstone of a country's socio-economic development and a teacher is the first national builder, addressing the problems that are hampering teachers' satisfaction is of critical public value. When educational managers do not care for the well-being of their teachers, their dissatisfaction inhibits innovation in the classroom and affects student development. Overall, the findings of this study affirm that creating a strong school climate that is ethically transparent is a strong, nonmaterial administrative intervention that fosters positive teacher actions, optimizes job satisfaction, and develops a healthy and committed school community.

6.2 Recommendations

This research makes the following empirically based, statistical conclusions and recommendations for educators, administrators, and policymakers:

1. Strategic Climate Cultivation: To move away from the top-down, bureaucratic and rigid approach to the management of primary schools and district education officers, and to intentionally create positive school climates that are open, caring, and supportive with mutual respect and ethical transparency.

2. Ethical Leadership Development: The Punjab School Education Department should develop and establish mandatory ethical leadership development programs and modules for the all primary school administration officers which shall include the concepts of transparent decision making, equitable distribution of resources and objective merit based reward system.

3. Institutionalizing Peer Collaboration: School managers should systematically implement formal peer collaboration platforms in elementary schools, as well as professional learning communities (PLCs) and team building, so as to increase team interest focus and reduce the external administrative stress on educators.

4. Expanding Professional Growth Frameworks: District management must make available high quality continuous PD and training and must ensure that primary teachers have clear and rewarded pathways to academic growth which have a direct impact on maximizing their career self-efficacy and job satisfaction.

5. Horizon Research Extensions: Future research (Horizon 5) shall focus on the potential use of longitudinal mixed methods designs across a wider range of district settings in Pakistan to observe the dynamic changes in school ethical climates over time and measure the impacts of these climates directly on objective measures of student academic performance.

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