# Exploring The Relationship Between School Culture And Teachers' Performance

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| Article Info | Abstract |
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| **Article History** | *The purpose of the study was to find out the effect of school culture on teachers' performance in public and private secondary schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The population of the study comprised 197 public and private secondary schools in District Charsadda Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. A representative sample of 118 schools was selected through a stratified sampling technique to get principals' perceptions about school culture and four students from each selected school useda homogenous sampling technique to rate their teachers. Two separate questionnaires were used to collect data from principals and students about school culture and teachers' performance respectively. Inferential statistics wereused to analyse data. The findings of the study revealed that the distribution of authority is the most important dimension of school culture that affects teachers' performance followed by collaboration and recognition. The study concluded that there was no significant difference in the school culture of public and private secondary schools in district Charsadda.* |
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## Introduction

School culture is an important element of a school and plays the most important role in the success of the school. It affects every aspect of the school and the teaching-learning process. It not only just surrounds teacher perspective but also affect their decisions and actions. According to Freiberg (1998), school culture is similar to the air we breathe. The culture of the school can influence the teaching-learning process; therefore, a school with a positive culture is a place where teachers want to be (Hansen & Childs, 1998). It is an old saying that paying attention to school culture is one of the basic responsibilities of a school leader. According to Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, & Hopkins, (2007) leadership influence on teaching is indirect and mediated through motivation, commitment, and working conditions. Similarly, Hallinger and Heck (1998) described that principalshave s indirect influence on students' achievements and mediate through school culture and climate. Research suggested that all effective school leaders focus on school culture and create a learning environment to boast teachers' morale. Hunt (2009) described it as a school that provides a clear vision, instructional leadership, and a safe and conducive environment then teachers will perform effectively and students will learn according to our expectations. The focus of this study was to find out the effect of school culture on teachers' performance in public and private secondary schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (PK), Pakistan. These two types of schools were then compared on the three dimensions of school culture measure in this study, including collaboration, recognition, and distribution of authority.

## Literature Review
### School Culture

School culture plays a pervasive role in the success of a school. The general environment of a school that affects the thinking, feeling, and action is the culture of that school. It can be elaborated as the assumption of a school that how their teachers interact with each other, what they are saying, how they are performing and how peaceful environment they have for learning, these and some more basic values and rituals develop the culture of a school. Peterson and Deal (1998) defined school culture as the "norms, values, beliefs, traditions and rituals" of a school that affect teachers' and students'perceptions, decisions, and actions. Recent research on effective school suggested that a strong and positive school culture holdsthe school to gather and has a deep focus on student development and teachers' performance. There are some characteristics of a positive school culture regarding distributed perspective.

i) ***Collaboration***: collaboration plays an important role in the success of a school and is an essential element of positive school culture. Literature shows that in a positive school environment, teachers voluntarily collaborate with the school administration without any other purpose but to improve school standards (Stoll, 1998). In a collaborative school culture school personnel share teaching materials, and ideas and solve each other's problems, which can help them to improve their performance and led the

school to a high standard. Similarly, in a collaborative school culture school personnel possess a shared sense of purpose and set high expectations for students learning (Peterson & Deal, 1998).

ii) ***Recognition***: Recognition of good work plays a significant role to improve teacher performance. Because they think that, their performances are important and valued in the school (Moye, Henkin & Egley, 2005). Their performances are reinforced by recognition (symbolically and orally) in the school. There is a school culture that honors, supports, and recognizes their staff work will boost their morale and will lead to better performance.

iii) ***Distribution of authority***: The distribution of leadership responsibilities makes the school a learning organization (Spillane, 2006). Sharing leadership is relying on shared vision, goals, and commitment, which are essential for teachers' performances. Involving more people in leadership activities and decision-making led them to professional development and allowed them to take ownership of school success. School leaders used it, to recognize and support teachers in the school (Bogler & Nir, 2012). Literature shows that leadership responsibility can lead teachers to evaluate their performance (Vernon Dotson & Floyd, 2012). There for distribution of authority can be seen as a result of positive school culture and can be considered a characteristic of school culture (Hokanson, 1999)

## School Culture and Teachers'Performance

School culture works as oxygen for teachers' performance and plays an important role in the success of the school. No importance was given to school culture until it turned into "foul" (Freiberg, 1998). Positive school culture can affect teachers' performances because teachers favored an attractive and invitational environment (Hinde, 2004). Similarly, Hansen and Childs (1998) argue that a positive culture makes school a place where teachers want to be, a place where teachers are respected, recognized, and supported. A positive culture develops a shared sense and an atmosphere of respect and recognition and develops a common set of expectation for students' learning (Peterson & Deal, 1998) which lead them to a common culture of collaboration. Peterson and Deal presented some characteristics of positive school culture:

❖ where staff have a shared sense of purpose, where they pour their hearts into teaching;
❖ where the underlying norms are collegiality, improvement, and hard work;
❖ where student rituals and traditions celebrate student accomplishment, teacher innovation, and parental commitment;
❖ where the informal network of storytellers, heroes, and heroines provides a social web of information, support, and history; and
❖ where success, joy, and humor abound (P, 29).

On the other hand, a negative or toxic school culture makes school a place where no one wants to be. It has a negative effect not only on teaching but also on communication; interaction and collaboration among school personnel (Peterson & Deal, 1998) and they take no interest in school affairs. It has been written that a school culture always wins and can affect teachers and students, especially newcomers because new teachers want to be like experienced teachers (Gruener, 2008).

## Role of Principal in the Development of a School Culture

Recent research suggested that the principal has a great role in the success of a school (Gruener, 2008). Research also shows that school leader influence on students learning is indirect and mediated through interaction and other factors of school culture (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Similarly, Leithwood (1992) stated that school leaders influence teachers through the transformation of school culture. According to Peterson and Deal (1998), school leaders play an important role in the development of school culture at every level. To create a positive culture they articulate values that are best for students' development then reinforce these core values through their words and action and convey them in routine work. For this purpose, they appreciate good work and celebrate school success. Provide the opportunity for and support collaboration. Communicate the school vision and appreciate those who have worked to achieve this vision. As an effective leader not only influences the learning process but also human development, therefore, rituals and traditions that provide opportunitiesforteachers' development and learning can establishthe school leader. A simple action like mentioning a teacher in a school meeting how he helped a student or asking a teacher about family matters even a smile can encourage a teacher and the whole school community (Littleford, 2007).

## Distributed Leadership and School Culture

There are a large number of theories about leadership. However, most of these theories are interested in the capability of one individual. However, contemporary research on school leadership suggested that it is not

right to think that a single individual can lead the school to success alone due to job diversity (Friedman, 2002). Especially in large secondary schools, where the leader has to perform different roles and cannot interact with every individual due to huge numbers of students and teachers. At the turn of the millennium distributed leadership got the attention of researchers and policymakers. Distributed leadership is the "collaboration between school leaders, teachers, and situation" (Spillane, 2006, p. 2 The main theme of distributed leadership is the distribution of authority and participation of more people in the decision-making process. Literature shows that the distribution of authority was used to appreciate and support teachers' contribution to school (Bogler & Nir, 2012). In distributed leadership, the leader gives importance to teachers' contributions and recognizes their work. According to Hollingsworth (2012), distributed leadership creates learning communities in the school, which helps in staff professional development. From above it has been found that distributed leadership plays a vital role in the development of school culture as the main aspect of distributed leadership and is an important characteristic of a positive school culture. As Hokanson (1999) stated the distribution of leadership responsibilities and the participation of more people in decision-making, creates a successful school culture (Bogler & Somech, 2004; Meng & Han, 2013).

## Objectives of the Study

The following are the objective of this study:
i) To find out different characteristics of school culture in public and private secondary schools of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
ii) To explore the relationship between school culture and teachers' performance.
iii) To find the effect of school culture on teachers' performance.

## Research Methodology

The main purpose of this article was to find out the effect of school culture on teachers' performance in public and private secondary schools in KP, Pakistan. The quantitative research methodology was used to answer the research questions and two questionnaires were used to collect data. One questionnaire was used to collect principals' perceptions about different characteristics of school culture. The other was used to collect students' ratings about the five aspects of their teachers' performance i.e. pedagogical skills, classroom management, student achievements, interpersonal relation, and professional responsibilities.

## The population of the Study

The population of the study includes all 197 secondary school principals (public =78, private =119) and the 10th-grade students enrolled in these schools for the academic year 2015-16, of District Charsadda.

## Sample of the Study

To reduce the sampling error a representative sample was selected. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select 60% of secondary schools to get their principals' perceptions. The homogenous purposive sampling technique was used to select four students from each selected school. Therefore sample for this quantitative study was 118 principals (public=47, private = 71) and 482 students (public =188, private =284) of class ten. SPSS 21 has been used to analyze data using mean, standard deviation, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression.

## Data Analysis

**Table1:** *Mean and Standard Deviation for Characteristics of School Culture*

| Characteristics of school culture | Public Schools | | Private schools | | Overall | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD |
| Collaboration | 3.35 | 1.47 | 3.30 | 1.67 | 3.32 | 1.57 |
| Recognition | 3.37 | 1.66 | 3.20 | 1.73 | 3.22 | 1.70 |
| Distribution of Authority | 4.32 | 0.65 | 4.12 | 0.76 | 4.20 | 0.77 |

The statistical analysis in table1 shows that secondary schools of district Charsadda possess a culture of respect, recognition, and support. Principals of secondary schools believe that they encourage collaboration in their schools (M = 3.32, SD = 1.57). As they provide all the available facilities to teachers, support their work, communicate a shared vision, and encourage them to participate in decision-making. The mean score of 3.22

and standard deviation of 1.70 indicate that secondary school principals not only recognize and encourage their staff but also support their teachers and give importance to their work. They also believe in mutual respect among school personnel. The mean score of 4.20 also suggests that principals did not entirely depend on their expertise and shared their responsibilities with teachers. They give importance to teachers' voices and involve them in decision-making.

Table 2: *Correlation Analysis (**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).)*Significant

The correlation analysis in table2 shows that there was a moderate and statistically significant relationship between school culture and teachers' performance with an $r$= .64 and $p$= .000. Similarly, all three dimensions of school culture were found to be positively correlated with teachers' performance. Distribution of authority has the greatest correlation with teachers' performance, followed by collaboration and then recognition.

**Table3:** *Effect of school culture on teachers' performance*

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| (Constant) | 55.443 | 8.894 | ----- | 6.234 | 1.000 |
| Collaboration | 2.199 | .939 | .224 | 2.343 | .021 |
| Recognition | .191 | 1.030 | .117 | 1.186 | .033 |
| Distribution of Authority | 3.783 | .681 | .503 | 5.559 | .000 |
| adjusted $R^2$=.44; $F$ (117)= 31.65, $p$=.000 | | | | | |

The regression analysis has been used to predict teachers' performance by school culture. Teachers' performance worked as a dependent variable and school culture (i.e. Collaboration, Recognition and Distribution of Authority) as an independent variable. The result {adjusted $r^2$=.44, $F$ (117) = 31.65, $p$=.000} reveals that 44% of the variance in teachers' performance is explained by school culture. Table 3 shows that among all dimensions of school culture, distribution of authority ($\beta$=.503) is the greatest predictor of teachers' performance followed by collaboration ($\beta$=.225) and then recognition ($\beta$=.117).

**Findings**
The major findings of the study are as given below:
- i) The mean score of public and private secondary schools(3.35 and 3.30) indicate that both public and private secondary schools possess a culture of trust, respect, collaboration, recognition, and support.
- ii) A statistically significant correlation was found between school culture and teachers' performance($r$=.64, $p$=.000).
- iii) A significant effect of school culture on teachers' performance(Adjusted $R^2$=.44, $F$ (117) = 31.65, $p$=.000) has been found.
- iv) Distribution of authority is the greatest predictor with a $\beta$=.503.
- v) No significant difference was found in public and private secondary school culture (Independent- t (116) = .66, p = .50 > .05) not in the table.

**Conclusion**
The main objective of this research was to find out the effect of school culture on teachers' performance in public and private secondary schools in KP, Pakistan. Based on the result it is concluded that school culture has a significant effect on teachers' performance. Therefore, principals of both public and private secondary schools may pay attention to the establishment of a positive school culture. Furthermore, principals may create a culture of respect and recognition to make the school a learning organization.

**Recommendations**
The study recommended that the distribution of authority and collaboration may be given more importance in schools to boast teachers' morale.

For future research, it was recommended that this study was delimited to male secondary schools of district Charsadda and teachers with leadership roles therefore in the future it might be investigated with a larger population in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including female schools and teachers of all cadres.

Furthermore, data about the school culture were collected from school principals, which can lead to our estimation of the result. In the future, data may be collected from teachers to get a more accurate result.

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