LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR AND SCHOOL CLIMATE AS DETERMINANTS OF WELL-BEING AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS AND STUDENTS: A CONCEPTUAL EXPLORATION

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ABSTRACT

This conceptual research article explores the relationship between leadership behavior, school climate, and the well-being of secondary school teachers and students. Leadership behavior and school climate are critical factors influencing the well-being of both teachers and students, impacting their academic and personal outcomes. By examining existing research, this paper provides a comprehensive review of the literature, proposing a conceptual framework that connects leadership styles, school climate, and well-being. The article concludes with implications for future research, policy, and practice in the educational context.

KEY WORDS: Leadership behavior, school climate, well-being, secondary school, teachers, students.

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Well-being in education is a multifaceted issue that extends beyond academic performance, impacting the physical, emotional, and social development of both teachers and students. Teachers' well-being is essential to creating a healthy learning environment, while students' well-being is closely tied to academic success and overall life satisfaction (Skaalvik&Skaalvik, 2015). In this context, factors like work-life balance, organizational climate, and psychological resilience play a pivotal role in influencing well-being at the secondary level.

LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR IN SCHOOLS

Leadership behavior refers to the actions, decisions, and approaches of leaders, typically school principals or administrators, that impact school operations (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Two prominent leadership styles are transformational and transactional leadership. Transformational leadership is characterized by inspiring and motivating followers through a shared vision and strong relationships, while transactional leadership is more focused on task completion and reward-based incentives (Burns, 1978).

Research shows that transformational leadership positively affects teachers' job satisfaction and well-being by fostering a sense of purpose, autonomy, and collaboration (Leithwood& Jantzi, 2006). Conversely, transactional leadership, which emphasizes control and performance, has been associated with higher stress levels and reduced job satisfaction among teachers (Bogler, 2001).

a) *Transformational Leadership and Well-Being*

Transformational leaders foster a supportive and collaborative environment, which has been shown to enhance teachers' professional well-being. By promoting open communication and recognizing individual contributions, transformational leaders reduce burnout and increase engagement among teachers (Leithwood et al., 2008). This style also promotes a positive school climate, which can benefit students by creating an environment that supports emotional and academic development (Day, Sammons, Hopkins, Harris, Leithwood, & Gu, 2009).

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b) Transactional Leadership and Well-Being

While transactional leadership focuses on structured performance and rewards, it can lead to increased pressure on teachers to meet targets, resulting in higher stress and lower job satisfaction (Bass & Avolio, 1994). For students, a school environment dominated by transactional leadership may create a climate of high competition and anxiety, negatively impacting their emotional well-being (Bogler, 2001).

SCHOOL CLIMATE

School climate encompasses the quality and character of school life, including relationships, teaching practices, and organizational structures (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009). A positive school climate, characterized by supportive relationships, academic challenges, and safety, is linked to improved well-being for both teachers and students (Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013). Conversely, a negative school climate marked by isolation, disrespect, and disorder can lead to stress, burnout, and reduced well-being (Loukas, 2007).

a) Impact on Teachers

Teachers' perceptions of their work environment play a critical role in shaping their well-being. A supportive school climate where teachers feel valued and have positive relationships with peers and administrators contributes to job satisfaction and reduces burnout (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012). In contrast, a negative school climate, where teachers experience high demands with little support, leads to increased stress and decreased mental health (Van Maele& Van Houtte, 2012).

b) Impact on Students

For students, a positive school climate promotes a sense of belonging, academic motivation, and emotional well-being (Roeser, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2000). A school environment that fosters mutual respect, safety, and support enhances students' ability to thrive both

academically and emotionally (Thapa et al., 2013). On the other hand, a negative climate, characterized by bullying, discrimination, and lack of emotional support, is linked to increased anxiety, depression, and disengagement from school (Loukas, 2007).

LEADERSHIP, SCHOOL CLIMATE, AND WELL-BEING: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The relationship between leadership behavior, school climate, and well-being is cyclical and interconnected. Leadership behavior sets the tone for school climate, which in turn affects the well-being of teachers and students (Day et al., 2009). Transformational leadership contributes to a positive school climate by fostering collaboration, innovation, and support, leading to higher levels of well-being (Leithwood& Jantzi, 2006). In contrast, transactional leadership may create a more performance-driven, stressful environment, detracting from the well-being of both teachers and students (Bogler, 2001).

A conceptual framework that connects these variables can be illustrated as follows:

a) Leadership Behavior → School Climate: Leadership behavior, particularly transformational leadership, plays a pivotal role in shaping the school climate.
b) School Climate → Well-Being: A positive school climate promotes well-being, whereas a negative climate exacerbates stress and anxiety.
c) Leadership Behavior → Well-Being: Leadership styles directly influence the well-being of teachers and students by shaping the organizational environment and emotional tone of the school.

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH, POLICY, AND PRACTICE

The findings of this conceptual exploration have significant implications for educational practice and policy. School administrators and policymakers should prioritize transformational leadership development and work towards cultivating positive school climates to support the well-being of teachers and students. Furthermore, future research should focus on empirically

testing the proposed framework to better understand the intricate relationships between leadership behavior, school climate, and well-being.

CONCLUSION

Leadership behavior and school climate are critical determinants of the well-being of secondary school teachers and students. Transformational leadership, which fosters collaboration, autonomy, and a supportive environment, is associated with positive school climates and enhanced well-being. Conversely, transactional leadership and negative school climates can lead to stress, burnout, and reduced well-being. This conceptual exploration underscores the need for leadership development and school climate improvement as strategies for enhancing well-being in educational settings.

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