

The Impact of Organizational Climate on Teachers Commitment

Nadia Khan

Independent Researcher

nadia.khan1141@gmail.com

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between school climate and teachers' commitment and the impact of key dimensions of school climate, which are collegial leadership, academic achievement, teachers' professionalism and institutional vulnerability on teachers' commitment. These factors are directly related with efficiency and effectiveness of school. Organizational Climate Index (OCI) developed by Hoy, Smith, and Sweetland and the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) developed by Mowday, Steers, and Porter were used as the survey instruments. Data were collected from 230 elementary private school teachers for the study. The results indicated a relationship between school climate and teacher's commitment. The results of the regression analysis revealed that the collegial leadership and institutional vulnerability are the predictors of teachers' commitment. The findings of the study can contribute to develop insights for school administrators and principals to make necessary interventions to develop a positive school climate.

Keywords: collegial leadership, institutional vulnerability, organizational climate, teacher commitment.

Introduction

School success highly depends upon teachers' professionalism and commitment. Motivated and committed teachers are more effectively engaged in school activities and consequently perform better at work, since they are keen to make use of their efforts to accomplish organizational goals. Teachers' commitment has been considered as a significant element for the progress of any educational institution (Huberman, 1993) and a significant predictor of teacher's performance (Tsui & Cheng, 1999; Dee, Henkin, & Singleton, 2006). Similarly, teachers' commitment is an essential element that contributes to the effectiveness of a school. School effectiveness involves students' academic achievement and their personality

development along with the teachers' professional growth in educational setting. According to Riehl and Sipple (1996), teachers' commitment is positively correlated with school effectiveness and is believed to be essential for the academic progress of students to achieve desired school outcomes.

One of the most significant characteristics of any organization is its climate. Organizational climate enhances motivation that leads to behaviors such as satisfaction, effectiveness and finally organizational commitment. Teachers are motivated and willing to work when they are committed to their schools. The development of a desirable work environment fosters job satisfaction and commitment (Melti, 2001; Afalobi, 2005). Positive school climate is also linked with teacher's perception that they can effectively influence students' academic achievement (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993; Berg, 2004) and teachers' willingness to remain in the school (Fulton, Yoon & Lee, 2005). The outcome of a positive school climate is visible in improved teacher retention (Distefano et al., 2007). To maintain their passion for accomplishing job responsibilities, teachers should sustain their commitment to the profession (Day, 2000). Day further adds that collegial leadership, student behavior, parental demands and education policies are the elements, which can improve or diminish teachers' commitment (Day, 2004). In addition, researchers claim that teachers' commitment is influenced by principals' leadership (Koh, Steers & Terborg, 1995; Ngumi, Slegers & Denessen, 2006; Cerit, 2010; Avey, Palansk & Walumbwa, 2011). Smart (2003) and Southworth (2004) opine that leadership behavior is strongly linked with school effectiveness. Thus, effective leadership behavior that contributes towards developing positive organizational climate is crucial to enhance teachers' commitment and helps an organization to effectively accomplish their goals.

Past research indicates that closed and unhealthy organizational climate contributes towards reducing the level of teachers' commitment, which leads to low job performance and low effectiveness. A closed climate is characterized by principal behavior that is directive, restrictive and not supportive which results in teachers relations that are disengaged, distant, ineffective and not professional (Hoy & Miskel, 1987). In comparison, positive open and healthy school climate enhances the level of teachers' commitment, which results in increased teacher effectiveness and performance. Organizational commitment has a positive influence on teacher's job performance (Wang, 2010). Teachers' job performance will be

low, if principals demonstrate an assertive leadership behavior style; whereas, if principals demonstrate shared leadership, teachers will exhibit a high level of commitment and job performance (Chen & Cheng, 2011; Meyers & Gelzheiser, 2001; Pearce & Herbik, 2004). Organizational climate is a significant element that contributes towards enhancing teachers' commitment, resulting in improved academic performance and overall effectiveness of the school. It is therefore, vital to consider teacher perceptions about their school climate to facilitate a positive and improved teacher commitment.

Teacher commitment has been central to educational research. The study of Raza and Shah (2010) examined the impact of organizational climate on performance of college teachers of Punjab. The results indicated a significant positive relationship between organizational climate and teacher performance. Danish, Daraz and Ali (2015) conducted a research involving participants from 179 college and universities teachers. Their findings revealed that organizational climate has considerable impact on teacher commitment. In the context of Pakistan, numerous researches have been conducted in which organizational commitment and relevant concepts have been examined from different perspectives. Minimal research focus has been on examining the impact of school climate and its dimensions on teacher commitment and identifying the factors that are the contributors for enhancing the level of teachers' commitment. Therefore, the current study focuses on identifying the key factors of organizational climate that have major impact on teacher commitment by examining the perceptions of teachers about their school climate within elementary private schools, Karachi.

Research Questions

The main question that emerges for this study is:

How do Organizational Climate Index (OCI) dimensions of organizational climate effect teacher commitment in the elementary school of private sector in Karachi middle class areas?

The sub-questions are:

1. What is the effect of collegial leadership on teacher's commitment?

2. What is the effect of academic achievement on teacher's commitment?
3. What is the effect of teacher professionalism on teacher's commitment?
4. What is the effect of institutional vulnerability on teacher's commitment?

Hypotheses

H1: Collegial leadership has a significant impact on teachers' commitment.

H2: Academic achievement has a significant impact on teachers' commitment.

H3: Teacher professionalism has a significant impact on teachers' commitment.

H4: Institutional vulnerability has a significant impact on teachers' commitment.

Literature Review

Organizational climate is a group of characteristics of the working environment which is perceived by its members and considered as an essential component that effects the behavior of an employee. Hoy (2005) assures that school climate signifies all those attributes which are perceived by its members. According to Mitchell, Bradshaw and Leaf (2010, p.272), "School climate is defined as the shared belief, values and attitudes that shape interactions between the students, teacher and administrators"; therefore, positive climate indicates an environment where all the members of the school interact with each other and facilitate an environment where the learning process persistently grows.

School exhibits several types of climate. The environment might be stressful in one school; whereas, it might be open and healthy in another. In an open school climate, teachers and principals' behavior is encouraging and collaborative, the principal willingly considers teachers' suggestions and often provides appreciation (Hoy, Smith & Sweetand, 2002). In comparison, in a closed climate there is a lack of legitimacy and disengaged behavior (Hoy & Miskel, 1987). In a closed climate the principal is not a productive leader, demonstrates directing behavior, exercises authority, and strictly monitors teachers within the school system. The principal is usually considered rigid and not very supportive. As a result, teachers in a closed climate are not committed to their schools (Hoy & Miskel, 1987); thereby effecting healthy attributes, which may have an adverse impact on teacher commitment (Riehl & Sipple, 1966; Hoy et al. 1990; Najeemah 2012). Thus, if the school climate is open and healthy it encourages teacher willingness to stay in the organization to

enhance the level of commitment.

As explored by earlier literature, effective leadership is considered important for stimulating teacher commitment and involvement with school reforms (Day, 2000; Fullan, 2002). According to Block (2003), effective leaders influence the workplace climate through decision making, giving positive and productive feedback, building positive relationships, developing an environment for enhancing creativity, developing professional development, and establishing collaborative behavior. Effective leadership is considered as a significant factor that plays a key role to motivate teachers for individual and shared learning and contributes towards school effectiveness (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). Principals share their vision and motivate and inspire teachers for professional development in order to create a positive learning environment (Hallinger, 2000). Smith (2009) concurs that those teachers who gain encouragement and cooperation from their leaders are more committed to the overall success of schools. Similarly, Cerit (2010) acknowledges that principal leadership behavior is correlated to teachers' job performance and organizational commitment. He further states that teacher commitment is the most significant influential element for enhancing student achievement. Therefore, academic institutions promote effective leadership style that is critical for achieving optimal learning environment (Wang & Berger, 2010). Thus, the key job of the principal is to develop a positive climate in schools which focus on creating an active learning process that allows teachers to be committed to their profession and recognize school goals.

According to Rowe (2003) "There are strong empirical grounds for believing that teachers can and do make a difference and that consistent high quality teaching, supported by strategic professional development, can and does deliver dramatic improvements in student learning" (p.27). Committed teachers carry out their responsibilities efficiently in accordance with their profession demands and establish a good teacher-student relationship. It is commonly believed that one of the distinct characteristics that teachers possess is their devotion and commitment to improve students' academic performance. Fried (2001) supports this view that there is a firm link between committed teachers and student achievement. Singh and Billingsley (1998) explains that lower students' achievement, increased teacher absenteeism and teacher turnover is the result of low level of teacher commitment. Thus, committed teachers develop better teacher student relationship

in agreement with professional standards as they have the potential to carry out their responsibilities efficiently.

In addition, a positive school climate influences teachers' personal development and professional competencies, which is linked to teacher commitment (Tarter, Hoy & Kottkamp, 1991). Firestone and Rosenblum (1993) claims that when teachers are provided with opportunities to collaborate and share their knowledge and resources with other teachers, it decreases uncertainty and fosters autonomy, which is interlinked with teacher commitment. Schools which demonstrate a positive school climate actively encourage a climate of corporation and confidence (Gurr et al., 2005). Hence, teachers are committed to a school when they fulfill their tasks by collaborating with other teachers and provide support and cooperation to each other.

Institutional vulnerability is the degree to which a school may be vulnerable to external pressures like parents and community members. An unhealthy school is vulnerable to external elements (Hoy et al., 1991). According to Miles (1969) a healthy school is identified by one "That not only survives in its environment, but continues to cope adequately over the long haul and continuously develops and extends its surviving and coping abilities" (p. 378).

Several researches have been conducted to determine the relationship between school climate and teacher commitment. Collie, Shapka and Perry (2011) conducted a research in British Columbia and Ontario in Canada with participants of 664 public school teachers. Their findings revealed that positive school climate is correlated with teacher commitment. The findings of Najeemah's (2012) research examined the relationship between school climate dimensions, which indicated a positive relationship between school climate and teachers' commitment.

Through the review of literature, the concept of organizational climate and its dimensions have proven to be positive indicators for desired school outcomes; therefore, the basis for enhancing teacher commitment requires the development of a positive school climate. The current study attempted to examine the relationship between organizational climate and teacher commitment and the impact of four dimensions of organizational climate on teacher commitment in elementary private schools in Karachi.

Methodology

This study used quantitative survey method using correlation design. The quantitative design is considered more useful to gather required data from a representative sample of a large population. Pearson's correlation coefficient, a parametric test for investigating the level of relationship between school climate and teachers commitment was used. To measure the impact of four dimensions of school climate on teacher commitment, regression analysis was used. To analyze the quantitative data, statistical software SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) version 17.0 was deployed.

Sampling

The present study used a non-probability sampling technique that is convenience sampling as this technique is considered least time consuming. The questionnaires were distributed and administered to 230 elementary private school teachers in middle class areas of Karachi. School selection was based on their willingness to participate and teacher participation was voluntary. All required attempts were made to maintain the participants' anonymity and confidentiality. Out of 230 questionnaires, 180 were found to be valid and useable. The response rate of the questionnaire was 78%. The majority of the participants were female teachers comprising 68.9%, while 31.1% were male participants. The age bracket ranged between 20 to 52 years. In terms of education level, the majority of the participants were degree holders with 62.2%, while 37.8% of participants had master's degree. Teaching experience of participants ranged from a minimum of one year to maximum of 12 years.

Data Collection Instrument

In the current research, the researcher selected the Organizational Climate Index (OCI) developed by Hoy, Smith and Sweetland (2002). The OCI is a valid instrument to examine school climate, consisting of 30 items. Responses to the items on the questionnaire are on a 4 point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (SA) to Strongly Disagree (SD). Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) developed by Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979) was used to measure teacher commitment to the organization. The most widely used instrument OCQ contains 15 items and uses a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 7= strongly agrees to 1 = strongly disagree. For the present study, sample reliability of the instruments was

measured using Cronbach alpha. The overall reliability of all the school climate variables was .87 and teacher’s commitment .70. The result indicates that the value of Cronbach alpha is within good and acceptable range.

Findings

Correlations

One of the objectives of the research was to investigate whether a significant correlation exists between school climate and teacher commitment. In order to examine this, correlation analysis was computed between overall school climate and teacher commitment. Table 1 displays the findings of the correlation analysis.

Table 1

The Relationship of Perceived Organizational Climate and Teacher’s Commitment

	Organizational climate	Teacher’s commitment
Organizational Climate	1	
Teacher’s Commitment	0.392**	1

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

Table 1 displays the correlation between organizational climate and teacher’s commitment. The result indicates a significant positive relationship between overall school climate and teacher’s commitment ($r = .392, p < .01$).

Table 2

Correlation Coefficients

	Teachers commitment	Significance
Collegial Leadership	.639**	.000
Academic Achievement	.215**	.004
Teacher Professionalism	.118	.114
Institutional Vulnerability	-.260**	.000

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

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

Table 2 displays correlation analysis for each of the four dimensions of school climate. The findings revealed that several of the dimensions of school climate are correlated with teacher commitment, only teacher professionalism indicated no correlation to teacher commitment. There is a positive correlation between variables collegial leadership and teacher commitment, where the value of correlation coefficient is ($r=.639^{**}$, $p<.01$); Academic achievement has a significant correlation with teacher commitment ($r=.215^{**}$, $p<.01$), whereas institutional vulnerability indicates a significant negative relationship ($r = -.260^{**}$, $p<.01$) with teachers' commitment.

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis on dimensions: collegial leadership; teacher professionalism; academic achievement and institutional vulnerability were computed to analyze their impact on teacher commitment. (see Table 3).

Table 3

Regression Analysis

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.689 ^a	.475	.463	.695

a. Predictors: (Constant), collegial leadership, teacher professionalism, academic achievement, institutional vulnerability

Table 3 illustrates the model summary of regression analysis. The four dimensions were input as independent variables. The combined influence was 47% of the variance in teacher commitment ($Ajd.r^2 = .463$). The result provides the value of ($R= .689$).

The significant value of .000 indicates the statistical significance of the regression model. This revealed that overall, teacher commitment depends on collegial leadership, teacher professionalism, academic achievement and institutional vulnerability.

Table 4
Regression Analysis to Predict Teachers' Commitment.
Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	3.982	.212		18.787	.000
Collegial Leadership	.453	.042	.609	10.704	.000
Teacher Professionalism	.030	.048	.035	.629	.530
Academic Achievement	.074	.051	.081	1.446	.150
Institutional Vulnerability	-.212	.047	-.248	-4.512	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Teacher Commitment

Regression analysis was computed with the four dimensions: collegial leadership, academic achievement, teacher professionalism and institutional vulnerability, which were input as independent variables and teacher commitment input as dependent variable. Table 4 provides the necessary information to predict teacher commitment. The findings revealed that collegial leadership ($B = .45$, $P < .01$) and institutional vulnerability ($B = -.21$, $P < .01$) were the predictors of teacher's commitment; whereas, the other dimensions like teacher professionalism and academic achievement have no significant impact on teacher commitment.

Discussion

The result of this study indicates the significance of school climate on teacher commitment. The findings revealed a correlation between school climate that exists in elementary private schools in Karachi and teacher commitment. The main finding was regarding the relationship between the dimensions of school climate and teacher commitment. The result indicated that collegial leadership had a strong and positive association with teacher commitment. An important finding of this study was that institutional vulnerability indicated a significant negative relationship with teacher commitment; whereas, teacher professionalism signified no relationship to teacher commitment.

To determine the impact of school climate dimensions on teacher commitment, regression analysis was performed. Based on the analysis, the findings suggested that collegial leadership and institutional vulnerability were the predictors of teacher commitment. Moreover, the findings revealed that the teacher professionalism and academic achievement failed to be the predictors of teacher's commitment.

A previous research by Smith (2009) conducted in Alabama using a similar instrument proves that a correlation exists between the dimensions of organizational climate and teacher commitment. The study revealed a relationship between collegial leadership, academic achievement and teacher professionalism toward teacher commitment. Though the current study supports Smith (2009) findings that correlation exists between two Organizational Climate Index (OCI) dimensions that is collegial leadership and academic achievement towards teachers' commitment, the same study revealed that there was no correlation between institutional vulnerability and teacher commitment. The current study indicates that institutional vulnerability has a significant negative relationship on teacher commitment. Smith's (2009) research indicated teacher professionalism as a predictor of teacher commitment. Regression analysis in the current study showed that collegial leadership and institutional vulnerability are the predictors of teacher commitment while teacher professionalism and academic achievement had no impact on it.

The findings of the present research indicated that a correlation exists between collegial leadership and teacher commitment. Tarter et al. (1990) recognized leadership behavior as a crucial factor in enhancing teacher commitment, which is supported in this study. The findings are aligned with the Singh and Billingsley (1998) study outcomes that teacher commitment increases when principal nurture a collegial school climate. The findings are also aligned with the findings of Mahdieh, Syed, and Koroush (2013) in that healthy climate is the result of competent leadership, specified as one of the factors of the organization which should be considered to attain outstanding academic achievement. The findings are also consistent with the research findings of Louis (1998) that school leadership as an organizational dimension of the work setting has an impact on teacher commitment. Moreover, researchers are in consensus that teacher commitment is influenced by the principal's leadership. Effective leadership is considered special ingredient for stimulating teacher commitment and ensuring involvement with school reforms

(Day, 2000; Fullan, 2002). Nguni, Slegers, and Denessen (2006) confirmed that leadership behavior can reinforce organizational commitment. When principals demonstrate shared leadership, teachers exhibit high levels of commitment and enhanced job performance (Meyers & Gelzheiser, 2001; Pearce & Herbig, 2004). Similarly, the supportive behavior of principals is positively linked to teacher commitment (Devos, Tuytens & Hulpia, 2014).

Conclusion and Recommendations

A positive school climate is essential for school effectiveness. It is therefore, vital to form a positive school climate that contributes towards enhancing teacher commitment, which in turn effects student's academic achievement. Implementation of school climate improvement action plan is the first step towards positive change. Principals specifically need to focus on the school climate to promote positive relationships in the school. In order to raise awareness, schools need to build a forum where all the stakeholders including school leaders, administrators, teachers, parents, students and other staff share information, raise issues concerning school climate and deal with them collaboratively. School progress and development is achieved with trained and competent leadership that is aware of the needs of their members. Therefore, schools should plan and conduct trainings for their members on school climate that contribute in developing a positive and enhanced school climate. It is mainly essential for educators to be informed of different approaches to evaluate teacher perceptions that directly impact school climate. They should get information from conducting a school climate survey and should give specific consideration to what teachers believes are the major restraints for creating positive perceptions of school climate.

According to the findings of the study, it would be worthwhile to develop a positive organizational climate strategy to improve teacher commitment. School leaders need to recognize the importance of school climate if they want to ensure that teachers are committed. Principals should develop a positive and healthy climate for teachers to ensure they stay in the organizations. The principal should consider developing an effective communication system in school that promotes a clear understanding amongst teachers and ensures their involvement in the decision making process. Principals also need to show concern and interest in teacher development and need to work towards improving teachers working conditions.

Thus, schools should endeavor to seek ways of developing a school climate that leads to improved teacher commitment commensurate with the fact that this is an important indicator of overall school success. The information gained through a study such as the present one can be worthwhile for school administration and teachers as they strive to refine the characteristics of the school which are not perceived as positive.

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