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Investigating the Relationship among Bureaucratic School Structure, Leadership Styles and School Culture at Secondary Level in Punjab

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Abstract

Structure of any educational system plays an important role in every successful academic institute. Bureaucratic hierarchical structure was primarily developed for industry but mostly schools are operating by using this system structure that has remained integral since century. In spite of its efficiency, this system is reluctant in accepting innovations and thus makes employees concerns regarding its effectiveness in today's global village. The aim of the study was to determine the relationship among bureaucratic educational structure, leadership styles and school culture of secondary schools of Punjab. This study followed the positivist paradigm, therefore correlation method was employed. Multi- stage random sampling techniques was used and a sample of (N=164) head teachers were selected from two districts of Punjab. Data was collected by using three instruments i.e. Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), School Culture Survey (SCS) and Bureaucratic school structure survey. Study revealed the moderate positive correlation between bureaucratic school structure and leadership styles (r=.624, p=.000). Moreover, positive, strong and significant relationship was found between leadership styles and school culture (r=.823, p=.000). However, a weak positive significant relationship was explored between bureaucratic school structure and school culture (r=.495, p=.000). This study recommends a training programs and workshop for head teachers to transform the bureaucratic hierarchical structure of schools to cope up the current paradigm shift in educational sector of 21st century.

Keywords: *Bureaucratic Hierarchical Structure, Leadership Styles, School Culture, Head Teacher*.

Introduction

In the field of education the school structure, leadership styles, and institution's culture are crucial elements that significantly impact the overall functioning and achievements of a school (Thompson, 2017). According to Doe (2019) grasping the dynamics of the bureaucratic educational institution, structure, leadership styles, and school culture is crucial for educational administrators, policymakers, and concerned parties who strive to establish an optimal learning environment.

The bureaucratic structure is distinguished by its hierarchical decision-making processes and standardized procedures has both advantageous and disadvantageous consequences for school effectiveness (Smith & Johnson, 2018). Research indicates that a well-defined bureaucratic structure can promote productivity, responsibility, and uniformity in school activities (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). However, it can also result in inflexible systems that impede innovation and adaptability (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2020). Alanoğlu & Demİrtaş (2021) suggested that investigating the correlation between the bureaucratic structure and its influence on leadership styles and school culture is crucial for comprehending its consequences on secondary-level education.

Leadership styles within a school setting play a critical role in molding the implementation of the bureaucratic structure and shaping the school culture (Atsroy, 2020). Different leadership styles, such as autocratic, democratic, or transformational have been found to have varying impacts on teachers' contentment, students' accomplishment, and overall on school environment (Leithwood et al., 2014). Effective leadership styles that aligns with the goals and values of the school community can foster a positive and supportive culture, while ineffective guidance can result in detachment and dissatisfaction among teachers and students (Farooq et al., 2014).

The culture of a school, which includes shared principles, convictions, and customs, is a crucial element of a prosperous educational instituties at the secondary level. Research indicates that a favorable school culture fosters students involvement, educational accomplishments, and overall school performance (Deal & Peterson, 2016). Furthermore, Turan & Bektas (2013) described that the harmony between the bureaucratic organization and styles of leadership is fundamental in establishing a united and supportive culture that fosters the progress and growth of students and schools.

The current study aimed to examine the correlation among the hierarchical structure of the school, leadership styles, and school culture in secondary education. By comprehending this correlation, educators and administrators can make well-informed decisions and implement methodologies that encourage positive educational settings and enrich student learning experiences.

Literature review

Bureaucratic educational system pertains to the hierarchical structure and management of schools, primarily distinguished by top-down decision-making and well-defined roles and obligations. Numerous researches have examined the influence of bureaucratic educational system on school culture and leadership styles (Volk, 2014). However, a research conducted by Smith (2015) ascertained that educational institutions with bureaucratic structures generally possess rigorous control over policies and procedures, which can result in a more uniform and predictable school culture. Furthermore, according to Schulz (2013) the centralized decision-making process in bureaucratic structures can limit the independence of educators and staff, potentially impacting their satisfaction with the overall school environment. The strict adherence to regulations and rules within bureaucratic systems might limit the capacity of educational leaders to adapt to changing educational trends and effectively address the needs of diverse student populations (Spillane & Kenney, 2012). However, many researchers have highlighted that moderate administrative rules in schools are encouraging for establishing a supportive culture (Özdemir and Kılınç, 2014; Önal, 2012 and Buluç, 2009).

Leadership Styles

Leadership styles have a significant impact on the overall school culture and can be influenced by the bureaucratic system. Various leadership styles have been identified in educational contexts, including authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire. According to a research conducted by Brown (2016), autocratic leadership styles are likely to align with bureaucratic educational systems. This style highlights strict adherence to policies and underscores the hierarchical nature of all affairs in school (Moodley, 2012).

However, authoritative leadership styles within bureaucratic systems may result in a top-down strategy where the principal or headteacher exert significant authority over decision-making processes, potentially having a negative impact on the school's culture (Mabaso, 2021). Furthermore, Young (2020) argued that the autocratic leadership style, which is frequently linked to bureaucratic processes, may create a culture that is oppressive and hierarchical, making teachers and pupils feel unappreciated and disrespected.

Green's (2019) study, however, indicated that even in bureaucratic institutions, a democratic leadership style, which involves stakeholders in decision-making processes can promote a healthy school culture. Similarly, according to Mullen & Jones (2008) a democratic leadership style fosters teamwork and involvement, enabling teachers and staff to make a positive, inclusive school environment.

School Culture

The values, norms, and beliefs of a school community are collectively referred to as the "school culture." It has a significant impact on how students, teachers, and staff perceive their overall educational experience. Researchers have studied the effects of leadership styles and bureaucratic structure on school culture (Özgenel & Ankaralioglu, 2020). According to Johnson et al. (2017), bureaucratic school structures can promote discipline and order, which helps create a more conventional and rule-oriented learning culture. The well-defined responsibilities and standardized procedures within bureaucratic structure might result in a more uniform school culture, characterized by adherence to established standards and norms. Conversely, a research conducted by Lewis (2018) suggests that a prejudiced school culture may be originated within bureaucratic structure if there is a lack of effective leadership that failure to foster a supportive and inclusive environment.

The literature review emphasizes that there exists a complex relationship among bureaucratic school structure, leadership styles, and school culture. Bureaucratic structures can provide discipline and consistency, but they might limit creativity and critical thinking (Piore, 2011). Leadership styles, particularly democratic styles, can positively influence school culture by fostering inclusivity and collaboration (Osiname, 2015). However, according to Akanji et al. (2020) autocratic leadership styles within bureaucratic structure might lead to negative school culture. Further research is necessary to delve deeper into these relationships and identify strategies for optimizing the interaction among school structure, leadership, and culture in secondary education settings.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

After a thorough analysis of the literature, a relationship was discovered between bureaucratic school structures, leadership styles, and school culture. These three components appear to be related, according to the theoretical framework as well. School leaders' leadership styles are shaped by the bureaucratic school structure, which in turn affects how the school culture is created and preserved. In contrast, a transformational leadership style may promote a more collaborative and school culture. For instance, an autocratic leadership style within a bureaucratic framework may result in a hierarchical and rule-oriented school culture (Leithwood et al., 2004).

Previous studies (Denison, 1990; Leithwood et al., 2004; Yukl, 2013) that looked at the relationship between organizational structure, leadership styles, and organizational culture in different situations provides the base for this theoretical framework.

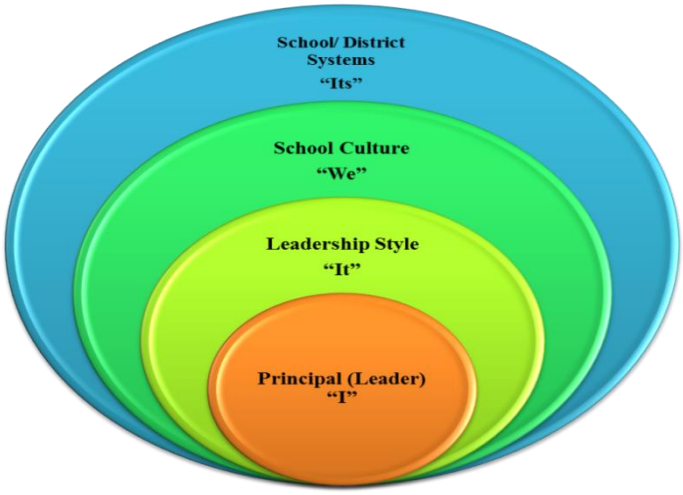


Figure 1: Integral leadership framework (Kupers & Weibler, 2008)

Küpers and Weibler (2008) expanded Wilber's integral concept; "I" refers to the leader; "IT" refers to leader behavior or leadership style, "WE" refers to culture, and "ITS" refers to the system here it means bureaucratic hierarchical structure. Placing the quadrants into a circular and overlapping design removes the two-dimensional aspect and allows connections and flow among the concepts: leader, leadership style, culture, and system. Studies using the integral framework have become more frequent within the first decade of the 21st century.

In essence, taking a holistic view is a "new" and different approach to understand leadership by using the concept of wholeness taken from Eastern philosophies (Jain & Mukherji, 2009). This was the first study in Pakistani education sector using this model to study leadership styles and school culture.

Research objectives

The research has following objectives:

1. To find out the opinions of head- teachers about the bureaucratic hierarchical structure of the school;
2. To explore that which leadership style is followed by the heads in public high schools;
3. To investigate cultural factors exist in public high schools' settings within a bureaucratic hierarchical structure.
4. To describe the difference in head- teachers' views about bureaucratic hierarchical structure, leadership styles and school culture based on demographics (gender).

Research Hypothesis

H0= There is no significant relationship among bureaucratic hierarchical structure, leadership styles and school culture.

Research Methodology

This study followed the positivist paradigm, therefore, quantitative research approach was used by keeping in view the research objectives.

Population

The population was comprised of all the secondary school head teachers of Punjab. According to the school education department there are thirty six districts in Punjab. Out of these districts two i.e. Bhakar and Lahore were selected by using simple random sampling technique. All the head teachers of government high schools in these two districts of Punjab province was the population of this study (N= 448).

Sample Size

By using proportionate sampling technique 50% percent of high schools from above mentioned population were selected. A total of 224 head teachers were the sample of this study.

Table No 1

	Bhakkar	Lahore
Total Number of High Schools	114	334
50% as a Sample of Total Population	57	167
Return Rate	42	122

Reliability and Validity of the Instruments

All the instruments of this study were adopted. The details of the interments are as follows: i) Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) with 38 statements under 4 factors with Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.92; ii) School Culture Survey (SCS) has 34 statements under 7 factors with Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.91, and iii) Bureaucratic school structure questionnaire was consisted of 20 statements with Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.89. Content, face, and language validity were sought from experts before piloting the questionnaires. The instruments were piloted with n=70 head teachers responses. Sub-factors of each instruments with their Cronbach's Alpha values are as follows:

Table 2: Sub-factors of the Bureaucratic School Structure Questionnaire and Reliability (n= 164)

Sub-Factors	Statements	Alpha
Hiararchy of Authority	5	.860
Division of Work	3	.667
Official Rules	6	.781
Impersonal Relationship	4	.618
Official Records	2	.692
Scale	20	.899

Table 3: Sub-factors of Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and Reliability (n= 164)

Sub-Factors	Statements	Alpha
Transfornmational Leadership	12	.805
Transactional Leadership	15	.839
Democratic Leadership	6	.676
Authoritarian Leadership	5	.677
Scale	38	.922

Table 4: Sub-factors of The School Culture Survey and Reliability (n= 164)

Sub-Factors	Statements	Alpha
Collaborative Leadership	11	.750
Teacher Collaboration	6	.753
Professional Development	5	.662
Unity of Purpose	5	.639
Collegial Support	4	.659
Learning Partnership	3	.705
Scale	34	.910

Data Collection and Analysis

Google survey was created for data collection from the head-teachers and invitations were sent to all sample of the study. It was also requested to all the head-teachers to share the Google survey link with their colleagues. Ethical considerations were considered and discussed with the study's respondents prior to data collection. A formal consent was also taken before sending the questionnaires.

Table 5: Response Rate of the study

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	88	54
Female	76	46
Total	164	100

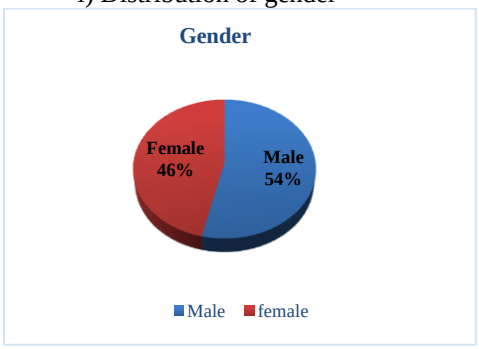
Analysis of Data and Results

Descriptive and inferential statics were applied.

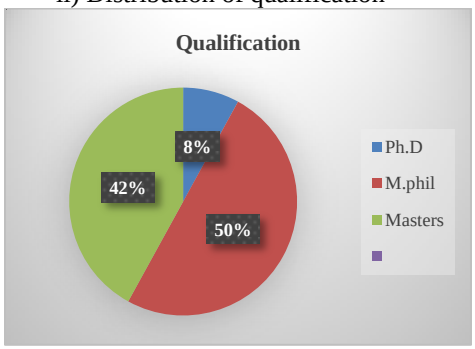
Background information

These figures show the percentage of respondents' information with respect to gender and qualification. There were 3 groups of teachers with respect to qualification and results showed that most of the teachers were qualified with M.Phil degree.

i) Distribution of gender

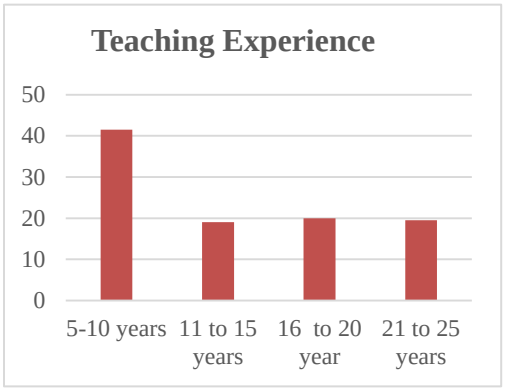


ii) Distribution of qualification

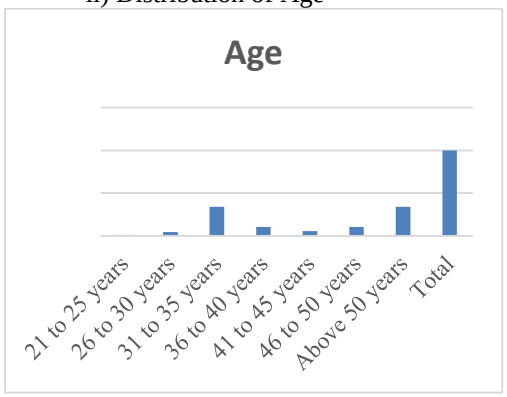


The following graphs show the teaching experience and age of the respondents of the study

i) Distribution of teaching experience



ii) Distribution of Age



Descriptive analysis

To understand the Mean value for each factor, mean value is computed and interpreted according to following criteria (Kaur & Embi, 2011).

Table 6: Criteria for Mean Value

Frequency of Use	Beliefs	Mean Scores
High Level	Very Strong	4.5 - 5.0
	Strong	3.5 - 4.4
Moderate/medium Level	Moderate	2.5 - 3.4
	Weak	1.5 - 2.4
Low Level	Very Weak	1.0 - 1.4

Table 7: Analysis of Mean Score of Bureaucratic Hierarchical Structure and Sub-Factors, (n=164)

Sub-Factors	Mean	SD
Hierarchy of Authority	3.87	.68
Division of Work	3.94	.79
Official Rules	3.86	.75
Impersonal Relationship	3.80	.49
Official Records	4.11	.90
Bureaucratic Hierarchical Structure	3.89	.63

Table 7 represents the mean score for the scale (M=3.89, SD=.63). The most significant factor was official records with highest mean score (M=4.11, SD=.90). The least significant factor was impersonal relationship with lowest mean score (M=3.80, SD=.49) among all factors.

Table 8: Analysis of Mean Score of Leadership Styles and Sub-Factors, (n=164)

Sub-Factors	Mean	SD
Transformational Leadership	3.87	.92
Transactional Leadership	3.53	.65
Democratic Leadership	3.79	.64
Autocratic Leadership	4.48	1.29
Leadership Styles	3.74	.59

Table 8 represents the mean score for the scale (M=3.74, SD=.59). The most significant factor was autocratic leadership style with highest mean score (M=4.48, SD=1.29). The least significant leadership style was transactional leadership with lowest mean score (M=3.53, SD=.65) among styles of leadership.

Table 9: Analysis of Mean Score of School Culture Survey and Sub-Factors, (n=164)

Sub-Factors	Mean	SD
Collaborative Leadership	3.85	.59
Teacher Collaboration	3.79	.71
Professional Development	3.58	.80
Unity of Purpose	3.80	.71
Collegial Support	3.81	.74
Learning Partnership	3.77	.78
School Culture Survey	3.76	.58

Table 9 represents the mean score for the scale was (M=3.76, SD=.58). The most significant factor was collaborative leadership with highest mean score (M=3.85, SD=.59). The least significant factor was professional development with lowest mean score (M=3.58, SD=.80) among all factors.

Hypotheses Testing

Inferential statics were used to evaluate the hypotheses. The strength of the relationship among school culture survey, leadership styles and bureaucratic hierarchical structure and were determined by using Pearson's correlation.

$H0_{1=}$There is no relationship exists among school culture survey,leadership styles and bureaucratic hierarchical structure

Table 10: Relationship among Bureaucratic Hierarchical Structure, Leadership Styles and School Culture (N=164)

Variable	Mean	r	Sig.
Bureaucratic Hierarchical Structure	3.89	.624**	000
Leadership Styles	3.74	.823**	000
School Culture	3.78	.495**	000

**p < .005 (2-tailed)

The table 10 shows that school culture survey and leadership styles had a significant positive moderate relationship (r=.624, p=.000). The strength of the correlation between bureaucratic hierarchical structure and leadership styles was .672 which shows a positive moderate relationship between the two variables. Similarly, positive strong strong relationship existed between leadership style and school culture (r=.823, p=.000). The strength of the relationship was .823. Therefore, a weak positive significant relationship lie between bureaucratic hierarchical structure and school culture survey (r=.495, p=.000). The strength of the relationship was .495.

Table 11: Examination of Mean Score of Bureaucratic Hierarchical Structure on the basis of Female/Male Head Teachers

Gender	N	M	SD	T	Df	P
Female	76	78.92	14.18	-0.982	139.98	.038
Male	88	76.95	10.94			

* Significant at 0.05 level

The p-value .038 showed a significant difference in the mean score about the views of head teachers based on gender about bureaucratic hierarchical structure. Mean score of both female and male teachers was (M=78.92, SD=14.18) and (M=76.95, SD=10.94) respectively. Thus, null hypothesis was rejected as p-value (.038) was less than 0.05 the level of significance.

Table 12: Examination of Mean Score of Leadership Styles on the basis of Female/Male Head Teachers

Gender	N	M	SD	T	Df	P
Female	76	139.25	25.67			
				-1.75	138.50	.001
Male	88	145.54	19.46			

* Significant at 0.05 level

The p-value .001 showed a significant difference in the mean score about the views of head teachers based on gender about leadership styles. Mean score of both female and male teachers was (M=139.25, SD=19.46) and (M=145.54, SD=25.67) respectively. Thus, null hypothesis was rejected as p-value (.001) was less than 0.05 the level of significance.

Table 13: Examination of Mean Score of School Culture on the basis of Female/Male Head Teachers

Gender	N	M	SD	T	Df	P
Female	76	129.43	21.15			
				-0.482	162	.091
Male	88	127.93	18.80			

* Significant at 0.05 level

The p-value .038 showed an insignificant difference in the mean score about the views of head teachers based on gender about the culture of schools. Mean score of both female and male teachers was (M=129.43, SD=21.15) and (M=127.93, SD=18.80) respectively. Thus, null hypothesis was accepted as p-value (.091) was greater than 0.05 the level of significance.

Discussion

The study aimed to find out the relationship among bureaucratic hierarchical structure, leadership styles and school culture. The results showed a significant moderate positive relationship between bureaucratic hierarchical structure and leadership styles. This finding is similar to the study conducted by Buluc (2009). The reason behind the moderate relationship can be communication gap and less participation of staff in the decision making in Pakistani context (Ömeroğlu, 2016). Therefore, another research conducted by Kamran & Mahmood (2021) in secondary schools, the weight of rules in Pakistani schools increases due to the low specialization of teachers in the relevant area and incompetent division of labour. Similarly, a significant positive weak relationship was found between bureaucratic hierarchical structure and school culture. This finding is aligned with the findings of Cranston (2013), Betts (2011), and Gray (2011) although they have used different scales. Furthermore, a strong positive and significant relationship was found between leadership styles and school culture. This finding is aligned with research of Turan & Bektas (2013). Some studies highlighted the fact that school leaders try to create a culture based on collaboration, support, and trust in their schools through their leadership styles and suggest that this culture forms the basis of school members' shared values and beliefs (Gurr & Drysdale, 2020). Successful leaders instill the school's shared values, ideals, principles, and beliefs in the members of the school.

Furthermore, the researchers analyzed five factors of the bureaucratic hierarchical structure like hierarchy of authority, division of work, official rules, impersonal relationship and official records. Official record keeping was the most important factor among all the factors of bureaucratic hierarchical structure of the schools with highest mean score (M=4.11) and this finding is similar to the finding of Pollit (2018). Likewise, the most significant leadership style in Pakistani schools was autocratic leadership style with

highest mean (M=4.48) among transactional, transformational and democratic leadership style and this finding is contrast to the finding of Pratt (2014) because the Pakistani culture is based on the power distance and gives priority to the autocratic decision making style. Moreover six factors of school culture were analyzed for the current study and those were collaborative leadership, teacher collaboration, professional development, unity of purpose, collegial support and learning partnership. Therefore, the finding of this research showed professional development as a least significant factor of school culture with least mean score (M= 3.58) because the leadership in secondary schools of Pakistan almost never tried to create a school culture for the effective running of schools. Mostly teachers have irrelevant professional training (Ministry of Education, NEP 1998-2010), and also adequate leadership training is unavailable for principals. Promotions system is based on seniority in teaching (Alam, 2021). Moreover, difference in the views of head teachers is aligned with the research of Coldwell (2018) which indicated a significant difference in the opinions of male and female teachers.

Recommendations

The current study recommends that, although the organizational structure of schools is bureaucratic and efficient. But necessary actions needs to be taken to make the bureaucracy more functional to improve the quality of the existing infrastructure and processes. This study was only based on quantitative findings and offers the head-teachers perspectives only. A qualitative study with teacher's in-depth responses may be conducted to have a clear understanding of given phenomenon.

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