

Influence of Demographics on Self-Perceived Morale of Public and Private Secondary School Teachers

Marium Din*

Hukam Dad Malik**

Samra Afzal***

Abstract

The study was an attempt to explore the influence of school sector (public/private), gender, academic qualification, professional qualification and length of service on self-perceived morale of teachers. The responses of 200 public, and 200 private sector secondary school teachers were obtained about self-perceived morale. The morale of public secondary school teachers was found higher than private secondary school teachers. The secondary school teachers with M.S/ M. Phil had morale level highest than the other teachers. The teachers with B. Ed as their professional qualification had morale level highest than the teachers with other professional qualification. Gender and length of service were found as weak variables as they did not have any significant influence on morale.

Keywords: Morale, demographics, affective, future/goal, interpersonal

Introduction

The teacher is considered a nimbus of all the activities in any educational system. Teaching-learning process cannot run successfully without the active contribution of teacher. Teacher has a direct impact on her students (Wangdi, 2008). There are many important personal attributes of teachers which directly or indirectly influence their teaching. Morale is one of them. Their morale level surely contributes in enhancing quality of teaching and learning. Therefore the leaders must continuously strive for putting their best to improve morale of their teachers. They should also investigate factors affecting morale of teachers. These can be positive and negative factors both and their investigation can contribute in retaining qualified teachers (Rafferty, 2002). Teachers not only interact with students but also work with leading professional bodies of the school organization, therefore their morale transfers to others and affect many important tasks of the school (Rowland, 2008). As teacher is the most

* Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Faculty of Social Sciences, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, Email: mdin@numl.edu.pk

**Associate Professor/Head, Department of Education, Faculty of Social Sciences, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, Email: hdad@numl.edu.pk

***Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Faculty of Social Sciences, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, Email safzal@numl.edu.pk

important resource therefore it is necessary to retain good teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2003).

Morale is not only an essential ingredient for quality learning but also influences the school organization to a great extent in terms of productivity. Morale can be characterized as a vigor, perseverance, unity, support and cooperation among a group. It is to strive enthusiastically to achieve the desired targets (Hart et al, 2000). It can also be attributed as a trust that one person has in its leadership where the individual and leadership strives for the achievement of common goals and objectives (Hardy, 2009). Morale is a loyalty of one person with other persons in the organization.

There are different factors which are responsible for the morale of teachers. Lumsden (1998) says that those teachers who enjoy high morale are those teachers who have good feelings about their co-workers. They have a sense of achievement and accomplishment in their job. Whitaker, et.al cited by Hunter-McGregor (2011) assert that the teachers should have a focus on morale and should strive for high morale. There are certain factors which are related to organization which have a strong influence of on morale as compared to classroom related factors (Hart et al., 2000). In return, the morale of the employees is an important factor in determining the overall effectiveness of the organization. Healthy and supportive climate of school organization results in high morale of teachers. The effective leaders pay greater attention to boost the morale of their employees (Yee, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

Morale is associated with positive and negative feelings of an individual. Positive feelings indicate high morale whereas negative feelings show low morale. There are various studies which specify that high morale positively contribute in the improved performance of the employees and increased productivity of the organization. Just like all other professions, morale is greatly important in the profession of teaching as well. Morale of teachers affects all aspects of school and education system. But unfortunately the morale of teachers is not much studied. One possible reason is lack of clarity about the definition and concept of morale. The studies that are conducted on the morale of teachers suggest that as teachers do not have their share in any type of decisions related to school including selection of text books, curriculum development, school budgeting and hiring of employees that is why they may have low morale.

There is a dire need to pay a greater attention to the morale of the teacher. Because when teachers have high morale they become more optimistic about their students' progress and focus on well-being of their students in a more positive term. Researches has also proved that teachers with high morale are likely to pay more attention to their work, teach more vigorously to their pupils and relate more positively

with their co-workers and school as compared to those teachers which have low morale (Santos, 2012).

In Pakistan, there are very few researches which are conducted to explore the morale of employees generally and in educational organization particularly. Furthermore if researches have been conducted in this area they are conducted at university level and schools are not studied in this regard. Therefore a need was to conduct a research study to explore the morale of school teachers and also compare difference in the morale level of public and private school teachers if any. There are certain demographic variables which may bring a difference in the level of morale of teachers. Therefore, it was also considered important to assess that what demographic attributes bring any significant difference in morale of teachers.

Objectives of the Study

The present study was carried out to explore the influence of:

1. school sector (public/private) on self-perceived morale level .
2. gender on self-perceived morale level.
3. academic qualification on self-perceived morale level..
4. professional qualification on self-perceived morale level .
5. To explore influence of length of service on self-perceived morale level.

Null Hypotheses of the Study

Following null hypotheses were formulated to initiate the study regarding self-perceived morale of secondary school teachers.

H01: School sector (public/private) does not influence significantly the self-perceived morale level.

H02: Gender does not influence significantly the self-perceived morale level.

H03: Academic qualification does not influence significantly the self-perceived morale level.

H04. Professional qualification does not influence significantly the self-perceived morale level.

H05. Length of service does not influence significantly the self-perceived morale level

Literature Review

Morale basically explains employees' feeling regarding their work and work place. The concept of morale has been investigated in relation to many other constructs including organizational culture, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employees' engagement etc. High level morale contributes positively in the individual, group and organizational success (Zweni, 2004). Morale benefits at three levels, individual level, group level and organization level. When an individual has high

morale, his work performance improves, he contributes confidently in group performance and this improved group performance results in organizations' productivity and effectiveness.

There are two different directions of morale high or low. The satisfaction level of employees and positive feelings about coworkers and organizational environment explains high morale while low frustrated, bitter and unpleasant feelings show low morale (Forret and Love, 2008). According to Hardy et.al (2015) employees with high morale contribute positively in knowledge and experience of their organizations. Such employees contribute certainly to their organizations' wellbeing while participating fruitfully in crisis resolution and continuously work for the wellbeing of organization. (Hardy, et. al , 2015). When workers have high level of morale, it empowers the organizations and supports the organizations in goals' achievement (Bowles and Cooper, 2009). When employees have high level of morale they love their job, coworkers and their careers and feel really contented in their organizations (Zemke, 2002). MacFadzean (2005) relates morale with many significant attributes found in armed forces which are discipline, respect, courage, teamwork, confidence, honor, unity, cohesion, commitment and camaraderie. Morale enhances performance and organizational competitiveness no matter it is public organization or private organization. Employees with high morale serve well their clients and help in increasing the profit. High morale also aids in achievement of organizational goals and mission.

Dimensions of Morale

According to McFadzean and McFadzean (2005) morale has affective, future /goal and interpersonal dimensions. These three dimensions are conceptualized as a result of certain variables which are categorized in three groups. The first category is related to the work values and expectations. These expectations are comprised of perception of morale, flexibility and decision making in the workplace. This category of variable is called work characteristics. Second category is context which is related to organizational practices. The third category of variables is termed as modifiers. Modifiers are those factors that affect employees' perception of work characteristics and context (McFadzean & McFadzean, 2005).

According to Hardy (2009) there are three components of morale. These are affective/value, interpersonal and future/goal. People in the organization realize importance of each other and feel a healthy connection among each other. They work with each other and also work for each other (Afzal, 2017). Morale is valuable for individuals as well as the organization. It is cement that keeps them coherent and together. According to Johnsrud & Rosser (2002), it is a commutative wellbeing of individual and groups where they feel themselves as a part and parcel and necessary for the survival of each other.

Bowles and Cooper (2009) have suggested many factors which contribute in increasing the employees' morale. Nature of job and the image of the organization, benefits and compensations the organization give to its employees, growth and development opportunities in career, Job security, dissemination or sharing of important and credible information, productivity, working conditions, management and supervision and decision- making opportunities in the organization play significant role in boosting the morale level of the employees.

According to Din (2016) high morale produces good consequences whereas low morale leads to passivity and low productivity. High morale of employees adds clearly in the improvement of productivity, creativity and performance .Morale brings quality, decreases absenteeism and cultivates a secure and safe environment in the organization (Millett, 2013). The organization with higher level of morale are more productive than those organizations which have employees with low morale (Weakliem and Frenkel, 2006; Zweni, 2004). The morale has a great deal of benefits for the business organizations as well. Salesmen with higher morale sell more (McClelland and Burnham, 2003).

Success of schools can be determined through examining the morale of people in the school organization (Tjosvold, 2008). Teachers with high morale are more supportive towards their colleagues, and engage positively in staff meetings and give creative solutions of the problem (Chirayath, 2009). Such employees reach on time at their work place waste less time in gossiping; communicate effectively (Mazin, 2010). Such teachers exhibit more pride in their jobs, more satisfaction and willingness to work collectively than individual tasks. Ngambi (2011) has highlighted the factors which improve morale which are trust building, proper communication, proper planning effective supervision and promotion of team spirit.

Jones (2009) has explained many identifiers of low morale including different rules for different employees, unresolved conflicts and tensions among employees, lack of incentives and rewards, unproductive relationship of supervisors and subordinates. There are certain factors that result in low morale among teachers. Most important are pressures from administration, negative evaluation from students less support from community and administration, insecure work place, excessive work load, low pays, mitigating emotional and behavioral demands of students, lack of faculty collaboration inadequate facilities, higher accountability and lack of appreciation. The chronic low morale affects negatively the professional competency of teachers and also results in burnout.

Lloyd (2003) says there are certain ways which may contribute in enhancement of morale among employees. Appreciation, reward and recognition count a lot in boosting morale, whereas lack of communication and disciplinary practices may decrease the morale of employees. He suggests monitoring of the climate of

organizations to determine the current situation of morale. Ethical culture and establishment of ethical standards may increase the morale level of employees (Hunter, 2008).

Research Methodology

The research study was carried out by employing quantitative approach in order to assess the influence of schools sector (public/private), gender, academic qualification, professional qualification, and length of service on morale of secondary school teachers. The data was collected by using survey method.

Population and Sample

All the Secondary school teachers teaching in Public and Private schools of Islamabad constituted the population of the study. Initially two strata of teachers were selected. One stratum was of public secondary school teachers and second was of private secondary school teachers.. Disproportionate sampling technique was used to determine the sample size. The sample consisted of 400 secondary school teachers (200 Public, 200 Private). Out of these teachers 75 were male and 325 were female. All the schools were located in urban Islamabad and they were secondary and higher secondary level.

Instrument of Study

Morale scale developed by Hardy (2009) was used for assessing the morale of teachers. It consisted of fifteen statements in three dimensions: affective, future/goal and interpersonal. As the instrument was standardized therefore only two educationists/experts were contacted for its validation in terms of its cultural relevance. The Chronbach alpha coefficient was 0.67. The reliability was acceptable as it was almost the same as determined by Ben Hardy (2009).

Results

Table 1

Influence of school sector (public/ private) on self-perceived morale level of secondary school teachers

Variable	School	N	Mean	T	Sig.
Teachers' Morale	Private	200	3.67	5.64	.000
	Public	200	4.00		

The results showed that school sector (public/ private) influenced significantly the self-perceived morale level ($t=5.64, p=.000$). Therefore the null hypothesis that School sector (public/private) does not influence significantly the self-perceived morale level is not accepted. Public sector teachers had higher level of morale (mean=4.0) than private sector teachers (mean=3.64).

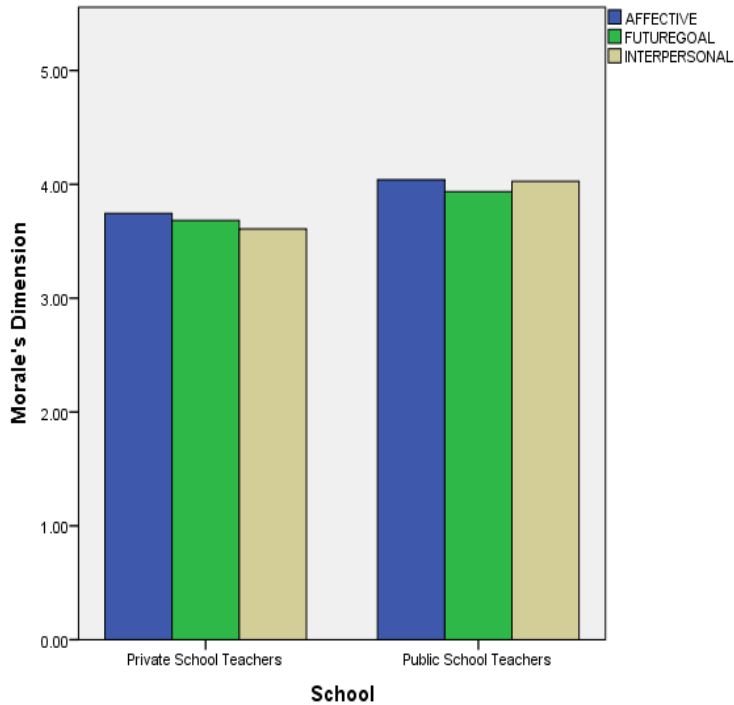


Figure 1. Influence of school sector (public/private) on morale level of secondary school teachers.

Graphical presentation shows that in public secondary schools morale of the teachers is slightly higher than private secondary schools in all three dimensions of morale which are affective, future and interpersonal

Table 2

Influence of gender on self-perceived morale level of secondary school teachers

Variable	Gender	N	mean	T	Sig
Teachers' morale	Male	75	3.81	.456	.649
	Female	325	3.84		

Results revealed that there was no significant influence of gender on self-perceived morale of secondary school teachers ($t=.456$, $sig=.649$). Therefore the null hypothesis that gender does not influence significantly the self-perceived morale level is accepted. The morale level of both male and female teachers was almost of the same level.

Table 3

Influence of academic qualification on self-perceived morale level of secondary school teachers.

Variable	Academic Qualification	N	Mean	F	Sig.
Teachers' Morale	B.A/BSc	116	3.70	4.23	.01
	M.A/M.Sc.	243	3.88		
	M.S/M. Phil	39	3.93		

Table 4

Post- hoc test regarding Influence of academic qualification on self-perceived morale level of secondary school teachers

Academic Qualification	Academic Qualification	Mean Difference	Sig.
B.A/B.Sc	M.A/M.Sc.	-.17736*	.02
	M.S/M.Phil.	-.22886	.08
M.A/M.Sc.	B.A/ B. Sc	.17736*	.02
	M.S/M.Phil.	-.05149	.86
M.S/M.Phil.	B.A/B. Sc	.22886	.08
	M.A/M.Sc.	.05149	.86

The teachers with M.S/ M.Phil qualification had highest level of morale. It reflected that an increase in academic qualification also helped in increasing morale. There was found a significant influence of academic qualification on self-perceived morale of secondary school teachers ($F=4.23$, $Sig=.02$). Results showed that significant mean difference existed between morale of teachers with two categories of professional qualifications, namely, B.A/ B.Sc. and M.A/M.Sc. (0.02). Therefore, the null hypothesis that academic qualification does not influence significantly the self-perceived morale level is not accepted.

Table5

Influence of professional qualification on self-perceived morale level of secondary school teachers.

Variable	Professional Qualification	N	Mean	F	Sig.
Teachers' Morale	B.Ed.	219	3.89	3.341	.03
	M.Ed.	103	3.82		
	Professional development courses/ Faculty development	78	3.69		

Table 6

Post- hoc test regarding influence of professional qualification on self-perceived morale level of secondary school teachers.

Professional Qualification	Professional Qualification	Mean difference	Sig.
B.Ed.	M.Ed.	.07091	.57
	Professional development courses/Faculty development	.19937*	.02
M.Ed.	B.Ed.	-.07091	.57
	Professional development courses/Faculty development	.12845	.31
Professional development courses/Faculty development programs	B.Ed.	-.19937*	.02
	M.Ed.	-.12845	.31

Results showed that there was a significant influence of professional qualification on self-perceived. ($F=3.341$, $Sig=.03$). Teachers with B. Ed had highest level of morale as compared to teachers with M. Ed or other professional development courses/faculty development programs. Therefore the null hypothesis that professional qualification does not influence significantly the self-perceived morale level is rejected. A significant difference was found in the morale of teachers between professional qualifications namely, B. Ed and Professional development courses/ Faculty development ($Sig=.02$).

Table 7

Influence of length of service on self-perceived morale level of secondary school teachers.

Variable	Length of service	N	Mean	F	Sig.
Teachers' Morale	Less than 5 yeas	61	3.76	1.114	.343
	5-10 years	157	3.81		
	11-15 years	104	3.92		
	16 years +	78	3.83		

Results showed that there was no significant influence of length of service on self-perceived morale of secondary school teachers. The morale of all the teachers with different length of service had almost the same level of morale. Therefore the null hypothesis that length of service does not influence significantly the self-perceived morale level is accepted.

Discussion

The findings of this study match and mismatch with a study that was conducted by Wolf, et.al in 2013 in a mental health organization with 1273 frontline workers. It was revealed from findings that there was a curvilinear relationship of morale with years of service and the morale score decreased with increasing time but that rate of decrease gradually reduced with an increase in time. This study also found that morale decreases with increase in number of years in present position. Moreover, the findings of Wolf's et.al study also revealed that employees with less academic qualification had higher scores on morale, the employees with high school certificate had highest scores on morale, and level of morale decreased with increase in each level of post-secondary education Associates, Bachelors, Masters/Ph.D. In this way the masters/ Ph.D had lowest morale level.

Another study's findings are also worthwhile to be discussed here. The study was carried out by Muhammad Jawarneh and his associates to assess the level of morale among primary stage teachers in Al-Zarqa in relation to some demographics in academic year 2008-2009. The findings revealed that the morale level varied according to specialization and also revealed that length of service also predicted morale level. This study found that teachers with 1-5 years of service had higher morale level as compared to other groups in terms of different length of service.

The findings of current study also match with a study conducted by Rheanna Plemons at Western Kentucky University in 2014 to study the factors affecting morale in Southeastern Registrar's offices. Her study's findings revealed that there was no significant difference in morale due to length of service.

Conclusions

The research study was conducted to explore the influence of sector (public/private), gender, academic qualification, professional qualification, and length of service on self-perceived morale secondary school teachers. On the basis of findings of the study it can be concluded that self-perceived morale of public secondary school teachers is higher as compared to those of private secondary schools (moderate level). The gender of secondary school teachers does not significantly influence their morale. Moreover, the findings of the study support to conclude that academic and professional qualification significantly influence self-perceived morale of secondary school teachers. Whereas, length of service of secondary school teachers does not influence their self-perceived morale.

Recommendations of the Study

Therefore, on the basis of findings of this study it is recommended that private schools' management may revisit their policies and assess the factors which are responsible for moderate level of teachers' morale. They may increase the level of morale by providing such incentives and environment which accelerates the morale

level of teachers at public schools. As significant influence of academic and professional qualification on self-perceived morale was evident from the findings of the study therefore it is also recommended to conduct research studies to explore that what are the aspects of professional and academic qualification which creates difference in morale level of teachers. While no significant difference as found due to the gender and length of service. There is also a great need to investigate cultural, administrative and personal factors which may influence morale. In other words it can be said that as literature suggests that positive work climate and a healthy environment contribute positively in the increase of morale level. Therefore it is recommended to conduct research studies for determining the effect of organizational and personal factors on morale of teachers.

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