Malaysian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (MJSSH) (e-ISSN : 2504-8562)
2024, Volume 9, Issue 11, e003103
DOI: https://doi.org/10.47405/mjssh.v9i11.3103

REVIEW ARTICLE

A Conceptual Framework of Behavioural Languages in Educational Leadership: Power, Politeness, Motivation, Humor, and Rhetoric

Khadija M. H. Alrashidi[1]*

[1]The Public Authority for Applies Education and Training, House 30, Street 104, Block 1, Sulaibikhat City, Al-Asimah Governorate, Kuwait
Email: km.alrasheedi@paaet.edu.kw

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR (*):
Khadija M. H. Alrashidi
(km.alrasheedi@paaet.edu.kw)

KEYWORDS:
Educational leadership
Language
Communication

CITATION:
Alrashidi, K. M. H. (2024). A Conceptual Framework of Behavioural Languages in Educational Leadership: Power, Politeness, Motivation, Humor, and Rhetoric. *Malaysian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (MJSSH), 9*(11), e003103. https://doi.org/10.47405/mjssh.v9i11.3103

ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to propose a conceptual framework to gain a comprehensive understanding of how behavioural language (i.e. power, politeness, motivation, humour, and rhetoric) relate to the educational leadership practices. This framework gives educational leaders a tactical method for promoting productive interactions and successful educational results by combining the body of knowledge and insights into leadership communication. The study uses a literature review methodology to synthesise previous research on behavioural languages and their use in educational leadership. The proposed framework was developed by categorising relevant studies into themes of power, politeness, motivating language, humour, and rhetoric. This conceptual exploration offers insightful reflections for educators to improve leadership effectiveness by implementing communication practices that improve engagement and relational dynamics in educational environments. This framework is designed to provide insights for future research and propose implications for educational leaders who want to develop supportive and dynamic workplace environments.

Contribution/Originality: This study contributes to the existing literature by proposing a conceptual framework for improving educational leadership practices through the integration of behavioural languages such as power, politeness, incentive, humour, and rhetoric. The framework offers useful insights into improving communication, effectiveness, and workplace dynamics, while also laying the foundation for future empirical study.

1. Introduction

Leadership has become a popular concept and has gathered a lot of interest in both educational and noneducational literature (Abbas et al., 2022; Alazmi, 2024; Al-Dossary, 2022; Del & Stahl, 2023). Globally, research into the qualities of educational leaders has experienced an accelerated growth. This rising interest is mainly driven by the need for a more seamless level of communication, behavioural language mode, and the impact it has on educational leadership and effectiveness. In the last decade, the Association for

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Talent Development (ATD) reported in 2015 that about $20 billion of the nearly $160 billion expended on staff learning and development was on leadership development and education. One of these development areas is communication, and particularly language usage.

Language plays a key role in shaping public perception, especially during crises, as Montiel et al. (2021) demonstrate in their analysis of pandemic rhetoric. They argue that leaders who use language strategically can foster resilience and trust. For educational leaders, understanding the power of communication is essential, as it aligns with the study's focus on language as a stabilizing and empowering force. For most leadership and managerial roles, behavioural language is regarded as one of the most sought-after skills a leader should possess. Oral communication is frequently used by leaders to issue commands, guide subordinates, transfer information, negotiate, and convince, among other things. As a result, leaders are frequently advised to improve their linguistic abilities in order to become more successful communicators. Previous studies have shown that generally, leaders spend up to 80% of their time communicating in one form or the other (Mayfield & Mayfield, 2017a), and in educational settings, leaders are known to spend about 84% of their time engaging their colleagues and subordinates in one form of leadership communication or the other (Holmes & Parker, 2017). As a result, establishing a good communication culture may help to create a healthy school environment and improve learning outcomes (Aljabeli, 2017). The high influx of advanced communication technologies and the growing interest in the use of language as a tool for motivation will continuously increase the need for effective behavioural language use by leaders especially in educational institutions.

Behavioural languages refer to the specific way people behave or how they communicate to the people around them. According to Locher (2012, p. 1), "*Language is not just a means to pass factual content from one person to another, it is also a tool to shape relationships and thus to negotiate interpersonal meaning. When we use language, we therefore also reveal something about ourselves and our relationships with others*." In this review, the focus will be on the five behavioural languages of power, politeness, motivation, humour, and rhetoric to see how they all work together to add to the success of school leadership practices. These languages will be assessed and their influence on leadership outcome and improved management tactics particularly in educational settings will be highlighted. Understanding these concepts exposes one to the fundamental aspects of the relationship that exist between language and leadership. According to Ruben et al. (2023), leadership communication serves as a tool for understanding the social influence of a leader which involves formal and informal, planned and unplanned, verbal and non-verbal, as well as intentional or accidental communication used for either good or evil. Furthermore, the application of these behavioural languages shapes one's beliefs into reality, creates awareness of its impact, and enables one to make more informed choices on how to communicate because this will determine the interpretation, response, and outcome.

Thus far, few attempts have been made to evaluate the impact of leaders' communicative language on their effectiveness (Sarros et al., 2014), as well as the specific behavioural languages used by educational leaders to communicate and motivate teachers and staff. In this paper, the role of language in educational leadership will be reviewed. Followed by how the five languages of leadership (power, politeness, motivation, humour, and rhetoric) interact to enhance leadership effectiveness in educational contexts. Additionally, a conceptual framework, on how the various concepts are linked, has been

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developed and illustrated. Finally, it is claimed that the same variables that motivate divergent linguistic usage may continue to impact speech manners in a good way, resulting in improved educational practices. This is critical in comprehending the interrelationships between action and structure in schools, where language is both a result and a cause of power as a result of these micro-behaviours. Therefore, the main objective of this literature review is to explore how these behavioural languages relate to leadership practices and to create a conceptual framework that educational leaders may utilize to improve communication, effectiveness, and workplace dynamics.

2. Method

This study adopts an integrative literature review methodology to discover how behavioural languages, namely power, politeness, motivating language, humour, and rhetoric relate to educational leadership practices. Snyder (2019) proposed that integrative literature review is a method used for synthesizing existing knowledge and creating a conceptual framework by uncovering insights in a certain topic. The main goal of this kind of review is to develop basic or preliminary conceptualisations and theoretical models. The studies used here were derived from academic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, and Google Scholar. Studies were searched for terms such as "politeness in educational leadership" and "motivating language and leadership effectiveness." Inclusion criteria were based on studies on educational leadership and behavioural languages, with irrelevant works excluded. The literature was categorized thematically into five behavioural languages, allowing for an organized exploration of ideas and their practical implications.

Once the literature review was done, the next stage of building a conceptual framework started. The proposed conceptual framework was developed by categorizing relevant studies into themes of power, politeness, motivating language, humour, and rhetoric. This framework aimed to reflect the nature of how behavioural languages relate to educational leadership. Torraco (2016) stated that a literature review method allows for many ideas to be immersed into an integrated framework, which serves as a valuable source for establishing theoretical connections and expanding knowledge. The employed method in this study not only strengthens the conceptual depth but it also paves the way for future empirical research on leadership communication in educational settings.

3. Results

3.1. The Role of Language in Educational Leadership

Language, leadership, and communication are interlinked (Uluturk et al., 2024). They all develop relationships, inspire creative and critical thinking, and establish order and structure. Language goes beyond mere communication and its impact has the potential to unlock leadership effectiveness, organizational culture, and team dynamics. Educational leadership practice requires awareness about the language used in their daily job because it is regarded as the key to successful leadership and management practices in schools. Leaders have a strong effect on their subordinates since they are the most powerful characters in the organisation. They also have a greater understanding of their teams in the workplace through good communication, which has an impact on both the team and the larger organization's outcomes (Luthra & Dahiya, 2015). Furthermore, Holmes (2016) declared that leaders communicate with individuals

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of the organisation using language that represents their leadership style, which has a direct impact on workers' productivity and engagement.

The role of language in leadership and its connectedness has been studied by several scholars based on certain situations. Take for instance, Gerpott et al. (2019) examined the conditions in which emergent leaders are produced through verbal communication in teams that are self-managed; in daily leadership exchanges, Baxter (2015) reviewed the differences in language based on teams' sex composition; while Van de Mieroop and Schnurr (2014) evaluated how performance appraisal interviews are shaped by leadership language. Other studies on gender and leadership language, confirmed that Language has the power to construct and reinforce gender dynamics (Daniel, 2012; Reimer & Hamilton, 2024). They highlight how gendered language can impact perceptions of authority, often shaping leadership hierarchies in ways that may disadvantage female leaders. In educational contexts, being mindful of language's role in reinforcing these dynamics is crucial, as it can help create a more equitable environment where authority is respected regardless of gender. Each of these studies indicates that leadership language is situation specific and can be used to improve leadership practices in varying contexts.

Educational Leadership language encompasses the ability to effectively communicate to the board members, school administration, colleagues, students, parents, and other community constituents (English, 2018). Communication is all about providing or conveying information, sharing and transferring knowledge, exchanging news and engaging in social interactions. Effective communication means mastery over non-verbal communication codes like body language, tone and tenor, facial expressions, and the right words. Additionally, effective communication also entails the ability to use language appropriately in a way that it takes care of people's senses, emotions, and allows them to see reasons without hurting their sensibility. The sheer ability to use language to communicate is what separates a human being from other living animals. If language is used appropriately, it facilitates congenial relationships and plays a pivotal role in everyday experiences (Shaharuddin & Harun, 2022). As a result, establishing a good communication culture may help to create a healthy school environment and improve learning outcomes (Aljabeli, 2017).

3.2. Power as a Language for Leadership Effectiveness

Power is an interactive concept (Alrashidi, 2015; Schedlitzki et al., 2017), and is considered an essential component of leadership. It provides a means through which leaders can influence others through interactive behaviours (Yukl et al., 2013), since they are the most powerful characters in the organisation. Language behaviours are used by individuals to convey indicators of their definition of self and their interpretation of the role relationships unfolding in front of them during daily interactions. In organizational social development, the part played by face-to-face behaviour has been emphasised by theorists with arguments that organisations are nothing more than a continuous stream of micro-behaviours.

Dominance theory proposed by Cummins (2021) interprets how living in dominance hierarchies otherwise known as rank order operates within human species to animals based on social status, survival of the fittest through behavioural strategies, and gaining favourable access to available resources in competitive social situations (Barnett, 2021;

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Cummins, 2021). Here, leaders or high-ranking individuals use their power to control the behaviour of subordinates to have the upper hand.

To understand the nature of interpersonal power, Sturm and Antonakis (2015) posited that power has three subcomponents – means, agency and the ability to enforce one's will. These components are all exercised through expertise, charisma, incentives, and punishment. When this is applied to leadership language, it raises questions as to how leaders demonstrate, maintain, and exert control on followers while permitting them to retain their individual agency. According to Lumby (2019), leaders have the ability to invoke language to secure power over followers, and a leader's power can be developed overtime from noble language.

Effective leadership power has also been classified into two clusters - soft and hard power, and has been associated with both desirable and undesirable individualistic and organizational outcomes (Kovach, 2020; Peyton et al., 2019). For effective leadership, the use of the soft power over the hard power has been recommended. Take for instance, the use of soft power by leaders while communicating is linked to higher levels of organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behaviour, while hard power is connected to low self-confidence, burnout, increased absenteeism, and lower productivity (Kovach, 2020; Randolph & Kemery, 2011). In exploring the role of language within leadership, Schedlitzki et al. (2017) argue that language is central to shaping organizational culture and power dynamics. This is particularly crucial in educational settings, as an effective leader is aware of such power of language through enhancing language power by empowering followers, enhancing confidence and credibility which invariably leads to the building of an enthusiastic, result-based culture, and a motivated team (Elmazi, 2018). This therefore implies that the use of the behavioural language of power is not only based on its acquisition, but on how well the leader uses it.

3.3. Politeness as a Language for Leadership Effectiveness

Politeness in leadership communication positively impacts engagement (Rabiul & Yean, 2021). Politeness is a behavioural language that plays a crucial role in facilitating harmonious interaction. The sociolinguistic theory of politeness by Brown and Levinson (1987) which is based on Goffman's (1967) notion of face postulates that everybody has either a positive or negative face where face refers to one's public self-image during social interaction (Amadi & Ken-Maduako, 2019). Two kinds of politeness strategies were proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) – positive and negative. Positive politeness expresses concern, sympathy, solidarity, uses complements and desires to be liked or admired by others. While in negative politeness, one acts freely, unimpeded with indications for indirectness, deference and impersonalisation. Brown and Levinson (1987) further stated that a potential threat to one's face is called a Face Threatening Act (FTA) and to redress these threats, the following strategies were presented: Say nothing, bald on record, off record, positive politeness, and negative politeness strategy. Furthermore, in exploring the high and low power actors of specific linguistic outcomes, the politeness theory has also been applied by Morand (2014) to describe the behavioural egalitarianism linked to how the demand for face-to-face interactions create authoritarian tendencies that mitigate against workers' successful workplace participation. Therefore, politeness theory entails the maintenance of linguistic civility and the use of communicative language without sounding offensive.

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As a dynamic phenomenon, politeness is also linked to power. In educational institutions, power and politeness have an ongoing and a complex interaction. Previous research has concluded that these two phenomena are enacted by educators on a daily basis. Alrashidi (2015), with a qualitatively conducted attempt explored the interrelationship between power and politeness in educational contexts, stating that: "(a) politeness is a source of power; (b) linguistic analysis of politeness is not sufficient; (c) politeness is a mitigation strategy; (d) powerfulness is not always impoliteness; (e) there is a relation between politeness and face-threatening acts; and (f) most of our behaviour is unmarked (i.e., politics)" (p. 89). Additionally, Morand (2014) also confirmed the role played by politeness in the construction and distortion of power within hierarchical communication.

A previously published study confirmed that leader-member politeness of exchange creates a positive communication atmosphere, reduces work ambiguity, social loafing, as well as develops a culturally relevant servant relationship (Abu Bakar & McCann, 2018). Similarly, Batool and Siddiqui (2024) in their study declared that the simple use of a culturally appropriate language plays a huge role in positively influencing objective effectiveness and enhancing group members' performance. Having confirmed that leaders' politeness strategies affect subordinates' motivation, Massoudi (2017) stated that to have highly motivated subordinates, different politeness strategies should be applied to different individuals and situations.

Politeness in communication not only fosters respect but also enhances motivation and organizational cohesion, as Saputra's (2021) study illustrates. The study's findings declare that polite language creates a supportive environment, boosts high performance and morale. For educational leaders, implementing politeness strategies is vital to cultivating a collaborative atmosphere that aligns with the framework's focus on respectful language as a keystone of effective leadership

3.4. Motivating Language as a Language for Leadership Effectiveness

Motivating language that incorporates empathy and clear direction is crucial in maintaining trust and engagement, particularly during crises (Men et al., 2022). The concept of speech characteristics that enable effective leadership using motivating language theory (MLT) was initially conceptualized by Sullivan (1988) after observing that leaders underutilize language tools. This concept has been supported, refined and expanded by several scholars' coinciding findings across different settings (Madlock & Sexton, 2015; Mayfield & Mayfield, 2018a, 2018b). Among other management concepts, previous research have shown that leaders' use of motivating language (ML) has positive influence on several follower behaviours such as performance feedback, job satisfaction, effective decision-making, and absenteeism (Doreen et al., 2022; Mayfield & Mayfield, 2018c).

In education, leaders who use both interpersonal and informational verbal ML communicates effectively with teachers, enhances their commitment to the teaching profession, sustains positive school climate, improves their self-efficacy, and offer clear work expectations (Bezzina et al., 2018; Holmes & Parker, 2018). Motivational school leaders, when combined with other personal and environmental attributes, generally lead successful schools (Owens & Valesky, 2014). The structure of the motivating language concept for effective leadership classifies all leader-to-follower oral speech

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into direction-giving language, empathetic language, and meaning-making language dimension (Mayfield & Mayfield, 2019).

Leaders employ direction-giving (DG) language to dispel role and task ambiguity, reduce uncertainty, provide requisite information and take action towards the achievement of organizational goals and articulate reward contingencies (Gutierrez-Wirsching, 2015; Holmes & Parker, 2019). When constructive feedback is given on a task using DG language, the employees' self-efficacy, performance, and learning is greatly enhanced (Nguyen et al., 2021). The second dimension which is the empathetic language is used by leaders to commend a worker's effort or success, and this invariably initiates and sustains a supportive relationship between a leader and a follower (Mayfield & Mayfield, 2016, 2021). As further posited by Nguyen et al. (2021), the scope of empathetic language goes beyond job performance and also includes a leader's ability to connect emotionally with a follower through supportive words, compassion, shared happiness, and in other personal life events. Lastly, meaning-making language which is usually informal, conveyed through stories and metaphors, aligns an employees' personal goals with organizational value, promotes cultural norms, and recognizes employees' unique work contributions (Mayfield & Mayfield, 2017b; Nguyen et al., 2021).

In a study conducted by Sarros et al. (2014) on leaders and their use of motivating language, results indicated that direction giving language was more prominent in strategic leadership and people related activities, followed by meaning-making and empathetic language. This suggested that the development of a repertoire of language approaches could facilitate effective organizational outcomes. According to MLT, the effective use of these linguistic dimensions can increase employee motivation (a) if they are included in the majority of the discourse between managers and employees; (b) when the drivers' actions are as they say; and (c) when all forms of language are used effectively and strategically. This is empirically supported by Holmes and Parker (2017) who asserted that for ML to occur, behavioural credibility and integrity are required.

Motivating language not only empowers others but also plays a crucial role in self-leadership (Mayfield et al., 2021). Mayfield et al. (2021) highlights how self-motivational language can enhance personal performance and resilience. In educational settings, promoting motivating language among both leaders and subordinates can foster a culture of self-leadership, supporting the emphasis on language as a tool for building intrinsic motivation and personal accountability

Men et al. (2022) emphasizes the importance of empathetic and directive language in building trust during crises, showing that motivating language is critical in maintaining engagement under stress leaders who communicate with empathy foster resilience and connection among their teams. For educational leaders, these insights are especially relevant, as motivating language can help support staff and students through challenging times, reinforcing the framework's focus on language as a source of stability and motivation (Mayfield & Mayfield 2021; Rabiul & Yean, 2021; Uluturk et al., 2024).

3.5. Humour as a Language for Leadership Effectiveness

Humour is identified as a crucial effective leadership skill and communication style in previous literature (Alazmi & Alhajeri, 2022; de Guzman & Arceo, 2019; Dewi et al., 2022; Grace-Odeleye & Santiago, 2019; Jansen, 2023). Though some point that a sense of humour is a necessary leadership quality, others stress the functional significance of

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humour (Fisher & Robbin, 2015; Robert et al., 2015). It is also identified as a behavioural language that maintains organizational harmony, and when combined with laughter, reflects a good socioemotional function and organizational creativity thereby releasing psychological tension (Cann & Kuiper, 2014; Valle et al., 2018). Additionally, humour has been instrumental to the achievement of leadership objectives like conflict management, team motivation, group cohesiveness, job performance (Schnurr & Omar, 2021), and has also been praised for its ability in enabling leaders to exercise power and politeness at the same time (Holmes & Marra, 2006).

In the educational setting, the application of humour has been found in two main domains – administrative processes and in delivering educational instruction. The focal point here is on the administrative processes as this has a lot to do with leadership effectiveness. As an effective managerial tool in schools, humour has been attributed to tension and distress reduction (Blanchard et al., 2014; Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2012), increased creativity (Fluegge-Woolf, 2014), organizational commitment (Sahin, 2017), enhanced employee motivation, and the facilitation of positive school outcomes (Sahin, 2018). In a stressful or powerless situation, people who apply humour are perceived as being in charge, irrespective of if they actually are or not (Schnurr & Omar, 2021) and this is regarded as a desirable attribute in a leader. In these stressful situations, oxytocin is released which invariably promotes trust, authenticity and social bonding (Zheng et al., 2017), thereby enhancing leadership styles in educational administration (Grace-Odeleye & Santiago, 2019).

Humour has also been linked with the face-threatening behaviour found in the workplace. This behaviour according to Alazmi and Alhajeri (2022) is characterised by the need to follow directions and guidelines as part of the authority hierarchy, but with humour, the face-threatening behaviour is reduced, making employees become more comfortable, energized and creative. It is also important to note that though humour leads to positive emotions, it has its dark side when misused. For example, aggressive humour which is viewed as a negative and unhealthy style of humour decreases creativity, teamwork efficiency, employee satisfaction, organizational trust and commitment (Evans & Steptoe-Warren, 2018; Lee, 2015; Romero & Arendt, 2011). For managerial effectiveness, school leaders should proceed with the use of humour with caution due to its positive and negative results in workplaces. These negative results could be in the form of employee isolation, exhaustion, frustration and intentions to leave the organization (Blanchard et al., 2014; Trif & Fodor, 2019). Dewi et al. (2022), analysed the interrelated nature between humour and politeness, and they revealed that humour can soften communication, creating an environment of respect and friendliness. For educational leaders, incorporating humour with politeness can, as Dewi et al., concluded, enhance relatability and mutual respect, proving the view of humour as an effective relational tool.

3.6. Rhetoric as a Language for Leadership Effectiveness

Holmes (2016), expands on motivating language theory, discussing how it can be used to enhance rhetoric in leadership. Rhetoric is defined as the verbal features of persuasion (De Mille, 2024). Rhetorical language has been recognized as one of the linguistic strategies that educational leaders develop to persuade teachers to shift their practice or position (Lowenhaupt, 2021). It gives the methodological tools to unravel the language of persuasion in the setting of school improvement initiatives and helps to evaluate how instructors communicate in the context of their schools. The persuasive language is used

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to convince the target audience to support a particular viewpoint or take a specific action and this could be in the form of a written or spoken communication, statistics or logical arguments (Ting, 2018). Although persuasion has long been recognised as an important control technique in organisations, it is the least understood.

Language should be viewed as a strategic and purposeful practice embarked on by leaders in relation to others, and this can be achieved by drawing on a range of rhetorical and linguistic repertoires to enact leadership and argue for particular outcomes (Lowenhaupt, 2021). Classical rhetoric has three forms – *logos, ethos and pathos*. *Logos* according to Ting (2018) is a persuasion mode that works by appealing to rationality, *ethos* appeals to ethics/credibility, while *pathos* appeals to emotions. While communicating, these three appeals may be used independently or collaboratively.

Importantly, the deployment of rhetorical manoeuvres by educational leaders should be seen as a constitutive of persuasive activity. In a study conducted by Lowenhaupt (2014) on the rhetoric language of leadership, findings indicated that though *pathos* and *ethos* forms of arguments were also pivotal to leadership talk, *logos* were most frequently used. The author further declared that rhetorical language enables educational leaders to enact school improvement, manage school reform, and also practice, define and shape ongoing educational practices.

The rhetorical language of leadership, often draws on literary techniques to convey authority and shape leadership ideals (Morrell, 2010). The skill of communicating rhetorically has become important to educational leaders. Based on this, they are saddled with the responsibility of instituting a vision anchored in the professional ethics of the field of education, and in providing a nurturing and safe space for students to Inhabit (Frick, 2011). After studying educational leadership through the "*study of social practices – language use – in social contexts*" (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000, p. 141), it can be concluded that language, specifically rhetoric, is used to "continually and actively build and rebuild our world (Gee, 1999, p. 11)." In educational leadership, adopting a similar rhetorical approach can strengthen the leader's ability to inspire and guide, show the emphasis on the power of rhetoric in communicating leadership visions effectively

3.7. Proposed Conceptual Framework

The proposed conceptual framework in Figure 1 illustrates the concepts used to analyse and understand the influence of the five behavioural languages on educational leadership. The framework is conceptualized into the behavioural languages in leadership – *power, politeness, motivating language, humour and rhetoric*, their influence on educational leadership, and the end products which are leadership effectiveness and school outcomes. As presented in Figure 1, the five behavioural languages and the three distinct dimensions (language, influence and outcome) are proposed and the framework outlined below:

i. *Power*: In educational leadership, the power dynamics communicated within educational environments establishes authority and controls hierarchical structure. This influences decision-making and organizational structure leading to improved school climate and culture.
ii. *Politeness*: Being polite facilitates respect, cooperation and uplifts employee morale. This influences educational leadership by fostering positive relationships, mitigating and resolving conflicts.

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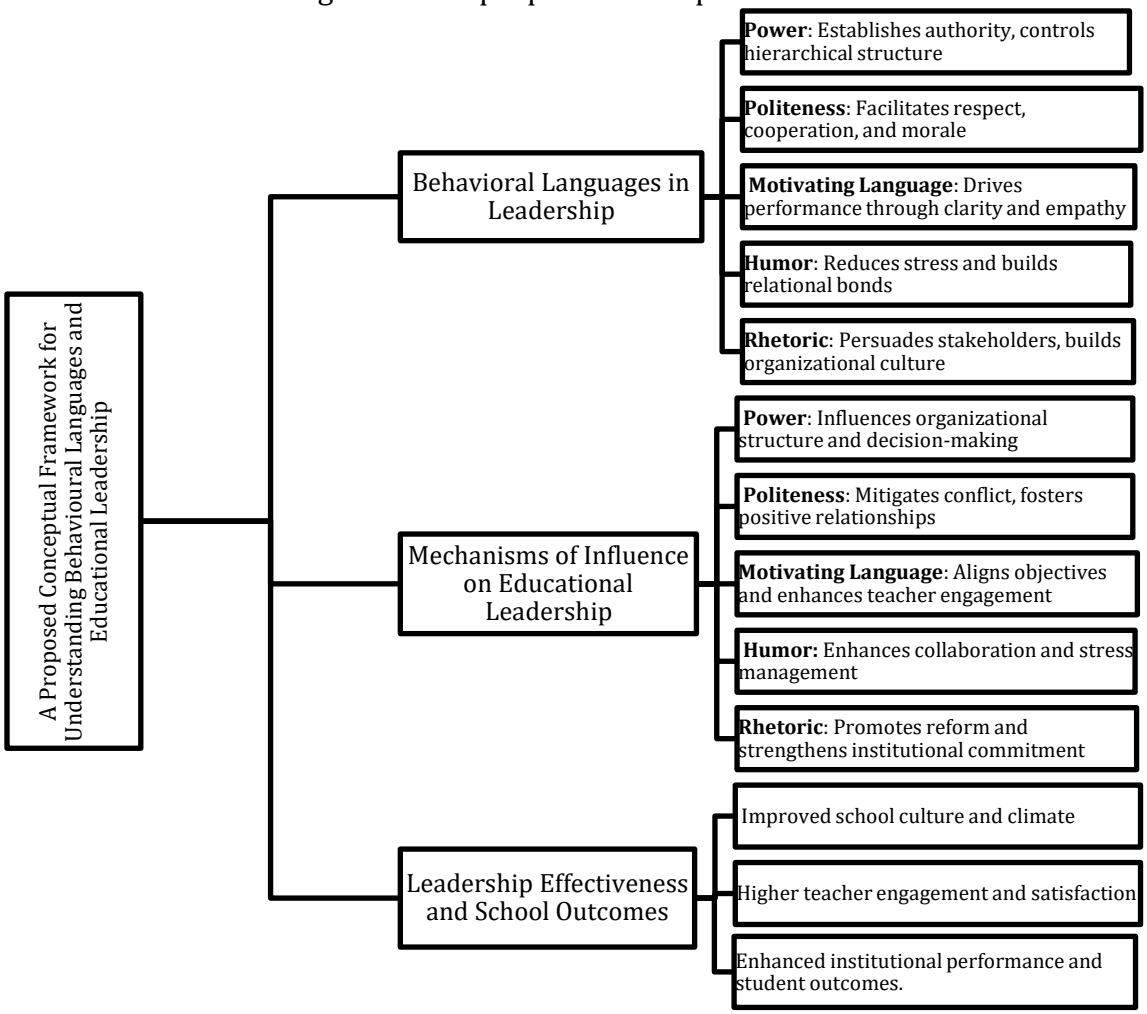
iii. *Motivating Language*: The use of motivating language by leaders in educational institutions while interacting with colleagues/subordinates drives performance through clarity and empathy. This in turn leads to a high level of teacher engagement, job satisfaction and impressive instructional delivery.

iv. *Humour*: The interjection of positive humor as a behavioural language by educational administrators builds relational bonds among staff and is associated with stress reduction. In the long run, this trickles down, resulting in enhanced institutional performance and positive student outcomes.

v. *Rhetoric*: The use of rhetorical language is an effective tool for persuasion that builds organizational culture, promotes organizational reforms, and strengthens institutional commitment.

Figure 1: The proposed conceptual Framework



The arrows connecting the concepts in the framework are a reminder that these languages are not experienced in isolation but are intertwined. It is important to note that positive improvements in the use of one behavioural language have the potential to impact positively on another which eventually culminates into improved leadership communication style, effectiveness, organizational growth and positive student outcome.

Clear and influential communication is essential for organizational success (Saputra, 2021). By ensuring that goals and expectations are communicated effectively, leaders can boost productivity. For educational leaders, applying these communication

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strategies is vital in guiding institutions toward success, which represent the impact of language in educational leadership.

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

This subject of study has already established a substantial research base and scholarly community. Despite extensive research and contemplation, no clear model of effective learning practices in the education sector has emerged to explain how, when, and why these languages must be implemented. Existing theories co-opted from other domains—psychology and education—are routinely used in current studies and practice. In this review, an attempt was made to move the topic of behavioural languages in educational institutions forward by proposing a conceptual model describing the relationship between the five behavioural languages in leadership – power, politeness, motivating language, humour, and rhetoric, leader-subordinate relationship, influence on educational leaderships' effectiveness and student outcomes. What education research lacks is a comprehensive model that it can claim as its own. The field of education is doing something unique in attempting to develop linguistically aware leaders and recent reviews have been excellent in finding and aggregating the effectiveness of these micro-behavioural languages individually. In this study, the effectiveness of the five micro-languages was assessed in educational leaders' practices and organizational leadership as a whole. Previous studies demonstrated the use of power and politeness in teaching practices and management skills in an organisational setup. Similarly, humour and rhetoric languages have seemingly been utilised as powerful tools in transformational leadership. Additionally, motivating language has always played a pivotal role in positively influencing rapid learning. All of these have contributed to effective educational practices and prior studies have proved this.

Language is such a valuable resource and leaders who have mastered motivational forms that recognise teachers' views may be able to improve the educational atmosphere. This review therefore suggests that leaders, especially in educational institutions can leverage behavioural languages at work, and the effectiveness of those efforts might depend largely on the quality of language used, and on the quality of the relationship that already exists between the leaders and their followers. Finally, while what is presented here is useful in its own right, they also pave the way for additional research. Future research should consider empirical research on leadership language and how this can be integrated with a compatible set of leader behaviour that will yield positive leader outcome.

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

This study did not involve human participants, and no ethical approval or consent was required.

Acknowledgement

No specific acknowledgments to declare

Funding

This study received no funding.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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