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**School Culture, Leadership, and Teacher Development**

**Leadership and Teacher Influence on School Culture and Climate and their Impact on Student Achievement**

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**Leadership and Teacher Influence on School Culture and Climate and their Impact on Student Achievement**

1. **Introduction**

The ultimate goal for educationists is for students to reach their highest potential in their achievement of learning. Various elements come into play in the orchestration of this feat. A school’s culture and climate as well as teacher development are some of the key contributors to student achievement hence making it critical that they are explored to dissect specific aspects that contribute to or hinder this process. This then enables institutions to work on maintaining the positive contributions and change or improve the aspects of culture and climate that are hindering student achievement and teacher development. Karadağ et al., (2020) write that schools are primarily measured by their academic achievement which although curriculum and teacher preferences contribute to, school culture plays a big part. Spicer (2016) adds that the school’s climate and student achievement have a direct relationship, making it imperative that the establishment of a positive school climate is foremost in a school leader’s plan especially if success is to be achieved**.** He further points out that schools with the best climate were found to outperform others within the same area and that the principals were responsible for the development of this climate.

To explore leadership and teacher influence on school culture and climate and their impact on student achievement, this essay will start by clarifying the meaning and relationship between school culture and climate. The school leader’s influence on school culture and climate will be scrutinized and the roles of informal and formal leaders in developing and sustaining a school’s culture examined. A probe into the effect of school culture and climate on teacher efficacy and the impact of teacher development on school culture and climate will be made.

Historical, social, and philosophical mechanisms that shape powerful school cultures will be analyzed and the fostering and maintaining of any required cultural change despite resistance experienced, will be elucidated.

1. **School climate and culture defined**

**Climate**

Climate may be used to describe how one feels. Kane et al., (2016) in describing school climate, relay that it is much more than one’s experience but more of the encompassing feel of the school and quoting The School Climate Council (2007), adds that it includes the building of relationships and learning within the school. Furthermore, quoting Drago-Severson (2012), Spicer (2016) reports that in comparison to a school culture that takes time to transform, a school climate is more responsive to influence and required change.

A school’s climate may be measured or determined by the rules, norms, social and emotional security, leadership, and above all the relationships among the students and adults which inadvertently affect the character and quality of school life (Spicer, 2016). He further advises leaders to focus on creating a positive school climate to improve student achievement.

**Culture**

According to Kane et al., ( 2016),culture is more of shared values and beliefs whose rules, norms, and traditions are unwritten but deeply interwoven in their daily practices in the school as opposed to the climate that is more of an attitude of the school. They add that changing culture may be slow and gradual because culture is deeply ingrained. To this end, culture is more of how people act as opposed to climate which is how people feel.

According toAtasoy (2020), school culture is historically rooted in the norms, values, and traditions of the school’s stakeholders. Cansoy & Parlar (2017) purport it as being an atmosphere that creates a sense of belonging to a community through shared experiences within the school.

In Herndon’s (2007) words, there are 2 elements to culture; it is a product as it constitutes an accumulation of knowledge and acumen from previous members and it is also a process due to its continued renewal and recreation as new members are embraced and taught the culture while leaders work towards improving the existing culture. They further report that collaboration among teachers enhances a positive school culture where colleagues’ work is supported and ideas and resource materials are shared and there is a strong sense of commitment to the school.

Yusof et al., (2016) convey that a social system with its own culture and characteristics is what defines school culture and will usually be expressed in social structures, school logos, traditions, beliefs, and goals. These ultimately influence teaching and learning in the school. They add that this definition works in consonance with Schein’s Organisational Theory where in the first stage the core of the school is expressed through an assumption of shared resources. The values and norms form the second stage and although these are not necessarily written down, they are known by the members of the school. A marriage of the first and second stage makes the third stage which is seen in the informal day-to-day practices through social interactions carried out. It also encompasses historical memories that are precious and have contributed to making the school what it is.

1. **Leaders’ influence on school culture and climate**

Spicer (2016) purports that since the school culture and climate greatly influence teaching and learning in schools, a leader must discern what is needed to determine their school’s climate for high student achievement to be realized. He adds that creating a climate that is safe and supports learning where stakeholders have the opportunity to positively influence the climate is what leaders are being called to do. This requires a shift in the role of a leader from a managerial one to an instructional one while simultaneously building relationships with teachers and students. Herndon (2007) writes that over time, the role of a school principal-leader has shifted from being focused on instruction to one that embraces various facets of a school like legal issues, resource allocation, and professional development to mention but a few.

Human beings are relational by default, so in any organization especially a school, to create a positive environment, the leader must build relationships with all the stakeholders. This then creates the ground for a collaborative movement towards achieving shared goals.

According to Spicer (2016), quoting Hopson & Lawson (2011), a positive school climate is created by collecting data that reflects students’ needs and organizational factors, which are then used to make informed decisions for the improvement needed for a positive school climate and resulting academic success. He adds that a principal's leadership style is directly related to its climate, which determines the quality and success of education.

There are diverse types of leaders but one that motivates people to reach their personal and organizational goals, that promotes change by first interacting and understanding the individuals through shared experiences, and motivates them by creating a positive environment and influences behaviors and beliefs toward the required change, is what Kalkan et al., (2020) refer to as an effective leader.

According to Perkins (2020), though the school administrators are instrumental in the success of a school, the school principals highly influence its effectiveness and as Gordana (2020) says, they have the most far-reaching effect on the school climate and culture. He adds that appraising the existing culture, discussing with stakeholders, and collaboratively working on a vision and mission for the school while keeping the progress in surveillance and not forgetting reflection, will help leaders bring about any desired cultural change. Liu et al., (2021) add that school leaders providing an allowance for teacher collaboration with the resultant job satisfaction creates a positive and supportive school culture.

Atasoy (2020) concurs by saying that culture and leadership influence each other where the latter shapes culture which inevitably affects the leaders, and that a critical part of the principal’s job is to create a strong positive culture where the motivation is high regarding teaching and learning among teachers and students. Therefore, leaders must focus on their school climate/culture, which enhances the school’s vision and resultant student achievement. Schools with strong school culture, have a more developed education, and quality of school-life experience (Karadağ et al., 2020).

MacNeil et al. (2009) agree with the idea of building a strong vision for the school’s organization stating that when the staff accepts and supports the leader’s goals for the school, higher health organizational scores are observed which in turn positively influence the school’s climate.

Leaders should work toward promoting a culture of collaboration that works toward improved teaching and the overall positive culture of the school. Additionally, leaders should facilitate teachers’ focus on organizational learning, sharing the norms and values of the school, and supporting teachers’ and students’ contributions to any cultural activities so that they feel responsible and part of any recommended changes. Issues raised can then be resolved quicker in line with the community’s views. A positive attitude toward the transformation of culture is observed when a culture of collaboration is adopted (Yusof et al., 2016).

MacNeil et al., (2009) advise that understanding the school’s culture is an antecedent for leaders who go beyond managing to then lead the school. Being that the organizational structure plays a crucial role in growing a successful school, understanding the complexities of belief patterns, values and attitudes and working collaboratively with stakeholders to create a clear purpose for what should be done and who to serve, is essential.

**3.1 The roles of formal and informal leaders in developing and sustaining a school culture**

It has been determined that leaders are highly instrumental in the development of school culture and climate, however, not all leaders are the same just as individuals portray various characteristics, leaders also lead using various styles usually dependent on their character, though some leadership styles can be learned. Spicer (2016) lists 6 different styles which include transformational, transactional, autocratic, laissez-faire, authoritative, and autocratic styles, and recommends that one creates their leadership style by first becoming self-aware and then being willing to learn and apply the characteristics of leadership. Atasoy (2020) further reveals that a substantial relationship between leadership style, school culture, and organizational image exists. Spicer (2016) suggests that high student achievement is directly related to leadership style. When a leader focuses on building relationships and trust among the teachers, they become more efficient and committed to the success of the students. MacNeil et al., (2009) append that the principal indirectly impacts student achievement through the mediation of relationships that in turn positively affect the school climate, reporting that a sense of community invariably led to high school achievement.

**Formal leaders**

A formal style of leadership implies distance in the relationship and more focus on achieving goals. Transactional and autocratic styles fall under this umbrella. According to Spicer (2016), a transactional leadership style seeks to maintain the existing structure while following a punishment-reward system and the leader is prone to micromanaging. Following rules is of utmost importance. Perkins (2020) adds that this reward-punishment system promotes compliance and short-term motivation. However, Atasoy (2020) contends that with transactional leaders control is maintained and employees are focused on producing results. Task requirements and work expectations are clear and though some writers claim that there is no creativity in this structure others claim that innovation and this type of leadership are positively related.

Autocratic and authoritarian leadership styles do not foster relationships between the leader and the employees. They use threats and pressure to get the job done and though the goals are set out and communicated, they are not effective for an educational setting as these styles do not encourage a positive work environment which is essential for teachers and high student achievement. A culture is developed where the employees work to achieve the bare minimum and innovation which is paramount in an educational setting is lacking (Spicer, 2016).

Though formal leadership may seem to negatively impact the school climate and culture, there are aspects of it that can be adopted in a leadership style for the good of a learning institution. The goals must be clear and well communicated and some sort of reward is provided that fosters a motivated and positive staff. However, if the motivation is short-lived, the purpose is not served hence the need for characteristics of alternative leadership styles to be adopted.

**Informal leaders**

An informal leadership style implies one where a leader is less of a stickler for rules and is more relational. This includes transformational, democratic, and laissez-faire styles of leadership. Spicer (2016) writes that with the democratic style of leadership, teachers are allowed to contribute, communication is effective and though there is freedom, order exists as opposed to the laissez-faire style where there is freedom but no order. Though freedom is required for creativity and innovation, when there is no order, there is no success in achieving desired goals.

The transformational leadership style is preferred among all the informal leadership styles. As the name suggests it implies an element of change or transformation. Perkins (2020) writes that the goal of a transformational leader is to grow and develop their followers into leaders through agreed changes in the people and social systems. Spicer (2016) purports that transformational leaders may focus on social harmony as opposed to student achievement and they easily become role models due to their dynamic personalities and encouraging positivity and creativity within the school. He adds that when the climate is positive, teachers are more effective resulting in higher student achievement.

According to Atasoy (2020), transformational leaders promote collaboration and collective task achievement where experiences are shared, authority is delegated and freedom in decision-making exists. He adds that transformational leadership positively impacts teachers’ perception of the school climate and organizational learning and is highly effective where reform and change are required since it is more involving of stakeholders as opposed to the transactional style of leadership. Furthermore, he points out that the reinvigorated motivation resulting from the structural and psychological empowerment that the transformative leaders provide yields a strong culture and positive climate that a transactional style does not.

Perkins (2020) concurs that to establish a positive school climate, transformational leadership is essential which leads to motivated teachers who are committed to the school’s success and student achievement.

The cultivation of strong relationships among staff and faculty and collaborative school culture is something that teachers aspire for which is a characteristic of transformational leadership, however, he contends that though transformational leadership is preferred, a hybrid of leadership styles is more befitting as no single style possesses all the qualities to perfect leadership. The strengths in formal leadership, as well as those in informal leadership, can be merged and adopted by leaders to enable them to be most effective in creating a climate and culture that yields high student achievement.

**3.2 The effect of school culture and climate on teacher efficacy**

Duan et al., (2018) write that a school’s effectiveness can be affected by school culture and job satisfaction which then influences the school climate. Ohlson (2016) reiterates by saying that a school leader is wise to encourage a culture of education improvement by encouraging change that is effective and promoting the implementation of standards that have strong professional school cultures by working collaboratively with teachers to improve teaching and learning hence climate as a whole.

Ohlson (2016) recommends that leaders also implement research-based strategies to successfully improve teacher efficacy, however, it is important to note that not all strategies work for all schools or learning institutions. I worked in a school where a parent introduced a research-based strategy for behavior management that worked well for her home situation and believed that this would best suit the school. Given her close relationship with the school head, she went ahead to implement this strategy by training the teachers and other stakeholders. It was not successful because though it worked for her home, it did not work for a school, and being that she did not have an educational background, there were many holes in the strategy. The teachers were resentful because they were not allowed to have any input in the development and were forced to apply it in the classroom regardless of whether it was working or not. Due to its lack of success, the teachers found it harder to be effective in the classroom because they were spending more time trying to figure out how best to work the strategy but the biggest problem was the change in climate as the teachers felt their views, opinions and even experiences were being completely ignored and they were being forced to do something they did not believe in. Needless to say, many resorted to doing what they believed worked for them regardless of the number of training sessions given. The school head was replaced by one who then collaborated with the teachers to create a new behavior management policy. Involving the teachers was instrumental in the success of its implementation because the teachers felt respected and heard and their experience in the classroom was used to create the new policy. The climate was more positive enabling the teachers to be more effective in their work hence promoting student achievement.

Duan et al., (2018) supplement this by reporting that school effectiveness, teacher job satisfaction, and school culture are interrelated. It is therefore imperative that leaders take steps to ensure teacher job satisfaction for the teachers to be more positive and effective hence contributing to a strong positive school culture which ultimately leads to high student achievement. Conversely, when teachers are dissatisfied due to various issues like low salaries, little or no opportunities for professional development, and poor communication, a negative school climate with high teacher attrition and low teacher efficacy and student achievement may be observed.

It becomes clear that positive school culture and climate are essential for student achievement and that teachers play a major role in this, making job satisfaction pivotal. Duan et al., (2018) write that a supporting and motivating culture works toward a teacher’s competence and satisfaction hence a positive climate and culture.

I had an experience with a leader who believed that pointing out teachers’ faults and areas where they were below standard, would compel them to improve. There were few opportunities for professional development and the general motivation was low leading to teacher attrition. However, a new administrator with a developmental philosophy who spent a large percentage of his time developing teachers professionally, and improving their motivation, contributed to teacher retention due to professional development even though there was not much increase in their remuneration. The vital role that teachers play in the success of effective teaching and learning cannot be overlooked. It is therefore imperative that leaders pay attention to their job satisfaction and resultant positive school climate.

Many researchers cite organizational structures as being fundamental in influencing the school climate hence teacher effectiveness (Abdulahi, 2020; Duan et al., 2018). Abdulahi (2020) insists that if schools are to realize their objectives successfully, creating a positive organizational climate that enhances teacher job satisfaction and a positive school climate is essential. He reported that student performances were affected by the levels of teacher job satisfaction and their job satisfaction increased their retention.

Being a teacher for over 17 years, I realized that teachers play one of the most important roles in school. Parents entrust their children to them expecting the highest possible student achievement. For 8 hours or more, a teacher is expected to create, teach, pastor, and train the students in their care. For this to be done successfully a positive culture and climate are essential. A leader must look into what must be done to make their environment conducive to allowing maximum efficacy. This may also have to do with the physical surroundings, resources availed to them and balancing their duties so that they are not burnt out, and additionally creating opportunities for them to grow professionally. This will increase their efficacy and lead to higher student achievement results.

**3.3 Teacher development, school culture, and climate**

Yusof et al., (2016) agree that achievement in examinations portrays a school’s level of excellence which excellence is determined by the quality of the teachers. Though first-rate teacher training is pivotal to teacher- excellence, the school culture greatly shapes and influences both the leadership skills and personality of the teacher.

Teacher collaboration not only develops teachers professionally but it adds to the positive climate created in a school. Through Professional Learning Communities, teachers can collaborate professionally, solve problems and work together in building the school’s educational goals. When teachers work together to build the school’s quality, they are empowered because they are developing professionally and contributing to the school’s growth hence adding to positive school culture and climate.

**3.4 Effects of school culture and climate on student achievement**

High student achievement is eminently dependent on a positive school climate. Spicer (2016) reports from a study that lower student achievement occurred when there was a failure to nurture positivity in a school. Karadağ et al., (2020) in agreement, quoting Amsalu (2002) write that the type of the school culture, combined with the teacher’s commitment and quality of administration could determine the performance of a school. They add that schools with strong, positive cultures cultivate motivation among learners in addition to teacher collaboration and enable students to reach their highest learning potential. Equally, Herndon (2007) and Karadağ et al., (2020) point out that there is a strong relationship between positive school cultures and high-performing schools as opposed to negative toxic cultures that showcased low-performing schools.

For a school climate to be positive certain characteristics are essential. School safety that goes beyond the physical is vital (Kane et al., 2016). I had the opportunity to work with a seasoned teacher whose lesson preparation and teaching techniques were exemplary. However, her approach to teaching and managing behavior in the classroom was to make the students have low esteem and be constantly in fear. This she believed would keep them under control and make her work easier. Some children were able to function in the classroom and produce exactly what the teacher wanted but others that had performed very well in previous classes either shut down or struggled in that environment to the point of not wanting to go to school anymore. This happened to a student that was well-behaved and smart, so her discomfort was a telling sign. The classroom was so toxic that the superior qualities of the teacher were not realized and neither the students nor other teachers were willing to work with her. In contrast, her co-teacher who was not as experienced but had a class with a positive climate, had the students enjoy coming to school and motivated to learn.

Other characteristics that Kane et al., (2016) highlight are interpersonal relationships where there are interactions between the teachers and the students, and school connectedness wherestudents believe that adults and their schoolmates are concerned about them as individuals as well as their learning. The smaller the school the stronger the connectedness.

Ohlson (2016) adds that in the drive to meet the government’s demand for high student achievement, educationists have turned to literature to find the characteristics needed for success in this area. One of the outstanding ones is the establishment of a strong school culture where teacher learning and improvement are supported and collaborative culture is encouraged by the school leaders which promotes strength in the culture of the school. Additionally, school leadership is instrumental in shaping the working conditions of a teacher which ultimately contributes to the character of the school climate. When the school leadership recognizes the importance of professional development in effecting needed changes and implementing new progressive standards in the school, improvement in education is realized by building strong professional school culture (Ohlson, 2016). Ohlson (2016) adds that it is the responsibility of the school leader to establish a positive school culture to ensure successful student achievement. Herndon, (2007) reiterates that outstanding school performance and teacher commitment can be realized with healthy school cultures.

Reno et al., (2017) point out that when there is a lack of correlation between students’ home cultures and the school culture, efforts by schools to promote a positive school culture through the implementation of behavioral models among students of color or from low economic backgrounds, were found to be ineffective and instead, the incongruency led to underachievement. To promote a culture of positivity, school leaders and teachers must endeavor to understand the diverse cultures of students that may be represented in their schools and find ways to have these diversities expressed positively so that students feel valued and ready to embrace aspects of the new school culture. This will contribute to the creation of a strong positive culture in the school which research has shown to contribute to student achievement (Reno et al., 2017). Yusof et al., (2016) agree with this and advise that school leaders start by studying the existing culture before adding to it in their advancement to changes required to make it more positive.

MacNeil et al., (2009) in agreement quoting Watson (2001) advise that an unhospitable culture causes student achievement to suffer, echoing Fink and Resnick’s (2001) reminder of how critical the school leader’s role is in establishing a strong culture of teaching and learning in a school. They add that a climate that supports effective learning for students can be created by the school leaders by increasing goal focus and needed adaptation.

1. **Mechanisms that shape powerful school cultures**

A powerful school structure is strong and united and its members have a sense of ownership and a vested interest in the success of the school. Cansoy & Parlar (2017) posit that one of the ways that this can be achieved is by developing teacher leadership. Through professional development and opening avenues for leadership with a supportive bureaucratic culture and a success/task-oriented culture, a positive relationship is built between the school culture and the teachers setting the ground for a powerful school. Kalkan et al., (2020) in agreement add that there is a close relationship between school culture, leadership, and organizational image and that transformational leaders should invest in training and development programs for teachers to enhance a strong culture and organizational image. Karadağ et al., (2020) point out that schools with a strong school culture are productive and have effective communication which impacts their success. Their performance expectation is high and they use cooperative learning techniques and quoting (Hoy & Miskel, 2010), they reiterate that high student achievement is a product of strong and trust-based cultures.

Many researchers put forth teacher collaboration as one of the factors that contribute to strong school cultures. Karadağ et al., (2020) report a strong correlation between improved teacher collaboration, high student motivation, and strong school cultures.

Stolp’s (1994) view is that a school leader who can adapt the school’s vision as the school changes will be more adept at creating a strong school culture. He adds that working collaboratively with the school’s stakeholders to re-create the school’s vision depending on the existing circumstances, builds a shared vision with collaborative school cultures enhancing strength in the school culture developed. Garrick (2019) purports that strong school cultures are created when great teaching and learning are supported and collaboration, communication, reflection, and innovation by teachers are endorsed.

From the various writers, it is clear that a strong school culture should have elements of collaboration from all stakeholders, opportunities for growth and development into areas of leadership for the teachers, and a leader that can recognize and adapt to desired changes in the school vision with input from all stakeholders. This builds a community that has ownership and a desire for the school to succeed hence positively impacting student achievement.

* 1. **Historical -the historical context of the culture of schools**

A culture, as opposed to climate, is built over time as it involves the values, beliefs, and traditions that are formed over time. I have been part of a school for over 28 years and have seen our school build its values, beliefs, and traditions that are particular to it being a faith-based international school in a third-world country. Promoting diversity and acceptance of all types of learners is part of the culture and as such without having a policy that directly addresses equality, the policies written reflect equality for the diversity represented. Ohlson, 2016) quoting Peterson (2002) adds that the school’s professional development and growth are reflective of the school culture and that success in organizational structure is greatly influenced by a change in the school culture.

* 1. **Social- ways in which a school's culture is shaped by and shapes its' participants**

Regarding the social aspect, a strong school culture reduces misconduct in the school and creates an environment where students prefer being in school than out of school (Ohlson, 2016). An observation of this was seen during the recent Covid 19 global pandemic, where in many cases, students lost their sense of identity and their ‘family’ in other cases. Where I work, a large percentage of the students have both parents working full-time and Uganda was one of the countries that had schools closed for the longest period of time-2 years! Many children were left to their own devices at home and there were many cases of depression among the teenagers. Needless to say, when schools re-opened, the children were elated to return and re-connect socially with their peers.

Jackson (2018) relays the importance of parental involvement in school learning and events which increases student interest in their academic achievement. Those that could care-less contribute to their children’s lack of interest in the school and their achievement which in turn weakens the school culture. He adds that communication between staff and parents is also key in building a strong school culture as it pre-empts misunderstandings and misconceptions while adding to positivity in the culture. In agreement, Garrick (2019) adds that the relationships that all the school’s stakeholders have with each other are the embodiment of the school’s culture and when collaboration is paramountly expressed in all areas that affect the school a sense of responsibility by all for the success of the school is realized as well as the establishment of strong school culture.

* 1. **Philosophical**

The philosophical aspect addresses the way one thinks or feels. Jackson (2018) points out that the teachers’ and students’ philosophy of the school can greatly impact the strength of its culture and the school culture is bound to be a reflection of their frustration or satisfaction and indifference or passion.

According to Garrick (2019), having teachers model a commitment to lifelong learning through inquiry and curiosity as well as involving all the community members in the learning process is a crucial step in the direction of building strong positive school culture. Reiterating what other researchers have said, he adds that reflection and readiness to change regarding the needs of the school staff and students, as well as practices that model learning with an established sound vision, are components of effective school culture.

Powerful school structures are shaped by historical, social, and philosophical factors all pointing out the strength of collaboration of all stakeholders involved in the success of the school. High student achievement is dependent on strong school cultures and leaders must make this their focus to improving student outcomes (MacNeil et al., 2009).

1. **How cultural change is fostered and maintained**

Change is inevitable and according to Spicer (2016), maintaining a strong school culture and climate requires leaders that can lead the schools in this transition all the while fostering a culture of unity and collaboration toward achieving a common goal. He quotes Herbert (2011) as citing transformational leadership as possessing these skills that allow for the development and sustenance of a positive school climate.

Atasoy (2020) claims that delay in or failure to adapt to educational changes negatively affects the school’s climate and culture. He adds that to improve school outcomes in line with the 21st-century needs, change and innovation are essential under the appropriate leadership who are instrumental in an organizational change leading to school improvement. He writes that when organizational change and adaptation to 21st-century demands are well managed, cultural change is more resistant and long-lasting.

According to Gordana (2020), analysis of the current culture and climate is the first step toward change. The relevance of the school’s current vision, the involvement of the teachers, and student achievement are areas to be looked into. In addition to this, engaging and collaborating with the school community to create changes is essential after identifying areas for improvement. It is up to the school leader to then monitor these changes all the while maintaining a positive school culture and climate. Perkins (2020) reiterates the influence that a transformational leadership style has on the development and maintenance of a positive school climate, while Ohlson (2016) echos working collaboratively with the teachers and school leaders to improve teaching practice and student achievement as a strategy toward fostering and maintaining agreed change that ultimately builds the strength of the school culture.

Blau et al., (2017) highlight time as an ingredient to establishing and maintaining any change in school culture. Using the integration of technology as an example, they explain that it takes time for the innovation to be understood and implemented. They add that learners cannot be rushed if the change is to be maintained as it requires growth and competence recognizing that individuals all learn at different paces. In addition to this, the process of integration is complex and staff readiness in conjunction with the involvement of school leadership is essential.

However great an idea for change may be, a good leader does not come into an organization and implement it without taking time to understand the existing culture MacNeil et al., (2009). They supplement that for change to be authentic and maintained, the culture of the school has to be understood, and changing the organizational culture of the school is critical to improved teaching and learning. For change to be maintained, support from the culture and climate of the school is needed.

School leaders that develop structures that allow the school to manage the pressure and preserve security and at the same time meet the needs of the school have put the school on the right path to embrace change.

1. **Conclusion**

This essay sought to highlight the importance of school culture and climate in the success of student achievement. After defining school culture and climate, a leader’s influence on the positivity of school culture and climate by working collaboratively with all stakeholders was examined. The influence of the leadership style on developing and sustaining a school culture and climate was explored showing that a hybrid of styles that are heavier on transformational leadership, is preferred.

Teacher job satisfaction through teacher development, acceptable remuneration, and healthy communication was found to be a major contributor to strong positive school culture and resulting student achievement. In addition, other elements like school safety, building interpersonal relationships, school connectedness, the recognition of the existing diverse cultures, and facilitating their acclimatization to the ‘new’ school culture were found to be contributors to strong, positive school culture and climate.

Collaboration from all stakeholders, opportunities for growth and development into areas of leadership for the teachers, and a leader that can recognize and adapt to desired changes in the school with input from all stakeholders, were found to be elements of a strong school culture notwithstanding the historical, social and philosophical contributions.

Once there is a recognized need for change in the school culture, the leadership taking the school through the required transition while maintaining unity and collaboration will facilitate the maintenance of strong school culture.

Finally, fostering and maintaining required changes was found to be successful under the appropriate leadership when with the collaboration of all stakeholders and the correct steps toward change were followed. From this, it is clear that the school leadership and teachers can negatively or positively influence the school culture and climate which in turn impact student achievement. It is therefore imperative that leaders follow the recommended paths toward creating a strong and positive school culture and climate for high student achievement.

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