

How and to What Extent Managerial Practices of School Heads are Influencing the Morale of Primary School Teachers?

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to explore influence of the managerial practices of heads on the morale of teachers. The informants of the study comprised both public primary school heads and teachers. The study was mixed-methods and employed concurrent triangulation design. The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire (Bentley & Rempel, 1980) was adapted for measuring managerial practices and morale. Quantitative data for the study were collected from teachers (n=806) through multistage sampling technique and qualitative data from heads (n= 20) and teachers (n=31) through interview protocols. The study also verified the link between the managerial practices of heads and morale of teachers through positive statistical correlation. Findings of the study revealed that school heads were using autocratic managerial practices. The study concluded prevalence of dissatisfaction among teachers about the managerial practices of school heads, AEOs, Dy.DEOs and frequent threat of Punjab Employees Efficiency & Disciplinary Act (PEEDA, 2006). Hence, the overall practices of school heads are found autocratic in nature by causing low morale of teachers. The study recommends that the primary school heads, AEOs, Dy.DEOs should be trained on establishing democratic attributes, relationship, and behaviour with the teachers by the Quaid-e-Azam Academy for Education Development (QAED) to heighten the morale of teachers.

Keywords: Managerial practices, Morale of primary school teachers, Autocratic, Stress, strict & non-professional behaviour of heads

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Introduction

The process of managing is one of the most essential parts of human actions. Management is a science as well as an art for the achievement of goals and objectives with the help of other people (Meisiek & Barry, 2014). According to Shikuku (2015), management is the process of getting things done through people for the sake of improving the performance of the organization. Both management and organization rely on each other. No organization can get its goals and objectives without management. Educational institutions are also considered as organizations which are established for teaching and learning process (Modibbo et al., 2020). Dybach (2019) reported that an ideal management is obligatory in educational institutions for the development of nation in the shape of social, moral, political, and economic grounds. Robbins (2009) mentioned that managerial practices are the ways of coordinating and integrating work activities with and through other people efficiently and effectively. Obviously, managerial practices are the working methods of school heads who are employed as a manager to achieve certain goals of an educational institution.

The head of primary school has most significant position in an educational institution. The repute of the primary school mostly rests on the quality of the school head. Dunning and Elliott (2019) elaborated that school headship is the most significant component which can play vital role to the achievement of objectives in the primary schools. According to Tamilselvi and Sethurajan (2010), the job of the educational managers like school heads, principals, administrative officers, etc. is the most demanding and complex. Therefore, the primary school head has to play an effective role in school managerial practices to fulfill his responsibilities. The managerial practices of the school heads greatly influence the environment of the school. According to Ahmad and Dilshad (2016), managerial practices of school head play a central role in school progress and efficiency. Bowra et al. (2012) stated that good managerial practices are evaluated by the performance of its teachers.

Willis and Varner (2010) defined poor status, low pay, and low morale as main causes of poor performance of the teachers in the schools. According to Veetkazhi et al. (2020), the behaviour of teacher trickles down to the students either it is good or bad. Globally, it had been recognized that high morale of the teachers positively affected the learning and performance of the pupils. A school having a healthy working environment enhances the staff morale. Geiger and Pivovarova (2018) described that high morale generates better communication, low rate of attrition, and maximum retention of the teachers in an organization. High morale also breeds a working climate and increases productivity in a right direction. Hence, it is clear that teachers' high morale has a central status in an educational institution while, low morale entails manifold problems as low

performance, enthusiasm, and productivity. Shaban et al. (2017) explained numerous causes of low morale among teachers by dint of unsympathetic management, who has no concern regarding the welfare of both teachers, and students. According to Briggs et al. (2012), problem of low morale of teachers can be rectified through the provision of an efficient management and welfare services to the teachers.

Rationale of the Study

In School Education Department (SED) Punjab, school heads are exhibiting diverse managerial practices to achieve their objectives. The school heads are trying their best to achieve the targets by applying different managerial practices such as; teachers are not permitted to avail casual leave regardless of an emergency before the visit of school by the Monitoring and Evaluation Assistant (MEA). Therefore, teachers wait for the MEA visit during the whole month and bear mental stress by not availing leave. According to the revised Punjab leave rules (1981) teachers can avail 25 casual leaves per annum and can also avail study leave / Ex-Pakistan leave. In addition, teachers are forced by the school head to visit the village after working hours and meet with the parents for admission of school going age children, whether parents are willing or not. It has been made duty of the teachers, to increase the strength of the school. Likewise, teachers are required to show 100% attendance of the students of their classes, which they are teaching irrespective of any genuine reason of the students e.g. illness, rain, and wedding etc. Furthermore, in case of non-compliance due to any genuine reasons, teachers are threatened to face Punjab Employees Efficiency & Disciplinary Act (PEEDA, 2006) by the school heads and officers as well. Due to such repeated managerial practices public schools teachers are coming across severe hardships and stress to achieve the goals of school heads. Therefore, the study aims to explore the influence of managerial practices on the morale of primary school teachers.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Explore the nature of existing managerial practices of school heads.
2. Explore the morale of primary school teachers.
3. Explore the relationship between school heads' managerial practices and teachers' morale.

Research questions

The research questions of the study are as follows:

1. What is the nature of managerial practices of school heads?
2. To what extent are managerial practices of school heads' influencing teachers' morale?
3. What is the relationship between the managerial practices of heads' and teachers' morale?

Methodology

The study employed mixed methods research design. Mixed methods research offers profound understanding about the research problem through the combination of both quantitative and qualitative data sets in a single research study (Maxwell, 2015). Therefore, the researchers used the concurrent triangulation approach because it is the best way to gather comprehensive insight and knowledge to solve the research problems under study (Headley & Plano Clark, 2019).

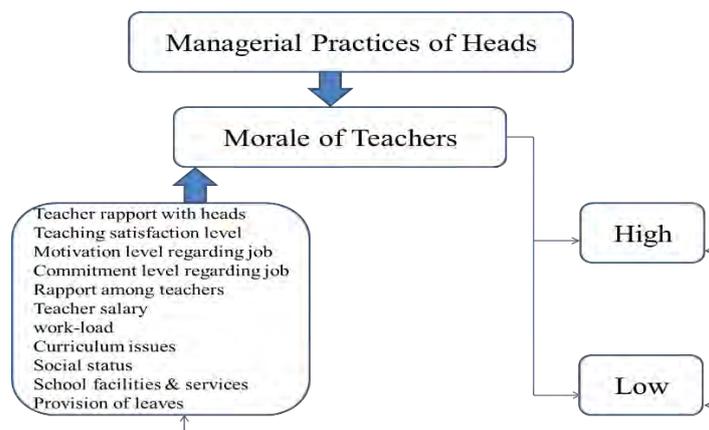
Population of the study

The population of the study constituted 12074 working teachers both (male=5274 & female=6800) including heads of the respective schools in the Sargodha division (<http://schools.punjab.gov.pk/?=schools>).

Sample and sampling

Multistage sampling technique was employed. At the first stage, 10 percent (403 out of 4030) public primary schools were selected from the four districts of Sargodha division through systematic random sampling. At the second stage, the male and female primary schools were selected according to the proportion present in the selected schools. Hence, male= 227 and female= 176 were selected by proportionate sampling “to guarantee proportional representation” (Gay et al., 2011, p. 134). At the third stage, two teachers from each selected school 806 (male= 454 & female= 352) were selected conveniently. Qualitative data were also collected from all available heads of sampled schools at the time of data collection, 20 heads of the selected schools (male=13 & female=07) and 31 primary school teachers (male=16 & female=15) were interviewed.

Conceptual Diagram



Research tools

The researcher adapted “The Purdue Teachers Opinionaire” by (Bentley & Rempel, 1980) to collect responses from primary school teachers for measuring managerial practices of heads as well as morale of teachers. The tool was based on five-point Likert scale. The points on the scale were; SDA (Strongly Disagree), DA (Disagree), UD (Undecided), A (Agree) and SA (Strongly Agree). It consisted of 11 indicators associated with 85 items. The first four indicators were about to measure the managerial practices associated with 41 items and the remaining was about the morale associated with 44 items. The Cronbach’s value of the questionnaire was found .90 which ensured the high reliability of instrument. In recent decades, it has been adopted by various researchers (Dubey, 2018). The interview protocols consisted of 17 semi structured questions were developed by the researcher to gain in-depth information from primary school heads as well as teachers. The researcher carried out the validation process of both research instruments by collecting opinions from field experts. Few of the items were revised, repetitive items were discarded, ambiguous items were rephrased and, few of them were transferred to the correct place. The qualitative data were analyzed by employing thematic analysis. According to Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis involved a systematic process by identifying, organizing, understanding, and finally generating the themes across the data set.

Quantitative data analysis and Findings

Table 1

Overall Indicator-Wise Results on Perceived Level of Teachers’ Morale

Sr. No	Indicators of morale	SA %	A %	SA+A %	UD %	DA %	SDA %	SDA+DA %	Mean	SD	Level of morale
1	Teacher rapport with school head	20.43	15.86	31.51	10.14	21.50	32.07	53.57	3.21	1.25	Moderate
2	Teaching satisfaction level of teachers	10.72	7.17	17.9	11.3	34.06	36.75	70.81	2.20	1.15	Low
3	Motivation level of teachers regarding job	11.42	8.1	19.67	10.36	26.72	43.4	70.12	2.30	1.19	Low
4	Commitment level of teachers regarding job	10.1	6.5	16.6	11	32.26	40.14	72.40	2.18	1.17	Low
5	Rapport among teachers	16.55	13.54	30.09	11.43	21.98	36.5	58.48	2.40	1.16	Moderate
6	Teacher salary	20.2	19	39.2	13.5	16.1	31.2	47.3	2.16	1.19	Low

7	Teacher work load	13.6	26.8	40.4	13.2	29	17.4	46.2	2.20	1.15	Low
8	Curriculum issues	17.8	9.7	27.4	15.2	15.5	41.7	57.3	2.64	1.21	Moderate
9	Teacher status	19.97	11.08	31.05	12.22	20.23	36.5	56.73	2.18	1.17	Low
10	School facilities and services	21	18	39	17	11	33	44	2.64	1.27	Moderate
11	Provision of leaves	4.1	13.6	17.5	16	27.4	39	66.5	2.16	1.19	Low
Total		15.08	13.57	28.23	12.85	23.25	35.27	58.51	2.33	1.19	Low

mean,st.deviation and level of morale

N=806, Mean Range (1-5), Levels of mean (1.00 - 2.33 low, 2.34 -3.67 moderate and 3.68 -5.00 high

Table 1 shows indicator-wise perceived level of morale of primary school teachers influenced by the managerial practices of heads. The first, fifth, eighth and tenth indicators fell within the moderate range of teachers’ morale. On the other hand, the second, third, fourth, sixth, seventh, ninth, and eleventh indicators fell within the low range of morale. It indicates that teachers are not satisfied with the managerial practices of heads and overall morale of teachers is in the low range.

Table 2

Pearson Correlation Between the Managerial Practices of Heads and Teachers’ Morale

Variable	Managerial practices of heads	Morale of teachers
Managerial practices of heads	1	
Morale of teachers	.85**	1

* p < 0.05, N=806

Table 2 shows that there is a strong positive relationship between the managerial practices of heads and teachers morale. It means good managerial practices enhance the morale of teachers and poor managerial practices lower down the morale of teachers.

Qualitative data analysis and findings on the Teachers’ and heads’ Responses

The following themes and categories were emerged from both the responses of teachers and heads.

The behaviour of school heads

The first theme reflected the unfair behaviour of the school heads with the teachers which produced psychological pressure on the minds of primary school teachers. Such practices of the school heads have been decreasing the morale of primary school teachers. One of the teachers reflected, “Our school head has very rough and strict behaviour with the teachers. He has no frankness with any one. He has no respect for the teachers. The

teachers are much worried and feel uncomfortable with his practices”. Another teacher stated, “The behaviour of the head is autocratic. He often misbehaves with us. He is overall non-cooperative, non-professional, and insincere with his job”. One of the teachers stated, “I have to face explanations from the head. He threatens the teachers with the implementation of the PEEDA”.

The behaviour of Assistant Education Officers /Dy. District Education Officers

The second theme revealed the unfair practices of the AEOs and DY.DEOs with the teachers that produced psychological stress on the minds of the primary school teachers and overall frustration among them as well. Such non-professional practices of the AEOs and DY.DEOs decreasing the morale of primary school teachers day by day. One of the teachers stated, “For the achievement of good ranking of their district the officers e.g. The DEOs and CEOs got incentives from the higher authorities. Therefore, they behave strictly with the teachers to achieve required goals. The Dy. DEO frequently misbehaves with the teachers a lot and does not appreciate”. Another teacher stated, “The officers do not appreciate the teachers and mostly misbehave with them”.

The school heads also revealed about the non-professional behaviour of the AEOs & Dy.DEOs. Such non-professional practices of the AEOs and Dy.DEOs decreasing the morale of school heads and teachers day by day. One of the school head stated, “Behaviour of the all education officers is very bad, harsh, and rough. They perceived that roots of all the evils are present at primary level. They officers know all the ground realities and facts, but do not acknowledge them and put all the responsibility on the school heads. They visit the school to misbehave with the staff. They are not problem solvers in fact, they are problem creators”. Another school head stated, “AEOs often blackmail the school heads. They mostly threatened the heads with the implementation of PEEDA”.

Consequences of strict behaviour

The third theme reflected consequences of strict behaviour of the AEOs and DY.DEOs with their subordinates which produced overall frustration among teachers. Such non-professional practices of the AEOs and DY.DEOs are decreasing the morale of primary school teachers. One of the teachers stated, “Due to such practices our school result is unsatisfactory and there is no output, at all from the teachers’ side”. Another teacher stated, “I am unsatisfied with my profession because the behaviour of the officers is very bad and rude”.

The school heads also revealed about consequences of strict behaviour of the officials of School Education Department (SED). The non-professional behaviour of the AEOs and DY.DEOs with school heads cultivates severe psychological issues for them. The increasing stress and strain has made the employees psycho-patients. The school heads and teachers are mentally in a severe strain and stress. One of the school head

stated, "Majority of the teachers remains upset and are in a severe mental stress. Such mental depression continues during the whole service in the mind of employees. They wait for the day of retirement to escape from such woes and worries created by the department".

Teachers' and heads' concerns

The fourth theme reflected the overall teachers' concerns about job. It produced mental pressure on the minds of teachers which gave birth to intense frustration among teachers. The teachers commented about the unnecessary meetings held by the AEOs & Dy.DEOs. One of the teachers stated, "The teachers have to attend unnecessary meetings". Another teacher stated, "The primary school teachers remained busy in the whole day. I am working as single teacher to teach six classes alone". One of the teachers stated, "Teachers are not only responsible to maintain 100% attendance and retention of the students".

The school heads also revealed their concerns. They had great frustration about unnecessary meetings held by the officials, needless interruptions in the teachers' matters, no concept of the acknowledgement of opinions from the heads, and severe shortage of teaching staff. One of the school head stated, "The officers arrange meetings after school working hours and on Sundays which continue late till late at night up to 9 pm". Another school head stated, "Strength of teachers is very low in the schools as compared to the number of subjects and classes. Thus, teachers do not teach the children in a better way".

Leave concerns

The fifth theme reflected teachers' concerns about provision of leaves. They are not allowed to avail casual leave before the visit of Monitoring & Evaluation Assistant (MEA). They are unable to obtain No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the department for getting higher education, study leave, and Ex-Pakistan leaves. On the other hand, such leaves are mentioned in the leaves rules and also notified by the School Education Department (SED). One of the teachers stated, "The teachers have to face hurdles in getting casual leave as well as any other leave. Head has forbidden us not to request for any casual leave before the visit of MEA".

The school heads also had great frustration regarding the non-availability of the leaves by the officials. The school heads have no authority to sanction casual leave at any cost before the visit of MEA. The AEO pressurizes the heads and possesses his own authority to let the teacher allow. In such circumstances, there is no concept of study leave/Ex-Pakistan leave and NOC for higher education in the department. Actually, the officials do not want to decrease their district-wise performance ranking, in order to attain incentives as well as financial aids from the higher authorities. One of the school head stated, "The head teacher have no authority to sanction any casual leave before the visit of

MEA. In case of any non-compliance, head has to face show cause notice by Dy.DEO and AEO as well. In any emergency, accident, illness, and death of relatives' teachers do not avail any leave before the visit of MEA in the school. There is no concept of study or Ex-Pak leave at any cost in the department”.

Remuneration concerns

The sixth theme revealed teachers' concerns about remuneration. They reflected that their salary is not in accordance with qualification and current dearness. One of the teachers stated, “Salary is very low. It is not in accordance with the qualification. A college lecturer is appointed in grade 17 and his initial pay is about 50,000 rupees. But the qualification of college and school teacher is same. On the other hand, a primary school teacher obtains 20,000 rupees per month only. Pay is not in accordance with the dearness”. Another teacher stated, “The teachers are quite unsatisfied with the current pay and its policies. The teachers do much work but receive small remuneration”.

The school heads also had great frustration regarding the remuneration which is not in accordance with the qualification and dearness as well. The policies regarding pay are unfair. One of the school head stated, “Teachers are unsatisfied with salary and its policies. Teachers they have to live with hand to mouth. In case of emergency accident, illness, wedding ceremony, death, and on the occasion of religious events like, Eid-ul-Azha and Eid-ul-Fitar teachers have to borrow money from the friends to celebrate such events. Teachers are in continuous mental worry due to financial issues”.

Curriculum concerns

The seventh theme reflected teachers' concerns regarding curriculum. They showed frustration about the curriculum and commented that current curriculum of the public schools was beyond the mental level of the children. One of the teachers stated, “The curriculum is not according to the mental ability of the students. Some chapters of 10th class are included in the primary curriculum. Children have to face problems in comprehension of the content”. Another teacher stated, “The main issue about curriculum is medium of instruction, because there is no stable policy of the department. It is changed on every new academic session. According to me, there should be Urdu as a medium of instruction, keeping in mind the ground realities” (T13).

The school heads also showed their concerns about curriculum. One of the school head stated, “The current curriculum is not according to the mental and chronological age of the children. The pupils have to face severe issues during their studies. They have to come across different languages at the same time like mother language, national language, local, and international language as well. In conclusion, the experiment of Urdu medium and sometimes English medium by the government spoils studies of the children”.

Extra workload

The eighth theme revealed teachers' concerns regarding extra workload. The school teachers showed their frustration about the excess of official duties which they have to perform other than teaching. Such kinds of additional duties are unfair because it badly influences the teaching as well as learning of the children. Due to such extra workload teachers are in severe stress and their level of morale is getting low day by day. One of the teachers stated, "The teachers have to perform election duty, UPE survey, and PEC exam duty". Another teacher stated, "No clerical facility is available in primary schools. The teachers remain worried about the solution of their own issues like completion of service-book." One of the teachers stated, "The teachers have to do cleanliness of the school, work of chowkidar, UPE survey, new admission campaign, and to repair the water pumps as well. The teaching work of the teachers is less and extra unnecessary assignments are more. The teachers also have to do work of gardener as well".

The school heads also revealed the concern of extra workload. They had great frustration and mental pressure to perform plenty of jobs other than management and teaching. They have to perform different types of official duties like UPE survey, examination duties of PEC, BISE, AIOU, election, numerator, polio vaccination, new admission campaign, and also meet the targets of MEA. One of the school head stated, "Preparation of all sorts of record (teacher attendance, students' attendance, staff detail, FTF record, NSB funds, expenditure record, PEC results record, service book record, and LND record, etc.), Exams duties of PEC and BISE, UPE surveys, election duty, school cleanliness, look after of school building, work of gardener, Chowkidar, security guard, and provision of previous 10 years record of the school. The School head is responsible for the maintenance, repair, whitewash, and overall looking after of the school's building. The school head has to attend meetings organized by the AEO and Dy.DEO after working hours. The head has to show good results of the children otherwise has to face punishment like stoppage of annual increments, breakage of service, and stoppage of promotion as well".

Discussion

The study explored the influence of managerial practices of public primary school heads on the morale of primary school teachers. The results of the study reveal that the managerial practices of school heads were unfavourable for the teachers. The school teachers showed their concerns about the rough and strict behaviour of school heads, AEOs and Dy.DEOs with the teachers. They had to face explanations, punishments, and mostly threatened by the Punjab Employees Efficiency and Disciplinary Act (PEEDA). The results of the present study are consistent with the results of the prior study conducted in Andhra Pradesh, India by Mehta and Banerjee (2015) to find job stress and

its influence upon performance of the teachers in terms of job dissatisfaction and found that teachers were dissatisfied due to long working hours, low remuneration, and undesirable behaviour of the management. The school teachers also showed concerns about unnecessary meetings of the officials, no acknowledgement of opinions, deficiency of staff, and duty of new admission campaign. Likewise, the results of the study are also consistent with results of the study conducted in United States of America by Diaz (2019) for measuring the relationship of stress and leadership on teachers' morale and found that teachers were in severe stress due to large amount of paperwork and extra duties. The results of the study are consistent with the results of Whiteoak (2020) exploratory study conducted in Australia to investigate link between morale and burn out, and revealed that due to lack of support and poor system particularly in relation to behavioural management, were key factors for staff burn out and lower morale.

The study demonstrates that the overall morale of teachers was found at low level because indicators of the morale were not fulfilled by the teachers due to existing managerial practices of school heads. The results of the present study are consistent with the earlier study by Ernst (2019) conducted in the United States of America to measure job-related stress. It concluded that majority of the teachers were unsatisfied with the practices of current leadership as well as other job related concerns. The results of the study revealed that there was a strong positive relationship between the managerial practices of heads and teachers' morale. It indicates that positive or good managerial practices of school heads enhance the morale of teachers and negative managerial practices lower down the morale of teachers. Similarly, the results of the study are consistent with the results of the study entitled "The relationship of principal leadership and teacher morale" in USA by Rowland (2008) and found positive relationship between the principal's leadership and teachers' morale.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study concluded prevalence of dissatisfaction among teachers about the managerial practices of school heads. Teachers' reflections highlight that they are in a severe mental stress due to rough and harsh behaviour of school heads, AEOs, Dy.DEOs and frequent threat of Punjab Employees Efficiency & Disciplinary Act (PEEDA, 2006). Hence, the overall practices of school heads are found autocratic in nature, which are directly linked with the low morale of teachers. Furthermore, both school teachers and heads reflected that they are in a severe mental stress due to frequent unnecessary meetings of the officials; deficiency of teaching staff; English as a medium of instruction; curriculum is not in accordance with mental ability of pupils; extra work-load and plenty of additional duties. It is thus concluded that, the School Education Department (SED) may take serious notice to overcome such crucial concerns of the teachers which are hindering in the way of heightening the morale of the highly qualified teachers.

It was recommended that the primary school heads, AEOs, Dy.DEOs should be trained on establishing democratic attributes, relationship, and behaviour with the teachers by the Quai-e-Azam Academy for Education Development (QAED) to heighten the morale of teachers. The primary school teachers should be free from the additional work-load other than teaching. So that, they can focus upon teaching and learning process of children with full attention. It is recommended that the facility of clerk, sweeper, watchman and gardener should be provided in primary schools in order to make teachers free from irrelevant tasks other than teaching.

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