



## MEDIATING EFFECT OF WORK ENVIRONMENT OF SCHOOL HEADS ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ETHICAL LEADERSHIP AND SCHOOL CULTURE

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### **Abstract:**

This study sought to ascertain the role that the workplace environment played in mediating the link between ethical leadership and school climate. Data were collected from 300 respondents who are elementary public school teachers of the public elementary schools in the province of Davao Oriental using a quantitative, non-experimental design using a correlational approach. For data gathering, the researcher used an online survey and stratified random sampling. Additionally, the researcher used the Pearson  $r$ , Med graph employing the Sobel  $z$ -test and mean statistical methods. According to the study's findings, there are very high levels of mean scores for ethical leadership, a high level for school culture, and a high level for work environment. Additionally, the findings showed a substantial association between ethical leadership and work environment, a large relationship between work environment and school culture, and a substantial relationship between ethical leadership and both. Additionally, it was discovered that the relationship between ethical leadership and school culture was somewhat mediated by the workplace.

**Keywords:** educational management, public school teachers, work environment, ethical leadership, school culture, mediating effect, Philippines

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## 1. Introduction

As workplace organizations with distinct cultures, schools are a complicated area of study in education. Schools are hierarchical, and because of the various organizational levels and structures of power that frequently encourage inappropriate conduct, schools may serve as the perfect breeding ground for bullying and rude behavior in job settings (Mannix-McNamara *et al.*, 2021). Moreover, if the culture is not favorable to learning, then the achievement level of the students may be lower. Other elements of poor culture in a school community could lead to unhappy teachers, behavioral problems, unmotivated students, disenfranchised parents, and fewer students graduating due to a lack of support on campus (Johns-Klein, 2019).

Each school's unique culture is a key aspect that enhances and gives meaning to various activities (Dimmock *et al.*, 2021). The school culture can provide the best environment for the teaching and learning programs and is one of the factors which can impact school effectiveness. A positive school culture has positively influenced a school's members and is a driving force in achieving goals. Every aspect of a school, including motivation, commitment, collaboration, and community building, is impacted by a positive school culture. Collaborative school cultures are known as the best setting for learning and are essential for continuous improvement in the school (Ismail *et al.*, 2022; Zahed-Babelan *et al.*, 2019).

Leadership in an organization is deciding to reach a moral agreement, interpreting that agreement to respond to novel events, and ensuring that morality serves as the foundation for all students' behavior. School culture has an impact on ethical leadership. The principal plays a leadership role that offers the best chance to develop, spread, and apply moral ideals in schools (Bafadal *et al.*, 2021). Further, a negative working environment is likely in organizations with immoral leadership. Many businesses want to repopulate the organization with like-minded individuals who lack toxic mindsets, which can produce a toxic culture. Recruitment based on cultural compatibility can be a cover for discrimination, with subsequent ethical repercussions (Perez, 2022). Also, because instructors are happier and plan to remain longer in educational institutions with a favorable work environment, this factor is crucial to them and their pupils. The physical environment, economic factors, cultural and social factors, such as the strength of the school's atmosphere, and coworker and student traits, are all significant parts of a teacher's profession (Masoom, 2021).

Furthermore, the researcher is unaware of any research on the local setting's mediating effect of school heads' work environments on the relationship between moral leadership and school culture. However, ethical leadership in the school goes beyond the role of the school principal and includes a propensity to work with stakeholders to achieve a common objective. The definition of school leadership and school culture as layered processes to create a productive workplace is equally applicable here. Even if school culture is based on the past and core principles of the school community, its replacement and renovation are made possible by the leadership's fundamental role and

a supportive workplace environment. In light of this, the researcher is interested in determining whether the work environment of school heads in the Caraga North and South Districts mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and school culture. If so, action plans to improve the work environment of school heads, ethical leadership, and school culture may be developed, which would benefit the study's intended beneficiaries.

## 2. Literature Review

There are review of related literature which are discussed in support to the study. On ethical leadership as the independent variable, person-oriented leadership is crucial because it promotes leaders to build relationships with followers based on mutual respect, trust, and confidence. This helps leaders inspire followers to fulfill the strategic corporate vision and organizational missions. Person-oriented leadership focuses on enhancing and enhancing the relationship between leaders and followers, and it can inspire and motivate staff to meet the demands and goals of the business. The path-goal theory explains that one of the key factors in determining whether someone will succeed in achieving their goals is their capacity to lead others down the appropriate path (Sinani, 2016; Chong *et al.*, 2018).

Employee comprehension of their jobs, responsibilities, and work processes is called clarity. It extends beyond just their job hat of their coworkers as lack of clarity can lead to tension and confusion. Clarity is a necessary pr for productivity. Role clarity is essential to reducing negative emotions and enhancing individual effectiveness and organizational success (Pijnacker, 2019). Role clarity has been shown to boost members of an organization's dedication, engagement, and job satisfaction while lowering stress and nervousness. This has several good effects, including decreased employee turnover (Hassan, 2013; Kauppila, 2014).

Moreover, sustainable leadership extends beyond formal positions or legal authority. These leaders are tasked with forging alliances and forging a shared vision among a broad group of frequently at-odds stakeholders while juggling a variety of collaborative connections. Three scholarly research areas have developed out of the concern for sustainability: sustainable leadership, responsible leadership, and conscious leadership. All three concentrate on a triple bottom line-aware leadership approach that balances stakeholder concerns (Fry & Egel, 2021; Hallinger & Suriyankietkaew, 2018).

On school culture as the dependent variable, working together as teachers to improve student outcomes goes beyond merely exchanging knowledge. Collaborative work suggests interdependence and communal accountability for achieving a shared objective. Although disagreement frequently leads to conflict, deep-level alliance predictably necessitates discussing principles and principles, which might be considered dangerous in some situations. Yet, teacher collaboration's emergence has been largely attributed to the pursuit of discourse and cohesiveness (Pischetola *et al.*, 2022; Romeu *et al.*, 2016; Vangrieken *et al.*, 2015). In this regard, activity-oriented design techniques are

helpful when shifting from specific tasks toward discussions on opposing values and adding to a group's collective knowledge (Goodyear *et al.*, 2021; Romeu *et al.*, 2016).

Another important factor in teachers' professional development is collegiality. It is acknowledged that collegiality is a crucial part of professional growth for educators and a way to increase teachers' knowledge. Since schools are now considered the best environments for teachers to learn and grow professionally, schools are beginning to reorganize in ways that enable more opportunities for educators to study together. Collegiate communities foster an environment of cooperation that increases instructors' levels of invention and zeal and offers ongoing support for staff professional development (Lofgren & Karlsson, 2016; Quines & Monteza, 2023).

Further, self-efficacy, a term used to describe people who believe they are competent in a subject, is confidence in one's ability to complete a task. This idea has a favorable effect on both one's performance and motivation. A person's self-efficacy belief is thought to positively affect their ability to resolve problems and devise novel strategies. Their self-efficacy beliefs have an impact on the goals that people set for themselves, the amount of effort they put in and how long they can persevere through challenges to achieve those goals, as well as how they respond when they fail (Zee & Koomen, 2016; Gale *et al.*, 2021).

On work environment as the mediating variable, the physical aspects of the workplace directly impact employees' quantity, morale, performance, and other organizational factors such as health and safety. Job discontent, absenteeism, somatic symptoms, burnout, and depression are all linked to unfavorable workplace conditions. A good environment encourages workers and increases efficiency, producing positive results and greater output. Employees try to work for a company that offers a nice work environment and where they're more appreciated (Ahmad & Khan, 2019). Goal-setting, work rewards, clearly defined procedures, performance evaluations, job congruity, coaching, resource accessibility, and supervisor assistance are just a few elements of the work environment. Together, these elements affect how well a worker performs. Employees need the right job-related aspects for superior outcomes (Bakhtiyari, 2019).

Employee productivity will rise when they feel at ease at work, which is made possible by a positive work environment. Staff productivity may suffer due to the place's dissatisfaction with its workers (Putri *et al.*, 2019). Both the physical and intangible aspects of the workplace have an impact on employees' motivation and morale. A relaxing and enjoyable workplace can boost workers' pro in accomplishing organizational objectives. The workplace environment significantly impacts work motivation. Since the available human resources can function effectively and produce excellent results, desire significantly impacts employee performance (Sari *et al.*, 2021).

For their schools, moral leaders have set goals and objectives. They provide imaginative, intellectual, and ground-breaking suggestions for raising achievement. Ethical leadership is attentive to organizational development, creating a common vision, distributing leadership, and establishing school culture to support current restructuring initiatives. Teachers and students can now meet the principals whenever they want,

thanks to these leaders who have improved interaction within the school. These principals give instructors and students the tools to carry out the curriculum. These leaders frequently uphold strong moral and ethical standards. An ethical approach fosters followers' trust, respect, and desire to cooperate in achieving the same long-term objectives. As a result, ethical leadership helps to facilitate educational reform and improves organizational performance and school culture (Amanchukwu, 2015; Lalitha *et al.*, 2020).

Instead of concentrating exclusively on the ethical aspects of other leadership styles, ethical leadership is a collection of actions or a distinct leadership style in and of itself. The concept of ethical leadership was developed using an altruistic strategy, and it was described as the conflict between selfless and egoistic motivations. This strategy demonstrates how an ethical leader puts supporters and the organization's interests ahead of a set of commonly held ideas and right decisions, which can be advantageous. It has been discovered that ethical leadership is associated with attributes of a good leader, such as honesty, reliability, and truthfulness, as well as ethical actions, such as transparency, fairness, care, and moral choices. As a result, an ethical manager might also be seen as someone ethical by their employees because of how much their morality affects how they interact with one another at work (Naeem *et al.*, 2020; Sabir, 2021).

Relatedly, tenure is time spent working for or with a company. Compared to shorter tenure, longer-tenured employees generally amassed greater human capital throughout their careers and demonstrated higher job efficiency and civic engagement. Additionally, employees' opinions of their workplace and abilities to manage outside factors varied depending on their length of employment (Amirkhanyan *et al.*, 2020). Employees who have been employed longer may be less affected by the workplace environment because they can better make choices based on their acquired experiences and absorbed social norms. On the other hand, personnel with shorter employment histories must connect with others to assist in their professional development activities, making them more susceptible to work settings. The impact of outside factors, such as the educational atmosphere, on the dedication of educators may be lessened by job longevity (Fu *et al.*, 2022).

Moreover, this study is anchored on Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1986). The first scholars to recognize ethical leadership as a distinct leadership style were Brown *et al.* (2005). According to the social acquisition hypothesis, people pick up the standards of acceptable behavior from their role examples through mimicry and imitation. As a result, ethical leaders set an example for followers to follow by modeling ethical conduct. Brown *et al.* (2005) The encouragement of such behavior to colleagues through dialog, interaction, and choice-making in two directions is what ethical leadership means. It involves the presentation of a normatively proper attitude through one's activities and interpersonal relationships.

This study is supported by the the Bakker *et al.* (2004) Job Demands-Resources Model, which emphasizes that work participation, job, and private assets are essential preconditions of work engagement, is used to support the present research. Resources

provided by the employer, such as autonomy, possibilities for growth, and social and supervisory support, assist workers in meeting the requirements of their jobs. Employees' involvement at work may increase, demands may be lowered, goals may be accomplished, and on their own be stimulated by workplace resources like freedom, social support from coworkers, and performance feedback. Personal resources are those parts of one's being that are typically associated with endurance and refer to people's perception of their capacity to influence and regulate their work surroundings effectively. (Xanthopoulou *et al.*, 2007). Self-efficacy, mental agility, and positivity are examples of one's personality.

This study is also supported by the Organizational Culture Theory of Denison and Mishra (1995), which claims that viewing school atmosphere as an interpersonal or managerial factor affects teachers' views and actions toward work by disclosing the shared organizational values and norms by participants, is another theory that lends backing to this study. The efficacy of the school and the way instructors perceive their work environments may be impacted, whether through or indirectly, by educators. According to Arifin *et al.* (2014), perceived school culture and job engagement are directly related. This brought home the significance of perceived educational environments in encouraging teachers' work.

### 3. Material and Methods

Respondents of this study are teachers at elementary public schools in the Caraga North and Caraga South Districts, Davao Oriental, made up 300 of the study's 447 total respondents. Stratified random sampling was utilized to ensure that everyone had an opportunity to be a part of the study. The study's respondents were chosen using a stratified random sampling procedure. A population is sampled using the stratified random sampling technique, which divides the population into subgroups and randomly selects units from each subgroup. In this case, only the public elementary school teachers in the Caraga North and South Districts were chosen as the respondents.

The study excluded teachers from the Caraga North and South Districts who do not teach in the elementary division since their work environments and levels of supervision differed. Teachers who worked in secondary and private schools, regardless of where they were located and those with administrative or supervisory responsibilities, were also not included in the research.

The study was conducted among public elementary schools in Caraga North District and Caraga South District. The municipality of Caraga is 84 kilometers (52 miles) from Mati, the provincial capital of Davao Oriental on the island of Mindanao, and 254 kilometers (158 miles) from Davao City, the regional hub of Region XI. It is situated facing the Pacific Ocean along this province's eastern shore. Its northern border is formed by the municipality of Baganga, its southern border by the municipality of Manay, its western border by the municipality of New Bataan in the province of Compostela Valley, and its

eastern border by the Pacific Ocean. The easternmost point in the Philippines is in Barangay Santiago at Pusan Point.

The researcher thought that this was the best location for the study because it has a sizable number of respondents who can guarantee the study's factual findings and because no other research has been done locally that utilized the variables related to school heads' work environments, moral leadership, and school culture. In addition, given that the consequences of the pandemic have brought about significant changes in the fields, as mentioned earlier in the study, the teachers are currently adjusting to the current situation. The outcomes of the pilot study, which involved calculating the Cronbach alpha coefficient to determine the accuracy of the scales, were 0.917 for ethical leadership, 0.940 for school culture, and 0.935 for work environment. The instrument's validity and reliability were demonstrated by the Cronbach Alpha values for all three variables.

A 5-point Likert scale was used to assess work environment, teacher engagement, and organizational commitment. The results were broken down into the following categories: 4.20–5.00, or Very High, meaning that measures are always manifested; 3.40–4.19, or High, meaning that measures are often manifested; 2.60–3.39, or Moderate, indicating that measures can be demonstrated; 1.80–2.59, or Low, meaning that measures are seldom manifested; and 1.00–1.79, or Very Low, meaning that measures are hardly ever manifested.

This study employed a quantitative, non-experimental research design with correlational methodology. In a non-experimental methodology known as correlational analysis, researchers analyze the link between two or more variables in a natural environment without manipulation or control. In correlational research, the researchers look at how a modification in one variable was associated with the changes in the other factor to assess the strength of correlations between factors (Cresswell, 2013). The researcher also collected numerical data from the population to verify the accuracy. According to Kowalczyk (2018), a descriptive study shows how respondents were carefully chosen for the survey. The design explained how teachers' professional self-worth and leadership styles for principals relate to one another.

Generally, independent and dependent variables are used in correlational studies, but the independent variable's influence on the dependent variable is unchanged (Patidar, 2013). Changes made were suitable given that the study's goal is to ascertain whether the workplace environments of school heads are related to moral leadership and school culture.

Additionally, the mediation procedure was performed to see if the mediator variable—work environment—significantly weakens the association between ethical leadership as the independent variable and school culture as the dependent variable. In other words, mediating relationships exist when a third variable significantly influences how the other two variables are related (MacKinnon, 2008).

This investigation used a systematic approach. The researcher first wrote a letter requesting approval from the Dean of Professional Schools. The approved letter asking

permission to conduct the study was sent to the School Division Superintendent of the Department of Education Division of Davao Oriental. The researcher then gave copies of the official letter to each respondent's school head.

In terms of statistical instruments and a more thorough interpretation and analysis of the data, the following methods were utilized: The mean was done to assess the workplace standard, the leadership's morality, and the institution's culture, addressing the first three research goals. The relevance of the relationship between and among the work environment, ethical leadership, and school culture was assessed using Pearson  $r$ . This addressed research goal number four. Medgraph using Sobel  $z$ -test was utilized to assess the importance of the work environment of school leaders in mediating the link between moral leadership and school culture. This resolved research goal number five.

The study was carried out by the researcher in compliance with all ethical guidelines, which included following the established standards and protocol assessments, particularly in relation to data management and demographics. Throughout the course of this investigation, moral considerations were noted. Regarding the behavior and participation of the target those surveyed, the researcher first requested approval from the relevant authorities. After being briefed on their tasks, the respondents were told that their involvement was entirely voluntary. Written permission was obtained from respondents, who were also guaranteed that the information gathered about them would be kept private, discreet, and available until they choose to discontinue taking part. The researcher took precautions to ensure that there weren't no potential risks and took into account financial, psychological, and physical planning in addition to mitigation measures. There was not a single instance of fraud, deception, or plagiarism over the entire investigation. There was no indication of any conflict of interest (COI), and dishonesty was prevented. The advisor joins the study as a co-author for publishing reasons.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

**Table 1:** Level of Ethical Leadership

Items	SD	Mean	D.E.
People Orientation	0.54	4.23	Very High
Fairness	0.67	4.19	High
Power Sharing	0.60	4.20	Very High
Concern for Sustainability	0.62	4.22	Very High
Ethical Guidance	0.68	4.16	High
Role Clarification	0.62	4.23	Very High
Integrity	0.68	4.16	High
<b>Overall</b>	<b>0.49</b>	<b>4.20</b>	<b>Very High</b>

The level of ethical leadership is very high, which results from the high levels of responses. The very high-level rating of *people orientation* suggests the great extent of caring about, respecting, and supporting followers. This prerogative aligns with various



authors (Chong *et al.*, 2018; Sinani, 2016). Person-oriented leadership is crucial because it promotes leaders to build relationships with followers based on mutual respect, trust, and confidence. This helps leaders inspire followers to fulfill the strategic corporate vision and organizational missions. Person-oriented leadership focuses on enhancing and enhancing the relationship between leaders and followers, and it can inspire and motivate staff to meet the demands and goals of the business.

The very high-level rating of *role clarification* suggests that school heads clarify responsibilities, expectations, and performance goals. This is also in line with various authors (Hassan, 2013; Jefferson, 2020; Pijnacker, 2019) stating that clarity extends beyond just their job to that of their coworkers. Clarity is a necessary prerequisite for productivity. Role clarity is essential to reducing negative emotions and enhancing individual effectiveness and organizational success. Moreover, the high level of *concern for sustainability* indicates the high extent of caring about the environment and stimulating recycling. This assertion agrees with various authors (Fry & Egel, 2021; Hallinger & Suriyankietkaew, 2018), who stated that true leadership transcends formal authority or legitimate power. These leaders are tasked with forging alliances and forging a shared vision among a broad group of frequently at-odds stakeholders while juggling a variety of collaborative connections. Three scholarly research areas have developed out of the concern for sustainability: sustainable leadership, responsible leadership, and conscious leadership. All three strongly emphasize a balanced stakeholder approach to leadership that specifically deals with problems posed by the triple bottom line.

**Table 2:** Level of School Culture

Items	SD	Mean	D.E.
Professional Collaboration	0.56	4.17	High
Affiliative Collegiality	0.68	4.15	High
Self-Determination/Efficacy	0.64	4.11	High
<b>Overall</b>	<b>0.51</b>	<b>4.14</b>	<b>High</b>

The high level of school culture ensued from the high-level answers. The high level of *professional collaboration* indicates how teachers and staff meet and work together to solve professional issues. This claim aligns with various authors (Pischetola *et al.*, 2022; Romeu *et al.*, 2016; Vangrieken *et al.*, 2015) wherein working together as teachers to improve student outcomes goes beyond merely exchanging knowledge. Collaborative work implies interdependence and shared accountability for achieving a common objective. The emergence of teacher-collaborative practices has largely been attributed to the pursuit of discourse and cohesiveness.

The high level of *affiliative* collegiality indicates how much people esteem and support one another while working together and how much they like working together. This claim aligns with various authors (Lofgren & Karlsson, 2016; Quines & Monteza, 2023) claiming that teachers' collegiality is a key factor in their professional development. It is acknowledged that collegiality is a crucial part of teacher professional development and a way to increase teachers' knowledge. Collegiate settings promote a cooperative

atmosphere that boosts teachers' inventiveness and ardor while providing continual assistance for staff professional development. Lastly, the high level of *self-determination/efficacy* indicates the high extent of improving their professional skills out of a sense of commitment. This is associated with the accounts by various authors (Zee & Koomen, 2016; Gale *et al.*, 2021), wherein it has a favorable effect on one's performance and motivation. Their self-efficacy beliefs impact the goals that people set for themselves, the amount of effort they put in and how long they can persevere through challenges to achieve those goals, and how they respond when they fail.

**Table 3:** Level of Work Environment

Items	SD	Mean	D.E.
Relationship Dimensions	0.62	4.19	High
Personal Growth or Goal Orientation Dimension	0.65	4.09	High
Systematic Maintenance and Change Dimension	0.64	4.18	High
<b>Overall</b>	<b>0.64</b>	<b>4.15</b>	<b>High</b>

The high level of work environment reveals the highly positive environment in which people work, which includes the environment, job description, culture, and market situation. Several authors support this assertion (Ahmad & Khan, 2019; Bakhtiyari, 2019) claiming that the physical aspects of the workplace directly impact employees' performance, morale, focus, and health and safety on the job. Employees make an effort to work for a company that offers a nice work environment and where they feel more appreciated. Employees should be given the right working conditions to get greater results.

The study's findings are consistent with those of numerous authors (Putri *et al.*, 2019; Sari *et al.*, 2021), who have noted that a positive work atmosphere will make employees feel at ease while working will improve employee performance. Both the physical and intangible aspects of the workplace have an impact on employees' motivation and morale. A relaxing and enjoyable workplace can boost productivity in accomplishing organizational objectives. The workplace environment significantly impacts work motivation. Since the current human resources can function well and produce excellent performance, enthusiasm significantly impacts worker productivity.

**Table 4.1:** Significance of the Relationship between Ethical Leadership and School Culture

Ethical Leadership	School Culture			Overall
	Professional Collaboration	Affiliative Collegiality	Self-Determination/Efficacy	
People Orientation	0.470* (0.000)	0.452* (0.000)	0.461* (0.000)	0.564* (0.000)
Fairness	0.384* (0.000)	0.544* (0.000)	0.459* (0.000)	0.572* (0.000)
Power Sharing	0.522* (0.000)	0.467* (0.000)	0.521* (0.000)	0.614* (0.000)
Concern for Sustainability	0.480* (0.000)	0.456* (0.000)	0.450* (0.000)	0.564* (0.000)

Shara Mie B. Manluyang, Raymunda L. Apostol  
 MEDIATING EFFECT OF WORK ENVIRONMENT OF SCHOOL HEADS ON  
 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ETHICAL LEADERSHIP AND SCHOOL CULTURE

Ethical Guidance	0.397* (0.000)	0.542* (0.000)	0.441* (0.000)	0.568* (0.000)
Role Clarification	0.491* (0.000)	0.512* (0.000)	0.475* (0.000)	0.603* (0.000)
Integrity	0.414* (0.000)	0.557* (0.000)	0.498* (0.000)	0.605* (0.000)
<b>Overall</b>	0.580* (0.000)	0.656* (0.000)	0.610* (0.000)	0.756* (0.000)

An important link was found between ethical leadership indicators and school climate. This suggests that moral leadership and school climate are strongly associated. The results of this study are consistent with those of other studies by different writers (Amanchukwu, 2015; Lalitha *et al.*, 2020), who claim that moral leaders have set goals and aim for their schools. Ethical leadership is attentive to organizational development, creating a common vision, distributing leadership, and establishing school culture to support current reorganization initiatives. Teachers and students can now meet the principals whenever they want, thanks to these leaders who have improved communication within the school. An ethical approach fosters followers' trust, respect, and desire to cooperate in achieving the same long-term objectives. Therefore, ethical leadership promotes organizational development, efficiency, and school culture while helping facilitate educational transformation.

**Table 4.2:** Significance of the Relationship  
 between the Ethical Leadership and Work Environment

<b>Ethical Leadership</b>	<b>Work Environment</b>
People Orientation	0.544* (0.000)
Fairness	0.514* (0.000)
Power Sharing	0.533* (0.000)
Concern for Sustainability	0.514* (0.000)
Ethical Guidance	0.494* (0.000)
Role Clarification	0.568* (0.000)
Integrity	0.519* (0.000)
<b>Overall</b>	0.680* (0.000)

The connection between the variables showed that there is a strong link between moral leadership and workplace culture. This suggests a favorable relationship exists between an ethical leader and the workplace. The study's findings support those of several authors (Ko *et al.*, 2018; Sabir, 2021) who noted that this strategy demonstrates how an ethical

leader emphasizes a set of generally held ideas and accurate judgments over selfishness, which can be advantageous for supporters and the company. It has been discovered that ethical leadership is associated with attributes of a good leader, such as honesty, reliability, and integrity, as well as ethical actions, such as openness, fairness, care, and responsible choices. As a result, an ethical manager can also be considered an upright individual by their employees because of the ethical impact that the manager has on the employees' willingness to participate in productive workplaces.

**Table 4.3:** Significance of the Relationship between Work Environment and School Culture

	School Culture			Overall
	Professional Collaboration	Affiliative Collegiality	Self-Determination/Efficacy	
<b>Work Environment</b>	0.546* (0.000)	0.560* (0.000)	0.498* (0.000)	0.654* (0.000)

There was a strong association between the parameters of the work environment and school culture. This suggests that the relationship between the workplace and school culture is good. According to several writers (Amirkhanyan *et al.*, 2020; Fu *et al.*, 2022), employees with varying job tenures have varying perceptions of their work settings and abilities to control external circumstances. This assertion is consistent with their findings. Employees employed longer may be less affected by the workplace environment because they can better make decisions based on their acquired experiences and absorbed social norms. On the other hand, employees with shorter employment histories must connect with others to assist in their professional development activities, making them more susceptible to work settings. The impact of environmental factors, such as school culture, on the work commitment of teachers may be diminished with longer tenure.

**Table 5:** Regression results of the variables in the criteria of the presence of mediating effect

Effect	Label	Estimate	SE	95% Confidence Interval		Z	p	% Mediation
				Lower	Upper			
Indirect	a × b	0.188	0.0372	0.115	0.261	5.06	<.001	25.3
Direct	c	0.609	0.0519	0.507	0.711	11.74	<.001	74.7
Total	c + a × b	0.797	0.0398	0.719	0.875	20.00	<.001	100.0

This study aims to add to the body of knowledge addressing the potential mediating factor for the association between moral leadership and school climate. In particular, the work environment was considered a potential mediating factor that might explain how ethical leadership affects school culture. The study discovered partial mediation and significant direct impacts were demonstrated that might aid in advancing ongoing investigations into moral management and school climate. Significantly, the current study on the connection between ethical leadership and school culture has discovered significance to the research of Bandura (1986), according to which ethical leaders represent the target for following to connect with by showing a model of ethical behaviors. In particular, Baron and Kenny's (1986) mediation principles were followed in

the current study, which discovered that the workplace environment is a substantial and positive partial moderator of ethical leadership and school culture.

The connection between ethical leadership and the workplace and the path between the workplace and school culture were both considered in the mediation study. According to one of the authors of this study, Bafadal *et al.* (2021), leadership in an organization entails recognizing to gain moral agreement, interpreting that consensus to respond to new situations, and ensuring that ethical conduct grows a foundation for behavior for all school individuals. The results of this study supported this assertion. School culture has an impact on ethical leadership. Therefore, moral leadership promotes a positive work atmosphere and school climate.

## 5. Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the researcher came up with several recommendations. The researcher advises school leaders to uphold the highest standards of ethical leadership in their interactions with all of their teaching and non-teaching staff, preserve the best conduct and engagement with all school personnel, and always be approachable and open, particularly to the students. They should also continue to be receptive to different viewpoints while at work. This could entail holding focused group talks with concerned teachers to address their questions, concerns, and suggestions for solutions to issues relating to their teaching responsibilities or even personal matters that may be affecting them.

Additionally, it is advised that instructors be provided motivational tools to use in the classroom and that present school activities be continued. This may involve giving teachers free time to relax and socialize with other teachers while celebrating their successes, as well as awarding them with cash, certificates of recognition, or plaques of appreciation or recommendations in exchange for their achievements. The school administration may also keep allowing teachers to enroll and continue with their professional advancement (master's or doctoral degrees) by offering scholarships or soft loans to cover tuition and other costs. Keep enabling teachers to attend conferences and seminars on ICT, communication talents, time management, and critical thinking to improve lesson plans and advance their expertise in various subjects.

To maintain a high level of school culture, the administration may regularly (every three months) hold seminars on working together, orientation and reorientation of the school's vision, mission, and goals, leadership development, interpersonal skills, and other training that will enable the team members to develop, be empowered, and serve as role models for their students. For teachers to be inspired to stay and continue their work as educators, there should always be spaces where they may be confronted with tasks like organizing, making choices, and including issues.

Given the demanding work environment, the researcher can advise the school to maintain the positive relationships already in place. The school's rules and policies that affect the school, its faculty, and its pupils may also be reviewed or revisited. The

alignment and re-orientation may be simplified as part of knowledge dissemination if adjustments to some policies are possible. To allow teachers to express their ideas, consultation sessions may be held regularly. For deserving instructors, the conduct also announces monthly awards for any successes or accomplishments made during teaching. When there are conflicts or concerns between teachers or in the relationships between pupils and educators, the school administration may always uphold the academic freedom of the teachers and may always listen to their perspectives before taking any drastic action. The school may continually implant in the minds of the faculty and staff that everyone's sincerity, devotion, and dedication matter most and that everyone is always willing to assist those in need. The school may also instill in their thoughts that what matters most is the student's education.

Additionally, it is advised that parents should be included in situations where pupils need to be recognized for their hard work in school along with the concerned professors or advisors. Parents should be aware of and always promote all school activities, including attending meetings, participating in outreach programs, and funding pertinent school projects. First, the school can evaluate its plans and programs versus its level of implementation. This is based on the findings of the partial mediation effect of the work environment on the relationship between ethical leadership and school culture and taking into account the school's academic achievement as demonstrated by the teachers' encouragement and collaboration. Additionally, evaluating teachers' performance by their peers and students may become an annual ritual. For the best working interactions to be evident as everyone leaves the school and goes out into society and the community, it is also advised that there should always be ongoing interactions between school management, teachers, and students and that everybody ought to constantly be reminded of the school's vision, mission, and goals.

## **6. Conclusion**

In this section, conclusions are made while considering the study's findings. High levels of school society, high levels of work environment, and high levels of ethical leadership are all present. School culture and ethical leadership have a substantial connection. Additionally, there is a substantial connection between ethical leadership and the workplace and between the workplace and school culture. The study's findings unequivocally support the idea that the workplace environment mediates the link between ethical leadership and school culture. The impact of the workplace on the connection between moral leadership and school culture is somewhat mediated.

The Social Learning Theory by Bandura (1986), which states that people learn through watching and imitating their role models' standards of appropriate behavior, is the anchor theory that supports the findings. As a result, ethical leaders set an example for followers to follow by modeling moral behavior. The results were viewed as indicating widespread agreement with the hypothesis.

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### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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