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How School Culture Shapes Teachers' Motivational Trajectories from Amotivation to Intrinsic Motivation: A Self-Determination Theory-Based Examination

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Abstract

A positive school culture is one of the important factors influencing teacher motivation, professional commitment, and instructional success. However, there is limited empirical evidence that has focused on the influence of school culture on teachers' motivation trajectory from amotivation to intrinsic motivation through the lens of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), especially within the government schools in Pakistan. The present study aims to analyze the impact of school culture on teachers' motivational trajectory by providing satisfaction of the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which facilitate the internalization of motivation through external, introjected, and identified regulation and eventually leads to intrinsic motivation. The study was based on the positivist research paradigm with a deductive research approach. Data were collected from 400 secondary school teachers in government schools of Karachi using stratified random sampling. For this purpose, the structural model of the study was tested using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The results suggest that a positive school culture plays a key role in facilitating teachers' psychological needs satisfaction and helps in the transition from controlled to autonomous motivation. Identified regulation proved to be a crucial step in the process of motivation internalization whereas autonomy satisfaction showed itself as a strongest predictor of intrinsic motivation. The research contributes to the understanding of the applicability of Self-Determination Theory and shows the importance of school culture in helping teachers develop their motivation. It also provides recommendations for educational policy-makers and educational leaders on how to enhance teachers' motivation and teaching skills.

Keywords: School Culture, Teacher Motivation, Motivational Trajectories, Self-determination Theory, Psychological Need Satisfaction, Intrinsic Motivation, Government Secondary Schools.

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Introduction

The school culture is regarded as one of the most impactful organizational factors influencing teachers' motivation, professionalism, teaching effectiveness, and the overall effectiveness of schools. The school culture refers to the collection of values, beliefs, leadership styles, interpersonal relations, and organizational practices that determine the work experience of teachers in education organizations. The school culture promotes collaboration, professional development, teachers' independence, and collective responsibility and creates conditions that make teachers more committed and productive at their job (Hamid et al., 2024; Hussain & Hayat, 2022; Tammets et al., 2024). On the contrary, ineffective leadership, bureaucracy, low professional independence, lack of resources, and high workload constitute unfavorable organizational conditions that demotivate teachers and restrict their ability to use innovation in teaching practices (Febriantina et al., 2020; Mannix-McNamara et al., 2021; Zulqarnain et al., 2025).

Teacher motivation is an essential factor for determining the quality of education since motivated teachers show more professionalism, engagement, efficacy, and creativity in their teaching methods (Orsini et al., 2020). Motivation is increasingly viewed as a dynamic process that evolves through continuous interaction between individuals and their organizational environment. The organizational setting of public secondary school teachers in metropolitan cities like Karachi consists of centralized management, increased accountability, standardized curricula, administrative duties, large class sizes, and inadequate instructional resources. Organizational features affect the culture of schools and teachers' motivational experience and professional satisfaction (Jabeen et al., 2023; Shah et al., 2024).

The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) offers an extensive theoretical model explaining the effect of school culture on motivational development among teachers. SDT posits that when people's psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are met to a sufficient extent, it becomes easier for them to experience and adopt intrinsic motivational states (Ryan & Deci, 2020). School environments marked by supportive leadership, professional collaboration, trust, recognition, and professional development provide an environment where those psychological needs are fulfilled and motivational states are internalized. On the contrary, controlling organizational culture with monitoring, lack of freedom to make decisions, and institutional support leads to controlling forms of motivation or amotivation.

Unlike traditional theories of motivation that view it as either being present or not present, Self-Determination Theory views motivation along a continuum of internalization that passes through different forms of motivation. Amotivation can be experienced at first by teachers before engaging in actions based on extrinsic motivators such as incentives and punishment (external regulation). With time, teachers become internally motivated by introjected regulation and identified regulation due to the satisfaction of psychological needs within a supportive school setting (Ryan & Deci, 2020; Orsini et al., 2020). Identified regulation is one of the most significant mechanisms during transition from one stage of motivation to another because teachers start valuing their professional duties internally.

Though there is extensive literature on the topic of teacher motivation, there are still significant gaps in the current knowledge base. There have been several international studies that have found positive associations between school environment support and teacher motivation. Nevertheless, many of those studies perceive teacher motivation as an end result rather than a process (Emiroglu, 2017; Kong & Wang, 2024). In Pakistan, the previous studies focused on investigating factors such as financial rewards, job satisfaction, leadership styles, or organizational commitment in

order to determine their influence on teacher motivation (Aziz, 2014; Khalid et al., 2020). There is relatively limited information about the influence of school culture on teacher motivation development through the processes postulated by Self-Determination Theory.

These gaps need to be addressed since the sustainability of teacher motivation cannot be attained through mere financial motivations or administrative changes. Rather, education requires the development of school cultures that enhance teachers' autonomy, build collegiality, foster professionalism, and engage them in teaching. This understanding of the influence of school culture on the motivational processes of teachers provides a theoretical perspective into the internalization of motivation and practical guidelines for educational administrators on how to boost teacher motivation.

Thus, the current study aims to examine the role of school culture in shaping motivational journeys of teachers from amotivation to intrinsic motivation based on the mechanisms put forth in the Self-Determination Theory. In particular, the study aims to examine the role of school culture in fulfilling the psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness of teachers which would help them to achieve motivational internalization through external regulation, introjected regulation, and identified regulation, ultimately leading to intrinsic motivation among government secondary school teachers in Karachi.

The objectives of the study were:

1. To determine the levels of perceived school culture, psychological need satisfaction (autonomy, competence, and relatedness), and motivational regulations (amotivation, external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, intrinsic motivation) among government secondary school teachers in Karachi.
2. To examine the direct effects perceived school culture on teachers' psychological need satisfaction (autonomy, competence, and relatedness).
3. To examine the predictive effect of psychological need satisfaction on teachers' motivational regulations
4. To investigate the mediating role of identified regulation in the relationship between psychological need satisfaction and intrinsic motivation.
5. To compare the contributions of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in explaining teachers' motivational internalization and intrinsic motivation.
6. To model the sequential motivational internalization pathways through which school culture facilitates teachers' progression from amotivation to intrinsic motivation via external regulation, introjected regulation, and identified regulation.

The study addresses following research hypotheses:

H1o: There is no relationship between perceived school culture and teachers' psychological need satisfaction (autonomy, competence, and relatedness).

H1a: There is a significant relationship between perceived school culture and teachers' psychological need satisfaction (autonomy, competence, and relatedness).

H2o: There is no relationship between psychological need satisfaction and teachers' amotivation.

H2a: There is a significant relationship psychological need satisfaction and teachers' amotivation.

H3o: There is no relationship between psychological need satisfaction and teachers' external regulation.

H3a: There is a significant relationship between psychological need satisfaction and teachers' external regulation.

H4o: There is no relationship between psychological need satisfaction and teachers' introjected regulation.

H4a: There is a significant relationship between Psychological need satisfaction and teachers' introjected regulation.

H5o: There is no relationship between psychological need satisfaction and teachers' identified regulation.

H5a: There is a significant relationship between Psychological need satisfaction and teachers' identified regulation.

H6o: Identified regulation does not predict teachers' intrinsic motivation.

H6a: Identified regulation significantly predicts teachers' intrinsic motivation.

H7o: Identified regulation has no mediation effect between the relationship between psychological need satisfaction and intrinsic motivation.

H7a: Identified regulation mediates the relationship between psychological need satisfaction and intrinsic motivation.

H8o: Autonomy, competence, and relatedness do not differ significantly in predicting identified regulation and intrinsic motivation.

H8a: Autonomy, competence, and relatedness differ significantly in predicting identified regulation and intrinsic motivation.

Literature Review

School culture can be defined as the set of common beliefs, values, principles of leadership, norms, and professional interactions that constitute the experience of teachers in educational institutions. The presence of a positive school culture encourages cooperation, trust among colleagues, professional independence, participatory decision-making, and constant learning process, thus creating a favorable organizational environment that will ensure the psychological well-being of teachers and their professional commitment. Studies have shown repeatedly that schools that provide supportive leadership and collegial interactions have motivated, committed, and effective teachers. On the contrary, bureaucracy, poor institutional support, lack of teacher involvement in decision-making processes, and resource shortages lead to demotivation and emotional exhaustion of teachers (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Mannix-McNamara et al., 2021; Tammets et al., 2024).

In the context of Self-Determination Theory, school culture serves as an essential contextual variable which decides whether or not teachers' basic psychological needs are met or unmet. Organizational behavior which supports teachers' involvement, acknowledges their professional successes, helps them collaborate, and gives chances to develop professionally results in an autonomy supportive environment in which teachers' competence is enhanced and interpersonal relatedness is strengthened. Such an environment helps internalize professional values and makes the shift from controlled to autonomous motivation possible. Therefore, school culture must be seen not only as an organizational but also as a psychological asset (Ryan & Deci, 2020; Slemp et al., 2020).

Empirical research in the past has revealed that school culture impacts teachers' perceived autonomy, competence, and relatedness greatly. Supportive leadership practices increase teachers' perception of autonomy because they allow teachers to make decisions about instruction and

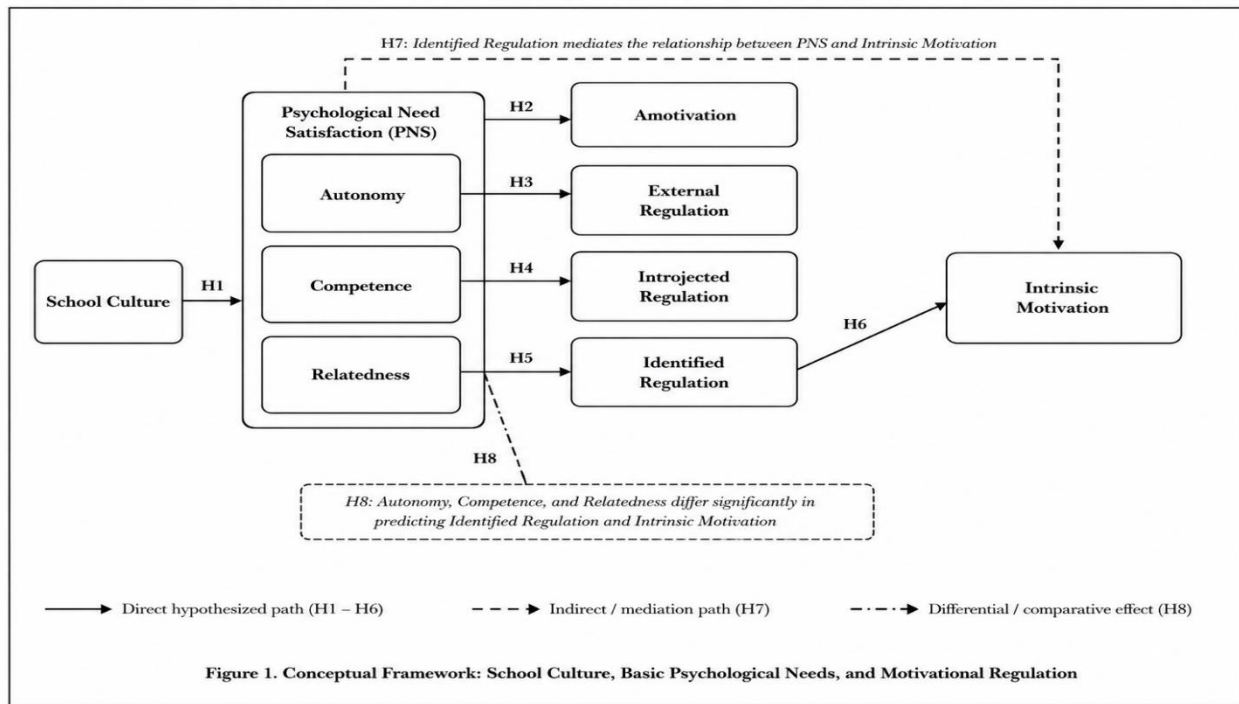
professional practices. Collaboration makes teachers feel competent since collaboration allows them to continuously develop professionally and receive constructive feedback, whereas good interpersonal relationships make them feel related because of mutual trust and cooperation. The satisfaction of psychological needs results in the teachers' internalization of the organizational aims and engagement in teaching motivated by personal aims and not external factors. Therefore, the satisfaction of psychological needs is the mechanism through which school culture affects teachers' motivational trajectory (Ryan & Deci, 2020; Bardach & Klassen, 2021; Lazarides et al., 2025).

Motivational internalization is the process through which an individual integrates and adopts the expectations placed on them by external agents. As per the Self-Determination Theory, teachers seldom skip from amotivation to intrinsic motivation. Motivation development occurs in a progressive manner in that it moves through external regulation, introjected regulation, and identified regulation until it becomes fully autonomous. The identified regulation stage is crucial since teachers are fully aware of the significance of teaching even if some tasks might not be enjoyable. School cultures that support learning environments enhance the process of motivational internalization through fulfilling the psychological needs of teachers. The psychological needs include autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2020; Fernet et al., 2008; Roth, 2014).

The reviewed literature indicates that teacher motivation is a multi-faceted psychological construct that has been affected by various organizational, interpersonal, and personal factors. Although previous studies have extensively examined Self-Determination Theory, teacher autonomy, and motivational outcomes, relatively limited empirical evidence explains how school culture shapes teachers' progression from amotivation to intrinsic motivation within government secondary schools in Pakistan. Moreover, the mediating effect of identified regulation remains largely unexplored even though this is theoretically significant in the Self-Determination Theory framework. Therefore, the present study integrates school culture with psychological need satisfaction and motivational regulation to provide a comprehensive explanation of teachers' motivational trajectories.

Individuals' motivation influences their selection of tasks and hobbies, how eagerly they work on the project, how much they love doing this, their ability to persevere during difficult times, and their personal goals they have defined for themselves. When applying to the profession of teaching, teachers' motivation is likely to influence processes concerning instructors' instructional decisions, the power and struggle that they prepare for and persevere in the face of adversities, their happiness with teaching and the way they set goals for classroom instruction (Lazarides et al. 2025). The connection between teacher motivation and teaching behaviors and student outcomes have been widely explored over the past two decades. (Lazarides & Schiefele, 2021). Constructs for teacher motivation based on SDT demonstrated that instructors' autonomy appears to be particularly significant for encouraging and improving teaching behaviors (Slemp et al., 2020). Additionally, Bardach and Klassen (2021) found consistent evidence concerning the function of instructors' instructional performance as mediators of the link between teachers' and students' autonomous motivation. SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2020) assumes that the fulfillment of key psychological needs including autonomy, competence, and relatedness influence people's motivation and conduct. Individual motivation can be divided six forms of motivation: amotivation (lack of self-determination) and intrinsic motivation.

Figure 1: *The conceptual framework of the study*



The above figure depicts the predicted relationships between school culture, psychological need fulfillment, motivation regulation, and intrinsic motivation in accordance with the principles of Self-Determination Theory (SDT). It predicts that school culture facilitates teachers' psychological needs satisfaction, which, in turn, affects various types of motivation regulation, including identified regulation mediating the pathway toward intrinsic motivation.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The study was grounded in the positivist research paradigm. The positivist paradigm adopts the hypothetico-deductive method to test theoretical propositions through empirical investigation. It helps the study relies empirically test the proposed hypotheses concerning the relationships between the independent and dependent variables (Park et al., 2020). The study employed cross-sectional research design. Cross-sectional studies help to analyze data from a population at a single point in time. They are often used to measure phenomena, understand determinants of education, and describe features of a population (Wang & Cheng, 2020).

Research Approach

The study adopted a quantitative research approach (deductive reasoning). A quantitative research approach is a collection and analyses of numerical data that can definitely be transformed into statistics and taken into consideration (Ussif, 2020). DeFranco (2011) states that a quantitative method to research enables the researchers to quantify perceptions, attitudes, behavior, opinions, and other well-defined variables. Deductive reasoning is the mental process of making inferences that are logical from general to specific. It helps the study to test existing theories and hypotheses using structured numerical data (Johnson-Laird, 2010). The quantitative approach was selected to test the hypothesized relationships among school culture, psychological need satisfaction, motivational regulations, and intrinsic motivation.

Population and Sample

Teachers from private and public schools of Karachi are research population. A sample of 400 secondary school teachers from public and private schools across Karachi was selected using random sampling technique to ensuring diversity in gender, experience, and school type. Random sampling is a valuable tool for researchers seeking to obtain a representative sample from a larger population (Makwana et al., 2023). The demographic characteristics of sample are given as follows:

Table 1: *Demographic Characteristics of Sample*

Category	Sub-category	School Type	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	Public	100	25
		Private	100	25
	Female	Public	100	25
		Private	100	25
Teaching Experience	1-10 years	Public	80	20
	10-20 years	Public	70	17.5
	More than 20 years	Public	50	12.5
	1-10 years	Private	65	16.25
	10-20 years	Private	70	17.5
	More than 20 years	Private	65	16.25

Table 1 shows demographic characteristics of the research sample. Sample includes total 400 teachers 200 from government schools and 200 from private schools. Public school teachers include 100 males and 100 females. Likewise, private school teachers also include 100 (25%) male teachers and 100 (25%) females.

Instruments

A survey was used for the study. Research instrument comprises three measurement scales including School Culture, Teacher Motivation Scale (amotivation, external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, intrinsic motivation) and Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction Scale (autonomy, competence, relatedness). All items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale. Validity and reliability was ensured. For validity the instrument was reviewed by six experts. S-CVI value was also computed which is .92. Moreover, factor loading and reliability is given as follow:

Table 2: Standardized Factor Loadings and Reliability

Construct	Item Range	Factor Loadings	CR	AVE
School Culture	SC1-SC6	.72–.81	.89	.58
Amotivation	AM1–AM4	.71–.84	.82	.63
External Regulation	ER1–ER4	.68–.82	.80	.61
Introjected Regulation	IR1–IR4	.65–.79	.78	.59
Identified Regulation	ID1–ID4	.72–.86	.85	.64
Intrinsic Motivation	IM1–IM4	.74–.88	.88	.66
Autonomy	AU1–AU4	.70–.85	.86	.62
Competence	CO1–CO4	.69–.83	.84	.61
Relatedness	RE1–RE4	.67–.81	.81	.60

Table 2 shows factor loadings and composite reliability and average variance extracted (AVE), indicating convergent validity. Discriminant validity was ensured with inter-construct correlations < .85.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using SPSS and SmartPLS. Details of Data Analysis used are as follows:

Table 3: Details of Data Analysis Tests and Their Alignment with Research Objectives

Research Objectives	Data Analysis Technique	Test Details
RO1	Descriptive Statistics	Mean, Standard Deviation
RO2	PLS-SEM Path Analysis	Standardized Path Coefficients (β), t-values, p-values
RO3	PLS-SEM Path Analysis	Standardized Path Coefficients (β), t-values, p-values, R^2
RO4	PLS-SEM Mediation Analysis	Bootstrapping (5,000 resamples), Indirect Effects, Confidence Intervals
RO5	Comparative Path Analysis (PLS-SEM)	Comparison of Standardized Path Coefficients (β), Effect Size (f^2)
RO6	Sequential Mediation Analysis (PLS-SEM)	Sequential Indirect Effects using Bootstrapping (5,000 resamples)

Table 3 shows the details of data analysis details aligning with research objectives.

Ethical Considerations

The study followed all ethical considerations. Participants were informed about the nature, purpose and procedures of the study prior to the study. Participation was totally voluntary. Identities of respondents were kept confidential. Respondents can withdraw at any step of the research.

Results

Table 4: *Descriptive Statistics*

Variable	Mean	SD
School Culture	3.80	0.71
Psychological Need Satisfaction	3.74	0.68
Amotivation	3.42	0.76
External Regulation	3.25	0.69
Introjected Regulation	3.10	0.65
Identified Regulation	3.68	0.72
Intrinsic Motivation	3.85	0.70

Table 4 provides the descriptive statistics of the study variables. It is evident from the results that teachers had relatively high perceptions about School Culture ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 0.71$), Psychological Need Satisfaction ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 0.68$), and Intrinsic Motivation ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 0.70$). This implies that there were positive perceptions regarding these three variables. The teachers had relatively high perceptions about the variable, which is Identified Regulation ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 0.72$), implying that the teachers realized the importance of their professional responsibilities for themselves. On the other hand, it can be noted that there were relatively low mean scores for the variables such as External Regulation ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 0.69$), Introjected Regulation ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 0.65$), and Amotivation ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 0.76$). Overall, the standard deviation values ranged from 0.65 to 0.76, indicating moderate variability and a reasonable level of consistency in participants' responses.

Table 5: *Correlation Matrix*

Variables	SC	PNS	AMO	EXT	INTJ	IDR	IM
School Culture (SC)	1						
Psychological Need Satisfaction (PNS)	.64**	1					
Amotivation (AMO)	-.47**	-.48**	1				
External Regulation (EXT)	-.35**	-.31**	.44**	1			
Introjected Regulation (INTJ)	.29**	.27**	-.18*	.39**	1		
Identified Regulation (IDR)	.58**	.49**	-.42**	-.28**	.46**	1	
Intrinsic Motivation (IM)	.61**	.53**	-.46**	-.34**	.32**	.57**	1

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 5 presents that school culture is significantly related to psychological need satisfaction, identified regulation, and intrinsic motivation, while negatively associated with amotivation and external regulation. In addition, psychological need satisfaction shows significant associations with all types of motivational regulations as well.

Table 6: Direct Effect of School Culture on Psychological Need Satisfaction

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	School Culture $\rightarrow$ Psychological Need Satisfaction	.64	13.52	< .001	Reject H1o

Table 6 presents that perceived school culture positively influences teachers' need satisfaction. Hence, the null hypothesis (H1o) is rejected.

Table 7: Direct Effects of Psychological Need Satisfaction on Motivational Regulations

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-value	p-value	Decision
H2	PNS $\rightarrow$ Amotivation	-.52	10.84	< .001	Reject H2o
H3	PNS $\rightarrow$ External Regulation	-.41	8.36	< .001	Reject H3o
H4	PNS $\rightarrow$ Introjected Regulation	.32	6.45	< .001	Reject H4o
H5	PNS $\rightarrow$ Identified Regulation	.47	9.21	< .001	Reject H5o

Table 7 depicts that psychological need satisfaction negatively and significantly affects teachers' amotivation and external regulation but positively and significantly affects their introjected and identified regulation. Thus, H2o, H3o, H4o, and H5o are rejected.

Table 8: Direct Effect of Identified Regulation on Intrinsic Motivation

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-value	p-value	Decision
H6	Identified Regulation $\rightarrow$ Intrinsic Motivation	.57	12.31	< .001	Reject H6o

Table 8 shows that identified regulation is a strong and significant predictor of teachers' intrinsic motivation. Therefore, H6o is rejected.

Table 9: Mediation Analysis

Hypothesis	Path	Indirect Effect (β)	95% CI	p-value	Decision
H7	PNS $\rightarrow$ IDR $\rightarrow$ IM	.27	[.18, .36]	< .001	Reject H7o

Table 9 shows that the identified regulation mediates the relationship between the psychological need satisfaction and intrinsic motivation. As the indirect effect is statistically significant, H7o is rejected.

Table 10: Comparative Predictive Effects of Psychological Needs

Hypothesis	Predictor	$\rightarrow$ Identified Regulation (β)	$\rightarrow$ Intrinsic Motivation (β)	Decision
H8	Autonomy Satisfaction	.47*	.51*	Reject H8o
	Competence Satisfaction	.39***	.36***	
	Relatedness Satisfaction	.28**	.18*	

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Table 10 shows that autonomy satisfaction has strong positive impact on identified regulation and intrinsic motivation. Competence satisfaction plays highly significant positive part in identified regulation and intrinsic motivation. Relatedness satisfaction has moderate but significant positive effect. Overall, autonomy satisfaction appears as the strongest predictor of both identified and intrinsic motivation. Thus, the study rejects this null hypothesis.

Table 11: *Model Fitness Indices*

Fit Index	Value
χ^2 (df)	2.3
CFI	.93
TLI	.92
RMSEA	.05

Table 12 presents model fitness indices. Model fit was acceptable as the values for CFI was .94, TLI .92 and RMSEA .05.

Discussion

The present study demonstrates that perceived school culture significantly influences teachers' psychological need satisfaction, providing empirical support for the assumption that organizational environments shape teachers' motivational experiences. The supportive school culture with collaborative relations, effective leadership, autonomy, and institutional support increases the sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness of teachers. This conclusion is supported by Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2020) that suggests that social and organizational contexts are essential for need satisfaction and autonomous motivation development. Furthermore, this study confirms the results of previous researches proving that the positive school culture impacts teachers' professional commitment and motivation (Slemp et al., 2020; Bardach & Klassen, 2021).

The study's findings are consistent with international studies on Self-Determination Theory, but they also offer context-specific insights for Karachi. Similar to Ryan and Deci (2020) and other SDT-based investigations, this study specifies that motivation exists on a continuum, with teachers progressing from amotivation and external regulation to identifiable and intrinsic motivation as their psychological needs are satisfied. The importance of acknowledged regulation as a transitional stage is in line with the results of Wilson et al. (2021) and Amelink et al. (2024). They emphasized the need of internalizing values for increasing intrinsic motivation in educational settings. Similarly, autonomy and competence are major determinants of internalization is consistent with earlier findings of (Rupnik & Avsec, 2020; Finch et al., 2021), which have revealed that need satisfaction is required for self-determined motivation

This study identifies certain context-specific discrepancies unlike many research undertaken in prosperous nations; where teacher autonomy and supporting leadership are more prevalent. The present findings emphasize the negative impact of top-down administrative pressures in Karachi's urban school. Previous studies frequently focused on teacher motivation as a static variable associated with rewards or work satisfaction (Manafa, 2018; West, Mavrogordato, & White, 2020). However, this study examines motivation as a dynamic process and specifically models motivational trajectories. It explicitly represents motivational pathways. This technique reveals patterns of internalization that were previously unknown in local studies.

Furthermore, whereas this study demonstrated that relatedness indirectly affects motivational internalization, several international studies (e.g., Mascarenhas et al., 2021) find that relatedness has a greater direct impact on intrinsic motivation. This distinction might reflect the more hierarchical and resource-constrained culture of Karachi schools where autonomy and competence may take precedence over interpersonal help.

Overall, the findings indicate that the school culture is the organizational base upon which the teachers' motivational trajectories are established. In contrast to considering the teacher's motivation as a fixed entity, the current research shows that the motivation changes through the process of psychological need fulfillment and motivational internalization. In this way, the holistic approach broadens the scope of the prior SDT research through the inclusion of school culture into the model as the crucial contextual antecedent. It allows a better understanding of how teachers move from controlled to intrinsic motivation within government secondary schools of Karachi.

Research Implications

This study makes contributions to the current body of knowledge in extending SDT in the context of government secondary schools in Karachi. This research contributes to the literature by establishing that school culture is an important factor in meeting psychological needs of teachers and their movement from extrinsic motivation to intrinsic motivation. While the existing body of literature focuses on viewing the phenomenon of teacher motivation as a static concept, which can be impacted by either the nature of reward or job satisfaction, this paper offers a dynamic perspective on the concept of motivation by taking into account the organizational and psychological factors. The results have significant implications for policymakers, educators, and administrators in providing an insight into the need to create a supportive school culture that fosters autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Developing such features will result in increased motivation among teachers and hence improved learning processes and educational outcomes.

Limitations and Future Research

Cross-sectional studies fail to account for changes in motivation over time. Future longitudinal research may have suggested to investigate how motivational trajectories affect outcomes including workplace engagement, satisfaction, and retention.

Conclusion

The current research examined how school culture affects the motivational trajectories of teachers from amotivation to intrinsic motivation in accordance with Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2020). The findings indicate that a positive school culture plays an important role in increasing psychological need satisfaction among teachers, which makes it easier for them to internalize their motivation. Psychological need satisfaction reduces amotivation and external regulation, while promoting introjected and identified regulation, which results in higher levels of intrinsic motivation. Identified regulation became a critical transition mechanism between controlled and autonomous forms of motivation, emphasizing the dynamic nature of teachers' motivational development.

The research clearly shows that autonomy and competence are the most important predictors of motivational internalization, while the role of relatedness is to provide complementary effects through the creation of supportive relationships among individuals, which promote motivational development. This paper extends the concept of Self-Determination Theory by demonstrating that it is possible to create autonomous motivation within resource-constrained and highly regulated

public school environments, teachers can become autonomously motivated if the school culture meets their basic psychological needs.

From a practical viewpoint, the study emphasizes the need for creating school cultures that are supportive in nature and consist of collaborative leadership, professional autonomy, professional development, and positive collegiality. This kind of atmosphere is likely to increase intrinsic motivation, professional commitment, and instructional quality among teachers. Overall, the study has made a contribution to the existing knowledge in the field through combining school culture with the Self-Determination Theory for explaining teachers' motivation in the Pakistani setting.

Recommendations

The study gives following recommendations:

- Promote autonomy-supportive leadership and involve teachers in decision-making.
- Foster a positive school culture based on trust, collaboration, mutual respect, and shared professional values.
- Offer professional development programs to improve teachers' competency.
- Encourage collaboration and peer support to increase relatedness.
- Reduce strict administrative measures and accountability pressures.
- Recognize teachers' efforts for growth and intrinsic motivation.
- Incorporate SDT ideas into policy and administrative planning.
- Develop school policies that prioritize teachers' psychological well-being alongside academic performance and institutional accountability.

Conflict of Interest

The authors showed no conflict of interest.

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