
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOUR OF SCHOOL HEADS AND SCHOOL CLIMATE

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ABSTRACT

The present study examined the relationship between leadership behaviour of school heads and school climate in elementary schools of Madhya Pradesh. Effective school leadership is widely regarded as a key factor in shaping the academic, organizational, and interpersonal environment of schools. A descriptive survey method with a correlational design was adopted. The study was conducted in five districts of Madhya Pradesh, namely Bhopal, Indore, Gwalior, Jabalpur, and Narmadapuram. The sample consisted of 100 elementary schools, 100 school heads, and 500 teachers selected through stratified random sampling. The Leadership Behaviour Scale developed by Dr. Asha Hingar (2005) and a researcher-developed School Climate Scale were used to collect the data. The findings revealed that a notable proportion of school heads demonstrated high leadership behaviour, while a similar proportion fell in the moderate category, and a smaller yet considerable group was in the low category. With regard to school climate, about one-third of schools were perceived to have a high level of climate, roughly half reflected a moderate level, and a smaller segment showed a low level. The study also found a significant positive relationship between leadership behaviour of school heads and school climate, suggesting that more effective leadership tends to be associated with a more positive and supportive school environment. The study concludes that school heads play a decisive role in creating a supportive, collaborative, and effective school environment. Strengthening leadership practices may therefore contribute meaningfully to improving school climate and overall school functioning.

KEYWORDS: *Leadership Behaviour Effectiveness, School Heads, School Climate.*

INTRODUCTION

School leadership occupies a central position in the effective functioning and overall development of educational institutions. In the contemporary educational system, the role of the school head extends beyond routine administration and management to include instructional guidance, organizational development, teacher motivation, and the creation of a conducive learning environment. Leadership in schools refers to the ability of school heads to influence, guide, and coordinate the efforts of teachers, students, and other stakeholders toward the achievement of educational goals. Effective leadership behaviour is considered essential for ensuring school effectiveness, improving academic standards, and promoting institutional growth.

School heads act as instructional leaders who shape the vision, mission, and culture of the school. Their behaviour directly influences teacher morale, professional commitment, discipline, innovation, interpersonal relationships, and students' academic achievement. A democratic, supportive, and participative leadership style often promotes collaboration, trust, and job satisfaction among teachers, whereas ineffective leadership may create stress, conflict, and a negative organizational atmosphere. Thus, the quality of leadership behaviour significantly determines the nature of the school climate.

School climate refers to the overall environment of the school as perceived by teachers, students, and other stakeholders. It includes dimensions such as interpersonal relationships, discipline, safety, communication, cooperation, and academic atmosphere. A positive school climate encourages holistic development, emotional well-being, creativity, and effective teaching-learning processes. In contrast, a negative climate adversely affects motivation, productivity, and institutional harmony.

In the present educational scenario, schools face several challenges such as increasing diversity, technological changes, accountability demands, declining motivation, and the need for inclusive and learner-centered education. These challenges require dynamic and visionary leadership. Educational reforms such as the National Education Policy 2020 emphasize quality education, transformational leadership, collaborative school culture, and holistic development of learners. Therefore, studying the effect of leadership behaviour of school heads on school climate has become highly relevant for strengthening school effectiveness and improving the quality of education.

Conceptual Framework and Theoretical Background

Leadership is regarded as one of the most critical determinants of organizational effectiveness, particularly in educational institutions where the quality of administration directly influences teaching-learning processes and institutional climate. Leadership refers to the ability of an individual to influence, guide, and motivate others toward the achievement of common goals (Northouse, 2022). In the school context, leadership behaviour denotes the pattern of actions, attitudes, and administrative practices adopted by school heads while interacting with teachers, students, and other stakeholders. Effective leadership behaviour is reflected through clear communication, participative decision-making, motivation, supervision, conflict resolution, innovation, and the ability to establish positive human relations within the institution (Yukl, 2013).

Educational administration encompasses different leadership styles that influence school functioning in varied ways. Democratic leadership promotes collaboration, trust, and collective participation in decision-making, whereas autocratic leadership emphasizes centralized authority and strict control. Laissez-faire leadership allows greater autonomy to teachers with minimal administrative intervention. Contemporary educational systems increasingly emphasize transformational leadership, which inspires teachers through vision, encouragement, and institutional commitment (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Instructional leadership focuses on improving classroom practices and academic achievement, while participative leadership strengthens collegiality and organizational involvement. Research indicates that supportive and transformational leadership behaviours contribute significantly to teacher morale, job satisfaction, innovation, and institutional effectiveness (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005).

School climate refers to the overall quality and character of school life as experienced by teachers, students, and staff members (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). It includes dimensions such as teacher-student relationships, discipline, safety, collegial atmosphere, trust, openness, collaboration, administrative support, and academic orientation. A positive school climate creates an environment conducive to effective teaching-learning, emotional well-being, and holistic student development. Conversely, a negative school climate often results in low morale, stress, poor communication, and reduced institutional productivity.

The relationship between leadership behaviour and school climate is strongly supported by several theoretical perspectives. Trait Theory emphasizes the personal qualities of effective leaders, whereas Behavioral Theory highlights leadership actions and interpersonal conduct. Transformational Leadership Theory explains how visionary leaders influence organizational

culture through inspiration and motivation (Bass, 1985). Situational Leadership Theory suggests that effective leadership depends upon adapting behaviour according to institutional needs and contextual demands (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982). Similarly, Organizational Climate Theory and Human Relations Theory emphasize that supportive leadership, democratic interaction, and positive interpersonal relationships are essential for creating a healthy institutional climate. Therefore, leadership behaviour of school heads plays a decisive role in shaping the organizational environment, teacher effectiveness, and overall school performance.

Need and Significance of the Study

In the contemporary educational scenario, schools are expected not only to achieve academic excellence but also to promote holistic development, inclusive practices, innovation, and a positive organizational culture. In this context, the leadership behaviour of school heads has emerged as a crucial factor influencing the effectiveness and functioning of educational institutions. School heads serve as the central force in planning, administration, supervision, motivation, and coordination within schools. Their behaviour significantly affects teacher morale, interpersonal relationships, discipline, communication, and institutional productivity. Therefore, investigating leadership behaviour becomes essential to understand how administrative practices contribute to the creation of a healthy and effective school environment (Northouse, 2022).

A positive school climate is widely recognized as a prerequisite for successful teaching-learning processes and institutional development. School climate influences teachers' job satisfaction, students' academic achievement, emotional well-being, discipline, and collaborative functioning (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). Schools characterized by trust, openness, mutual respect, and supportive leadership generally demonstrate higher organizational commitment, innovation, and academic performance. Conversely, ineffective leadership often results in poor communication, stress, conflict, low morale, and reduced institutional efficiency. Hence, studying the relationship between leadership behaviour and school climate is essential for improving overall school effectiveness.

The significance of the present study extends to administrators, policymakers, teachers, and students. For school administrators, the findings may provide insights into effective leadership practices required for strengthening institutional climate and teacher motivation. Policymakers may utilize the findings to design leadership development programs, training modules, and administrative reforms aligned with educational quality enhancement. Teachers

may benefit from improved organizational support, participative management, and professional satisfaction, while students may experience a more conducive and emotionally secure learning environment.

Furthermore, educational reforms such as the National Education Policy 2020 emphasize transformational leadership, collaborative culture, and quality education. Therefore, the present study is significant in identifying leadership practices that contribute toward effective school functioning, institutional harmony, and sustainable educational improvement.

Objectives of the Study

1. To Study the leadership behaviour of elementary school heads of Madhya Pradesh
2. To Study the school climate of the elementary schools of Madhya Pradesh.
3. To study the relationship between leadership behavior of school heads and implementation of government schemes.

Research Question

1. What is the leadership behaviour of elementary school heads of Madhya Pradesh?
2. What is the school climate of the elementary schools of Madhya Pradesh?

Hypothesis

1. There is no significant relationship between Leadership Behavior of School Heads is and School Climate.

METHODOLOGY

The present study adopted the descriptive survey method along with the correlational research method. The descriptive survey method was considered appropriate because the study aimed to examine the existing patterns of leadership behaviour among school heads and the prevailing school climate in elementary schools without manipulating any variables. The study further employed the correlational method to determine the relationship between leadership behaviour of school heads and school climate.

Population and Sample

The population of the present study comprised all elementary schools, school heads, and teachers of selected districts of Madhya Pradesh. The study was conducted in the districts of Bhopal, Indore, Gwalior, Jabalpur, and Narmadapuram. The final sample consisted of 100 elementary schools selected through the stratified random sampling technique. From each

selected school, one school head and five teachers were included in the sample. Thus, the total sample comprised of 100 School Heads and 500 Teachers. Among the school heads, equal representation was provided to gender and locality categories. Out of 100 school heads, 50 belonged to urban schools and 50 to rural schools. Further, both urban and rural groups included 25 male and 25 female school heads respectively.

Tools Used

Leadership Behaviour Scale (LBS):The Leadership Behaviour Scale developed by Dr. Asha Hingar (2005) was used to assess the leadership behaviour of school heads. The scale consists of 30 items, including 24 positive and 6 negative statements, distributed across six dimensions namely Emotional Stabilizer, Team Builder, Performance Orientor, Potential Extractor, Socially Intelligent, and Value Inculcator. The scale follows a five-point Likert format ranging from “Always” to “Never.” The split-half reliability coefficient of the scale was reported as 0.69, indicating acceptable reliability and the scale demonstrated significant positive correlations with emotional quotient and organizational effectiveness.

School Climate Scale (SCS):The School Climate Scale was developed and standardized by the investigator to measure the climate of elementary schools. The scale consisted of 53 items under eight dimensions including Leadership and Administration, Teacher–Student Relationships, Interpersonal Relationships, Teaching–Learning Process, Safety and Security, Infrastructure and Resources, Parental Involvement, and Equity and Inclusiveness. The scale employed a five-point Likert response format ranging from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree.” The reliability of the scale was established using the split-half method and Spearman–Brown Prophecy Formula, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.91, indicating high reliability. Content validity was ensured through expert review, while construct validity was established through item analysis and significant t-values between upper and lower groups. The School Climate Scale was administered to five teachers in each school, and the average score of the teachers was used to represent the school climate of that school.

Data Collection Procedure

Prior to data collection, formal permission was obtained from the concerned educational authorities and heads of the selected schools. The investigator personally visited the schools and explained the objectives and significance of the study to the respondents. The Leadership Behaviour Scale was administered to school heads, whereas the School Climate Scale was administered to teachers under standardized conditions. Ethical considerations were strictly

maintained throughout the study. Respondents were assured that their responses would remain confidential and would be used solely for academic purposes. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were encouraged to provide honest and unbiased responses.

Statistical Techniques Used

The collected data were analyzed using Percentage Analysis, Arithmetic Mean, Standard Deviation and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r)

Analysis and Interpretation

The first objective of the study was 'to study the leadership behaviour of elementary school heads of Madhya Pradesh' for which the research question prepared was 'What is the leadership behaviour of elementary school heads of Madhya Pradesh?' The data pertaining to leadership behaviour of school heads was collected using The Leadership Behaviour Scale developed by Dr. Asha Hingar (2005) and based on the scores the school heads were categorized as having low, average and high leadership behaviour effectiveness. The results are shown through figure 1.

Leadership Behaviour of Elementary School Heads

The distribution of elementary school heads based on their level of leadership behaviour effectiveness is shown in figure 1.

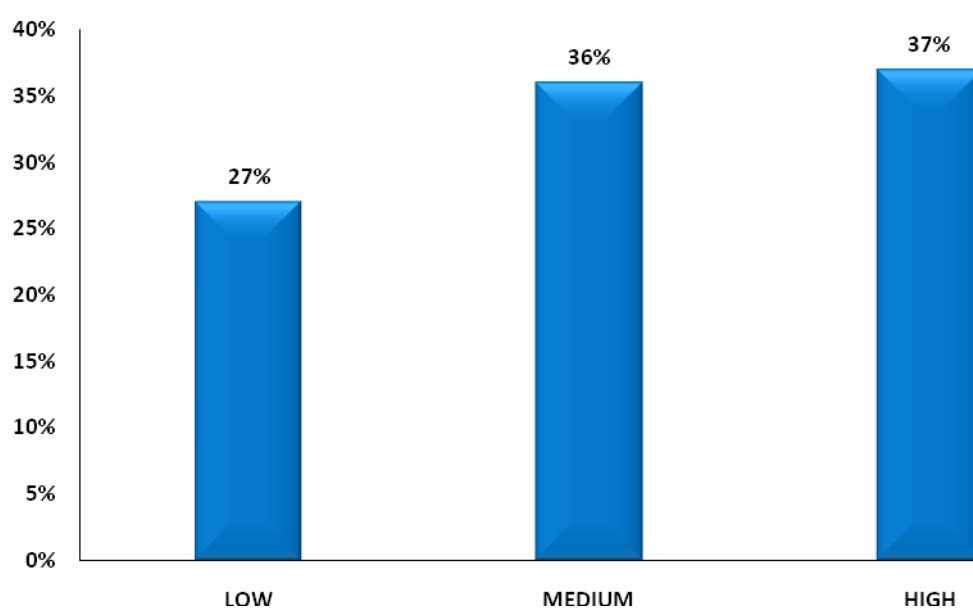


Figure 1 Leadership Behaviour of Elementary School Heads.

From figure 1 it can be seen that 37% of the elementary school heads fall under the high level of leadership behaviour effectiveness, 36% of the respondents in the medium category, while 27% are categorized having low level leadership behaviour effectiveness. The findings suggest that a majority of the school heads exhibit moderate to high levels of leadership behaviour effectiveness.

School Climate of Elementary Schools

The second objective of the study was ‘to study the school climate of the elementary schools of Madhya Pradesh’ for which the research question prepared was ‘What is the school climate of the elementary schools of Madhya Pradesh?’ The data pertaining to school climate in the elementary schools was found by administering the School Climate Scale developed by the investigator and the school teachers. Based on the scores the school climate was taken as high, moderate and low level of school climate. The distribution of elementary schools based on their level of school climate as per the teachers is shown in Figure 2.

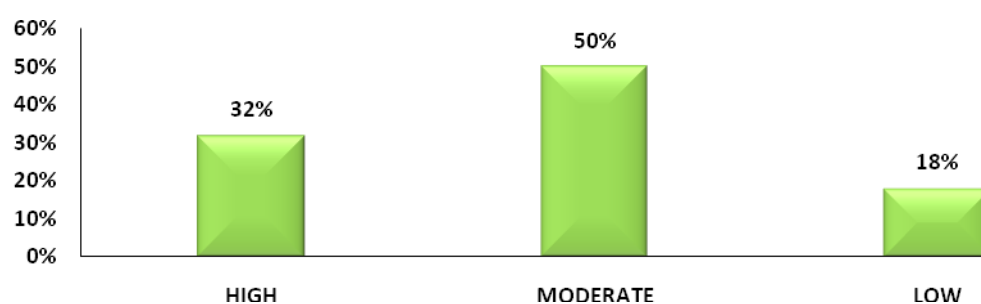


Figure 2 School Climate as per Teachers of Elementary Schools.

From Figure 2, it can be seen that in 32% of the elementary schools the teachers expressed the school climate to be of high level, 50% reported it to be of moderate level, while 18% conveyed it to be of low level. The findings suggest that a majority of the teachers of elementary schools felt the school climate to be of moderate level, indicating a reasonably supportive and functional school environment. However, the comparatively lower proportion in the high category and the presence of schools in the low category highlight the need for further improvement in creating a more positive and conducive school climate.

Relationship between Leadership Behaviour of School Heads and School Climate

The third objective of the study was to determine whether there exists any relationship between leadership behaviour of school heads and school climate, for which the null

hypothesis framed was ‘there is no significant relationship between leadership behaviour of school heads and school climate.’ The relationship between leadership behaviour of school heads and school climate was found out using Pearson’s product moment correlation (r). The value of r is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Value of ‘ r ’ for Leadership Behaviour of School Heads and School Climate.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r-value
Leadership Behaviour	100	94.56	32.22	0.679**
School Climate	100	180.76	47.12	

** $p < 0.01$

Table 4.5 shows that the value of r is 0.679, which is significant at 0.01 level. Since the value is significant, the null hypothesis namely, there is no significant relationship between leadership behaviour of school heads and school climate, was rejected. This result indicates a moderate positive and significant relationship between leadership behaviour of school heads and school climate. Further analysis reveals that as leadership behaviour effectiveness increases, the level of positive school climate also improves.

The present finding reveals a significant positive relationship between leadership behaviour of school heads and school climate, indicating that stronger leadership effectiveness is associated with a more positive school climate. Similar findings have been reported by studies emphasizing that effective school leadership promotes trust (Leithwood et al., 2004), collaboration (Hoy & Tarter, 1997), and a supportive institutional environment (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). However, some studies have argued that school climate is influenced more by teacher relationships (Thapa et al., 2013), organizational culture (Cohen et al., 2009) and socio-economic conditions (Bryk & Schneider, 2002) than by leadership behaviour alone.

The cause for the present finding may be that school heads largely shape the day-to-day functioning and interpersonal environment of the school. Effective leaders encourage participation, maintain discipline, support teachers, and foster positive communication, which directly strengthens the overall climate of the school. Thus, when leadership behaviour becomes more effective, the school environment naturally becomes more supportive, organized, and collaborative.

Findings of the Study

1. 37% of the elementary school heads fall under the high level of leadership behaviour effectiveness, 36% of the respondents in the medium category, while 27% are categorized having low level leadership behaviour effectiveness.
2. 32% of the elementary schools the teachers expressed the school climate to be of high level, 50% reported it to be of moderate level, while 18% conveyed it to be of low level.
3. There is significant relationship between leadership behaviour of school heads and school climate. This result indicates a moderate positive and significant relationship between leadership behaviour of school heads and school climate.

Recommendations of the Study

Based on the findings of the present study, the following recommendations are proposed for different stakeholders to strengthen leadership behaviour, improve school climate, and enhance the implementation of government programmes in elementary schools.

Recommendations for School Heads

1. School heads should adopt more democratic, participative, and supportive leadership practices to build trust and cooperation among teachers.
2. They should make regular efforts to improve communication, transparency, and mutual respect within the school.
3. School heads should pay special attention to schools where leadership behaviour is low, and seek training in emotional intelligence, conflict management, and instructional leadership.
4. They should create a climate where teachers feel valued, heard, and encouraged to contribute ideas.

Recommendations for teachers

1. Teachers should actively cooperate with school leadership in decision-making, school planning, and implementation of academic activities and contribute to a positive and healthy school climate.
2. They should share constructive feedback with school heads to help improve school functioning.
3. Participation in professional development programmes should be encouraged to improve classroom practice and teamwork.

Recommendations for Educational Administrators

1. Block and district-level educational officers should organize regular leadership development programmes in school management, teacher motivation, and climate building for school heads.
2. Schools with low or moderate climate should be identified and supported through mentoring and monitoring.
3. Periodic review of school climate and leadership effectiveness should be made part of school supervision.

Recommendations for Policymakers

1. Policymakers should include leadership development as a key part of school quality improvement initiatives.
2. Training modules should be designed to strengthen participative and transformational leadership among school heads.
3. Policies should encourage a school environment based on collaboration, accountability, inclusiveness, and teacher well-being and special attention should be given to rural and low-performing schools where leadership and climate may need stronger support.

Recommendations for Teacher Education Institutions

1. Pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes should include modules on school leadership, teamwork, and organizational climate.
2. Future teachers should be prepared to work collaboratively and contribute positively to school culture.
3. Training institutions should conduct workshops on communication, conflict resolution, and school-based collaboration.
4. Recommendations for parents and community
5. Parents should be encouraged to participate in school activities and maintain constructive communication with school staff.
6. School management committees should play a more active role in monitoring school climate and supporting school development.
7. Community members should cooperate with schools in creating a safe, respectful, and encouraging environment for children.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the leadership behaviour of school heads plays a meaningful role in shaping the climate of elementary schools. The findings show that while a considerable number of heads demonstrate effective leadership, a large proportion still function at moderate or low levels, indicating scope for improvement. Similarly, most schools reflect only a moderate school climate. The significant positive relationship between leadership behaviour and school climate confirms that better leadership is associated with a healthier, more supportive, and more effective school environment. Therefore, strengthening leadership practices can contribute directly to improving school climate and overall school functioning.

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