

Gendered Perspectives of Pakistani Principals on Crafting and Leading a Positive School Climate

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study investigates school principals' understanding of the positive school climate (PSC) and their role in establishing PSC based on their gender. The study used phenomenological research. We collected data from 20 purposively selected school principals, with the breakdown of 10 male & 10 female principals. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data, followed by thematic analysis. The Braun and Clarke (2017) six steps thematic analysis framework was applied in this regard. The results revealed valuable insights highlighting school principals' interpretation of PSC and their role in establishing PSC. There was agreement on certain aspects of PSC, such as the physical infrastructure of the school and instructional tools and material. However, differences existed between male and female principals on peers and student-teacher relationships, school wide community involvement, emotional support, and wellbeing. Female principals preferred such aspects of PSC to their male counterparts. Likewise, female principals preferred a supportive leader, while men preferred an autocratic and decisive leader in decision-making. The results offer theoretical underpinnings, practical strategies and actionable solutions to establish and sustain PSC. It also has implications for policymakers and educationists regarding the important aspects of PSC and devising and implementing relevant programs considering the gendered understanding of PSC. Similarly, school leaders must exercise caution in cultivating and maintaining PSC to promote the holistic development of students. The study remains limited in explaining the effect of the two different groups of principals on the prevalence of PSC, which future research may consider.

Keywords: Gender; leadership; positive school climate (PSC); school climate (SC); school principals