

## School Climate and Teacher Job Satisfaction: Evidence from Primary Schools in Lahore, Pakistan

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### Abstract

The correlation between school climate and teacher job satisfaction has been the subject of international studies worldwide, but in Pakistan this is a relatively uncharted field of investigation, especially from the viewpoint of primary school teachers. The way teachers perceive their school climate is very important, as it has a direct influence on their job satisfaction, performance, and teaching commitment. This research examines school climate and job satisfaction from the perspective of primary school teachers in Lahore and determines to what degree the two variables are correlated. Quantitative correlational research design was utilized to maintain objectivity and generalizability of findings. 202 teachers (101 male and 101 female) from ten public primary schools responded to standardized and validated survey instruments. Results show a strong positive correlation between school climate and job satisfaction ( $r = .241$ ,  $p = .015$ ), where greater positive perceptions of school climate are related to higher job satisfaction. Surprisingly, the study did not find significant variation in perceptions by gender or years of experience, demonstrating a fairly consistent pattern across demographic categories. With respect to particular facets of job satisfaction, teachers indicated greater satisfaction on dimensions like pay, supervision, chances for promotion, and responsibility, whereas levels of only moderate satisfaction were reported for recognition, working conditions, and relationships with colleagues. The findings of the study highlight the paramount necessity of fostering an encouraging and positive school climate as a means to enhancing teacher job satisfaction and, by extension, teaching effectiveness. Through closing gaps in recognition, professional assistance, and workplace connections, school leaders and policy-makers can establish settings under which teachers are valued, encouraged, and more dedicated to their jobs. Down-to-earth recommendations from the study are the implementation of clear and equitable promotion policies, provision of systematic professional development and supervisory assistance, and introduction of policies that enhance collegial cooperation and general school climate. These steps could not only improve teacher satisfaction but also help bring about sustained improvement in the quality of primary education in Pakistan.

**Keywords:** school climate, job satisfaction, primary school teachers, Pakistan, educational leadership

### Introduction

Education is universally acknowledged as the cornerstone of social, cultural, and economic advancement. It not only transmits knowledge but also nurtures civic

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values, fosters creativity, and equips individuals with the competencies required for personal and collective development. Schools, in this regard, act as microcosms of society where learners acquire not only academic knowledge but also the social, moral, and emotional skills necessary for becoming responsible citizens (Rapti, 2013). The success of this transformative process is strongly influenced by the commitment, motivation, and satisfaction of teachers, who are widely regarded as the most critical human resource in education (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005).

Teacher job satisfaction has been extensively studied in developed contexts because of its association with retention, professional performance, and student outcomes. Satisfied teachers are more likely to demonstrate enthusiasm, maintain professional commitment, and adapt to innovative teaching strategies, whereas dissatisfaction often leads to burnout, absenteeism, and attrition (Ingersoll, 2001; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). However, in many developing countries, including Pakistan, the issue has received relatively limited scholarly attention despite its direct implications for educational quality (Ali, Zubair, & Iqbal, 2019). Given that primary education forms the foundation of the entire educational structure, the satisfaction of primary teachers is particularly critical for ensuring the effectiveness and sustainability of learning systems.

Parallel to job satisfaction, the concept of **school climate** has gained prominence in international educational research. School climate refers to the quality and character of school life as experienced by its members, encompassing norms, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009). A positive school climate has been associated with higher student achievement, greater teacher efficacy, and improved psychosocial outcomes for both students and staff (Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013). Conversely, a negative or toxic school climate contributes to stress, conflict, and diminished professional satisfaction among teachers (Johnson, Kraft, & Papay, 2012).

In Pakistan, however, systematic investigations into school climate remain scarce. Most studies of teacher performance and professional development focus on training, resources, or curriculum, while the psychosocial and organizational environment in which teachers operate is often overlooked (Shah, 2012). This research gap is critical, as evidence from other contexts suggests that teachers' perceptions of school climate directly influence their level of satisfaction and their capacity to perform effectively (Aydin, Sarier, & Uysal, 2013).

Against this backdrop, the present study seeks to examine the perceptions of primary school teachers in Lahore with regard to both school climate and job satisfaction. It further investigates whether there is a significant relationship between these two variables, and whether differences exist based on gender and teaching experience. Understanding these dynamics is essential for policymakers, administrators, and educational leaders who aim to foster environments that not only

enhance teacher satisfaction but also improve student learning outcomes and the overall quality of schooling.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To measure teachers' perceptions of the school climate in public primary schools.
2. To assess teachers' perceptions of job satisfaction in primary schools.
3. To determine the relationship between school climate and job satisfaction.
4. To compare perceptions of school climate and job satisfaction based on gender.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the perceptions of primary school teachers about school climate?
2. What are the perceptions of primary school teachers about job satisfaction?
3. What is the relationship between school climate and job satisfaction?
4. Do male and female teachers differ in their perceptions of school climate and job satisfaction?

### **Literature Review**

School climate has been known to be a key factor affecting both teacher and student outcomes for many years. It is a complex construct that includes the norms, values, interpersonal relationships, organizational structures, and practices that define life in a school (Anderson, 1982). Hoy and Miskel (1982) define school climate as the psychological and social climate that influences the behavior, motivation, and performance of teachers and students. In this regard, school climate is not merely physical but also the relational and emotional climate that teachers and students share on a day-to-day basis.

The Organizational School Climate (OSC) model is based on Baumrind's (1968) theory of authoritative parenting, where high expectations are balanced by strong support systems to create effective schools. These schools promote trust, open communication, and respect among students, teachers, and school leaders. Studies have indicated that teachers who experience schools as supportive and inclusive report less burnout, stress, and turnover (Gregory & Cornell, 2009; Huang & Cornell, 2018). In contrast, negative climates of poor leadership, low collaboration, and minimal professional support tend to discourage teacher participation and innovation.

International literature supports the importance of school climate in contributing to academic achievement. Fraser (1994) and Wang & Dishion (2011) established that positive school climates are associated with increased student achievement and improved teacher effectiveness. Notably, school climate is not a stable attribute but a dynamic process that captures recurrent interactions within the school community.

## 2.2 Teacher Job Satisfaction

Teacher job satisfaction is another theoretical construct that has been extensively explored in educational research because it directly relates to teachers' retention, performance, and students' learning outcomes. Locke (1976) conceptualized job satisfaction as a positive mood state triggered by an individual's evaluation of their job or job experience. For teachers, job satisfaction occurs when teachers experience their work as meaningful, supported, and in harmony with their professional and personal needs.

Theoretical models like Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943) and Herzberg's two-factor theory (1959) provide great insights into job satisfaction determinants. Maslow focused on the satisfaction of physiological as well as psychological needs varying from basic security to self-actualization. Herzberg, however, separated intrinsic motivators (e.g., achievement, recognition, and responsibility) that cause satisfaction from extrinsic hygiene factors (e.g., wages, working conditions, and policies) that avoid dissatisfaction.

In developing countries, teacher satisfaction is usually undermined by systemic issues. The most significant issues include limited remuneration, absence of opportunities for career progression, lack of adequate resources, and heavily congested classrooms (Adejumobi & Ojikutu, 2013). Maslow (1954) emphasized that if fundamental needs such as equitable compensation and safety are not met, higher-order professional satisfaction is hard to achieve. In spite of these limitations, studies indicate that satisfied teachers are more committed, creative, and effective in their teaching (Goodenow, 1993). They also form better relationships with students and are more resilient in difficult settings.

## 2.3 School Climate and Job Satisfaction Relationship

There is a significant amount of literature that has demonstrated a strong positive relationship between school climate and the job satisfaction of teachers. Schools that have positive leadership, collaborative cultures, equitable policies, and open communication make teachers feel that they belong, are respected, and have a purpose. This ensures their motivation and job satisfaction (Brown, Anfara, & Roney, 2004). On the other hand, unhealthy school climates with autocratic management, distrust, and unsatisfying working conditions result in dissatisfaction, absenteeism, and ultimately teacher turnover (Jankens, 2011).

These results are supported by empirical research drawn from various cultural and educational settings. For instance, Trepurtharat and Tayiam (2014) established that Thai teachers teaching in positively climatic schools had elevated levels of satisfaction, while Villiers (2006) found similar trends in South Africa where positively climatic schools were associated with greater teacher commitment. In the US, various studies affirm that a positive climate not only increases job satisfaction but also minimizes teacher burnout and facilitates professional development.

Literature indicates school climate as a predictor of job satisfaction among teachers, acting both as an enabler of intrinsic motivation and a preventer of

professional dissatisfaction. Through ensuring a supportive and team-oriented environment, schools can promote teachers' sense of being valued, supported, and encouraged to perform. This is particularly crucial in environments like Pakistan, where systemic issues already put pressure on teachers' morale and motivation.

## Research Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative correlational research design to investigate the relationship between school climate and teacher job satisfaction among primary school teachers in Lahore. A correlational design was considered appropriate because the purpose of the study was not to manipulate variables or establish causality, but rather to measure the degree of association between two naturally occurring constructs (school climate and job satisfaction). Quantitative methods allowed for the collection of objective, standardized data from a relatively large sample, thereby ensuring reliability, replicability, and generalizability of findings.

### 3.2 Population and Sample

The population for the study comprised all primary school teachers working in public schools across Lahore. Since it was not feasible to survey the entire population, a **sample of 202 teachers** was selected through a multistage sampling technique. In the first stage, **ten schools** were selected, ensuring representation of both boys' and girls' schools (five each). In the second stage, teachers were selected proportionally from these schools, with careful attention to gender balance. The final sample consisted of 101 male teachers and 101 female teachers, which allowed for meaningful comparisons across gender groups.

The use of multistage sampling ensured representativeness while maintaining feasibility in terms of time and resources. The sample size of 202 was considered adequate for applying statistical techniques such as correlation, t-tests, and ANOVA, thereby ensuring the validity of the study's results.

### 3.3 Instruments

Data were collected using two standardized questionnaires, both of which had been previously validated for use in educational research:

1. **School Climate Questionnaire** – This instrument measured teachers' perceptions of the psychological, social, and organizational environment within their schools. It was validated for use in the Pakistani context, ensuring cultural relevance and appropriateness.
2. **Teacher Job Satisfaction Questionnaire** – This tool assessed teachers' levels of satisfaction across various dimensions, including pay, supervision, promotion opportunities, recognition, responsibility, working conditions, and collegial relationships. The instrument was adapted to the local educational context to ensure clarity and applicability.

To assess the **reliability** of the instruments, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated. Results indicated acceptable internal consistency:

- School Climate Questionnaire:  $\alpha = 0.703$

- Teacher Job Satisfaction Questionnaire:  $\alpha = 0.796$

These values confirm that the instruments were sufficiently reliable for measuring the intended constructs.

### 3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

Data were gathered through self-administered questionnaires, which were distributed to teachers during working hours with the consent of school authorities. Teachers were assured of confidentiality and anonymity to encourage honest and unbiased responses. Completed questionnaires were collected on the same day to minimize response attrition.

The data were coded and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed:

- **Descriptive statistics** (mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage) were used to summarize teachers' perceptions of school climate and job satisfaction.
- **Inferential statistics** were applied to test hypotheses and examine relationships between variables:
  - **Pearson's product-moment correlation** was used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between school climate and teacher job satisfaction.
  - **Independent samples t-tests** were conducted to explore potential gender-based differences.
  - **One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)** was used to examine differences in perceptions based on teaching experience.

The combination of these statistical techniques provided a comprehensive analysis of the data, enabling the study to not only describe but also interpret patterns in teachers' perceptions.

### Data Analysis

This chapter presents the results of the statistical analyses conducted to examine the relationship between school climate and teacher job satisfaction among primary school teachers in Lahore. The findings are organized into four sections: (1) descriptive statistics, (2) gender-based differences, (3) experience-based differences, and (4) correlation analysis.

#### 4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were computed to summarize teachers' perceptions of school climate and job satisfaction. The results indicate that teachers reported **moderate levels** of both constructs, with a mean score of 3.32 ( $SD = 0.37$ ) for school climate and 3.35 ( $SD = 0.44$ ) for job satisfaction.

**Table 1:** *Descriptive Statistics of School Climate and Job Satisfaction*

Variable	N	M	SD
School Climate	202	3.32	0.37
Job Satisfaction	202	3.35	0.44

Note. N = sample size; M = mean; SD = standard deviation.

## 4.2 Gender Differences

To determine whether male and female teachers differed in their perceptions of school climate and job satisfaction, **independent samples t-tests** were conducted. Results indicated **no statistically significant gender differences** in either variable. For school climate,  $t(200) = 1.44$ ,  $p = .152$ , while for job satisfaction,  $t(200) = 0.74$ ,  $p = .461$ .

**Table 2: Independent Samples t-Test Results for Gender Differences**

Variable	Gender	N	M	SD	t	p
School Climate	Male	101	3.29	0.36	1.44	.152
	Female	101	3.35	0.38		
Job Satisfaction	Male	101	3.33	0.45	0.74	.461
	Female	101	3.37	0.44		

Note. N = sample size; M = mean; SD = standard deviation.

## 4.3 Experience Differences

A **one-way ANOVA** was conducted to explore whether teachers' perceptions of school climate and job satisfaction differed across groups based on teaching experience. Results revealed **no statistically significant differences** for either variable across experience levels.

**Table 3: ANOVA Results for Differences by Teaching Experience**

Variable	Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
School Climate	Between Groups	0.152	2	0.076	0.55	.576
	Within Groups	27.678	199	0.139		
Job Satisfaction	Between Groups	0.183	2	0.092	0.48	.619
	Within Groups	38.236	199	0.192		

Note. SS = sum of squares; df = degrees of freedom; MS = mean square.

## 4.4 Correlation Analysis

To examine the relationship between school climate and teacher job satisfaction, a **Pearson product-moment correlation** was performed. Results indicated a **significant positive correlation** between the two variables,  $r(200) = .241$ ,  $p = .015$ . This finding suggests that as perceptions of school climate improve, teachers' job satisfaction also increases.

**Table 4: Correlation Between School Climate and Job Satisfaction**

Variable	1	2
1. School Climate	—	.241*
2. Job Satisfaction	.241*	—

\*Note.  $p < .05$ .



#### 4.5 Summary of Findings

The results of this study can be summarized as follows:

1. Teachers reported **moderate perceptions** of both school climate and job satisfaction.
2. **No significant gender-based differences** were found in perceptions of either variable.
3. **No significant experience-based differences** were observed.
4. A **significant positive correlation** was found between school climate and teacher job satisfaction, indicating that improvements in school climate are associated with higher levels of teacher satisfaction.

#### Discussion

The findings confirm that school climate plays a significant role in shaping teacher job satisfaction, consistent with prior studies (Fraser, 1994; Adejumobi & Ojikutu, 2013). The absence of significant gender differences aligns with international research suggesting that male and female teachers often perceive their professional environments similarly when structural conditions are uniform (Koustelios, 2001).

The moderate overall satisfaction reported by teachers suggests areas for improvement. While teachers expressed contentment with pay and supervision, they were less satisfied with recognition, collegial collaboration, and working conditions. This indicates that intrinsic motivators and professional support systems require strengthening to foster greater engagement and commitment.

#### Conclusion

This study provides empirical evidence that school climate significantly influences teacher job satisfaction in public primary schools in Lahore. A supportive, fair, and collaborative school environment was shown to enhance teachers' morale, motivation, and professional performance, thereby strengthening their commitment to the teaching profession. The findings reinforce the notion that teachers are more satisfied when they perceive school leadership as supportive, decision-making as participatory, and collegial relationships as cooperative. Such a climate not only reduces stress and burnout but also fosters a sense of belonging and recognition, which are essential for sustaining long-term teacher engagement. These results highlight the importance of developing policies and practices that prioritize a positive school climate, as improvements in this area can directly contribute to higher levels of teacher satisfaction, lower turnover, and improved student learning outcomes.

#### Recommendations

1. **Fair Promotion Policies** – Transparent, merit-based advancement systems should be implemented to motivate teachers.
2. **Professional Support** – Regular professional development, mentoring, and recognition programs should be introduced.
3. **Improved Working Conditions** – Schools should ensure adequate infrastructure, manageable class sizes, and supportive leadership.



4. **Policy Implications** – Educational policymakers should prioritize school climate in reform agendas, recognizing its impact on teacher retention and student outcomes.
5. **Further Research** – Similar studies should be conducted across other districts of Pakistan to enable generalization of findings.

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