RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACADEMIC DECISION MAKING PRACTICES OF SCHOOL HEADS AND TEACHERS' MORALE AT SECONDARY LEVEL

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Abstract:
The current study focuses on the relationship between Academic Decision Making Practices of School Heads and Teachers' Morale at Secondary Level. Survey research design was used. Gay's (2003) recommendations, which suggest a 20% sample for populations up to 1763, were followed in determining the sample size. In order to ensure statistical power and reliability, the final sample consisted of 349 teachers (211 male and 138 female). The researcher employed a self-developed questionnaire based of Five point Likert scale. Experts validated each item of the tool. The instrument's total Cronbach's Alpha was 0.841, indicating strong reliability (Academic Decision Making Practices: 0.835; Teacher Morale: 0.843). Pearson product moment correlation used as inferential statistics. The study concluded that there is a significant positive association between the academic decision-making practices used by the school heads and teacher morale. The result shows that moderate positive association was found between the two variables, showing that when school heads effectively manage academic decisions and involve teachers in instruction planning and problem-solving, the morale of teachers tends to increase. The study recommended that school heads should adopt participatory and collaborative academic decision practices in order to enhance the teacher morale, involve teachers in decision-making practices, academic planning, and problem-solving processes that can increase their sense of ownership and motivation.

Keywords: Academic Decision making practices, Morale, Secondary School

INTRODUCTION

Decision making is thought to be the cornerstone of administration and management (Lent & Brown, 2020). Making academic decisions entails identifying and choosing options while adhering to organizational interests and principles. The goal of this methodical procedure is to select the best options (Gati & Kulcsár, 2021). Important academic decisions like curriculum design, instructional improvement, school governance, parental involvement, resource management, and community engagement are made by school leaders (Cody et al., 2022). Individuals' mental and emotional state, which reflects their capacity to endure adversity in a group setting, is referred to as morale. It has a direct impact on teamwork, loyalty, and organizational harmony—all of which are essential for accomplishing goals (Onyeizugbe et al., 2020). According to Yacoub (2022), greater teacher morale results in higher output, better performance, lower absenteeism, more responsibility, safer workplaces, and higher-quality work. On the other hand, poor performance and service quality might result from low morale (Shahzad et al., 2020).

A crucial component of educational leadership is the relationship between academic decision-making and teacher morale. Proactive, student-centered strategies that favorably impact decision-making processes are supported by high teacher morale (Tan, 2021). Low morale is associated with reluctance, resistance to change, and a diminished commitment of teachers to learning objectives (Alanoglu et al., 2022). Maintaining strong morale and improving decision quality requires effective leadership techniques such open communication, acknowledging accomplishments, and providing opportunity for professional development (Gueldner et al., 2023). However, in the face of changing educational goals and public expectations, heads

frequently encounter internal and external obstacles that make academic decision-making more difficult.

The academic decision-making procedures of school administrators are crucial to the efficient operation of secondary schools since they have a big impact on instructors' morale. Because it influences work satisfaction, commitment, and overall performance—all of which have an impact on student learning outcomes and school effectiveness—teacher morale is a crucial element (Shahzad et al., 2020). Despite this, a number of recent studies have revealed concerning levels of poor teacher morale in educational institutions, which frequently lead to higher absenteeism, higher turnover rates, and lower-quality instruction (Lind, 2023). Such negative outcomes highlight how urgent it is to investigate the elements that affect teacher morale. There is still a lack of thorough knowledge regarding the precise impact that school heads' academic decision-making methods have in influencing teacher morale, despite prior study highlighting the significance of leadership styles and communication tactics on teacher motivation. Specifically, it is unknown how teachers' psychological health and workplace engagement are impacted by various decision-making methods, the inclusiveness of these procedures, and the professional development possibilities offered by school administrators (Gueldner et al., 2023).

The complex relationship between decision-making and employee morale was explained by Kumar and Rani (2020). They found that authoritarian decision-making approaches diminish autonomy and disregard the opinions of teachers, which lowers morale. On the other hand, teachers are empowered by participatory decision making, which boosts their self-assurance, dedication, and drive. According to Brown (2021), teachers' morale considerably increases when they are actively involved in decision-making. In addition to increasing their sense of professional worth, participation helps them feel like they belong in the educational system. In a similar vein, Lee and Chen (2021)

discovered that teacher morale and performance are substantially predicted by institutional culture, which is demonstrated through support, decision communication, and inclusivity. The objectives of the study were given below:-

1. To investigate the relationship between the academic decisions making practices of Heads and the morale of their teachers at secondary schools.
2. To find out the gender based relationship of principals' decision making practices with morale of their teachers.
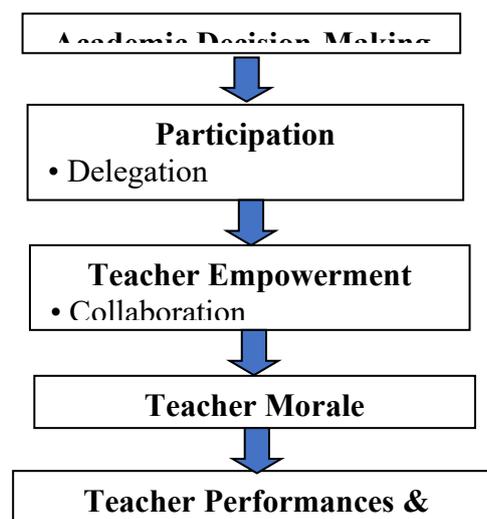
Conceptual Framework of the study

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design

The current study used a quantitative survey research design to examine the association between secondary school teachers' morale in District Dera Ismail Khan and school heads' academic decision-making processes. The efficacy of this approach in gathering data from a huge population and enabling statistical analysis of correlations between variables led to its selection (Kumar, 2019). Survey research is especially useful for studies evaluating attitudes and perceptions since it makes it easier to extrapolate results to a larger population.

Population and sample

All of the secondary school teachers in District Dera Ismail Khan made up the population for this study. The Elementary and Secondary Education Department of the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa published the Annual Statistical Report (2022–2023), which states that there were 1763 teachers overall, 1083 of them were male and 680 of whom were female. Gay's (2003) recommendations, which suggest a 20% sample for populations up to 1763, were followed in determining the sample size. In order to ensure statistical power and reliability, the final sample consisted of 349 teachers (211 male and 138 female).

Research tool

The researcher employed a self-developed questionnaire. The 40 items in the research tool were broken down into three primary sections: demographic data, school heads' academic decision-making methods (20 items), and teacher morale (20 items). A five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree) was used for each question, allowing for reliable quantification and comparative analysis.

Validity and Reliability of research tool

Four Qurtuba University experts in educational management, psychology, and research methods participated in a content validation process that proved the validity of the instrument. The questionnaire had 45 items at first. After reviewing each item for coverage, clarity, and relevance, the panel suggested rephrasing fifteen of them and eliminating five because they were redundant or unimportant. Forty approved items made up the final instrument. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, a gauge of internal consistency, was used to assess instrument dependability. The instrument's total Cronbach's Alpha was 0.841, indicating strong reliability (Academic Decision Making Practices: 0.835; Teacher Morale: 0.843).

Statistical analysis Tools

Important statistics included Pearson product moment correlation. Assessing the strength and direction of the association between school leaders' academic decision-making methods and teacher morale is the main goal of this statistical analysis.

RESULTS

Table 1

Pearson Product–Moment Correlation between Academic Decision-Making Practices and Teacher Morale (N = 318)

Variables	M	SD	1	2
1. Academic Decision-Making Practices	3.80	0.71	—	.424**
2. Teacher Morale	3.50	0.44	.424**	—

p=000<.05

Table 1 present the product Pearson product moment correlation to analyze the association between the academic decision-making practices used by the heads and teacher morale. The

results show that there is a significant relationship between the two variables with r is equal to .424. The study indicates the above table shows that there is a significant relationship between two variables with *p* is equal to .000 <.05.

Table 2

Pearson Product–Moment Correlation between Academic Decision-Making Practices used by male school heads and Teacher Morale (N = 318)

Variables	M	SD	1	2
1. Academic Decision-Making Practices (Male)	3.78	0.69	—	.401**
2. Teacher Morale (Male)	3.47	0.45	.401**	—

p=000<.05

Table 2 present the product Pearson product moment correlation to analyze the association between the academic decision-making practices used by the male school heads and teacher morale. The results show that there is a significant relationship between the two variables with r is equal to .424. The study indicates the above table shows that there is a significant relationship between two variables with *p* is equal to .000 <.05.

Table 3

Pearson Product–Moment Correlation between Academic Decision-Making Practices used by male school heads and Teacher Morale (N = 318)

Variables	M	SD	1	2
1. Academic Decision-Making Practices (female)	3.78	0.69	—	.446**
2. Teacher Morale (female)	3.47	0.45	.446**	—

p=000<.05

Table 3 present the product Pearson product moment correlation to analyze the association between the academic decision-making practices used by the female school heads and teacher morale. The results show that there is a significant relationship between the two variables with r is equal to .446**. The study indicates the above table shows that there is a significant relationship between two variables with *p* is equal to .000 <.05.

Discussion

The present study aimed to investigate the academic decision-making practices used by the school heads and teacher morale at secondary school level. The result of the present study shows that a significant and positive association was found between the academic decision-making practices of school head and teacher morale. Similar result was found by the Bogler and Somech (2019). They found that when teachers are involved in organizational decision-making process, their professional morale and commitment significantly high. In the same way, Collie, Shapka, and Perry (2018), they found that supportive leadership and participative management practices play a crucial role in enhancing the teacher morale and job satisfaction in the educational institutions. Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2020) reveals that leadership styles emphasizing collaboration, communication, and shared decision-making practices often improve the teacher morale and school climate.

Conclusions

The study concluded that there is a significant positive association between the academic decision-making practices used by the school heads and teacher morale. The result shows that moderate positive association was found between the two variables, showing that when school heads effectively manage academic decisions and involve teachers in instruction planning and

problem-solving, the morale of teachers tends to increase. This suggests that leadership practices within school play a significant role in shaping teacher motivation, professional satisfaction, and commitment to their work. Moreover, the gender-based analysis also confirms that academic decision-making practices are also significantly associated to teacher morale in schools. The result shows a positive correlation for male school heads as well as for female school heads, indicating that effective leadership and sound academic decisions contribute to maintaining teacher positive attitude toward their profession.

Recommendations

This study recommended that school heads should adopt participatory and collaborative academic decision practices in order to enhance the teacher morale, involve teachers in decision-making practices, academic planning, and problem-solving processes that can increase their sense of ownership and motivation. The study also concluded that apex body and policy makers may also organize regular leadership trainings and professional development programs for the school heads to strengthen their decision-making skills. School may promote a supportive and transparent organizational culture where teachers feel respected and valued in the decision-making process.

Research implication

The finding of the study provides important implications for future researchers. The significant association between academic decision-making practices and teacher morale suggests that leadership behavior plays a significant role in shaping teacher morale in the school. The study also highlights the need for more comparative research focusing on gender differences in the school leadership, since the result shows a slightly stronger relationship in schools led by female heads, so future studies may explore how leadership approaches, communication patterns, and management techniques differ between male and female school leaders and how these differences influence teacher morale and motivation.

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