

FACTORS AFFECTING TEACHERS' MORALE IN SCHOOL

Narayan Prasad Adhikari

Central Department of Education, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal.

ABSTRACT: *This qualitative study aims to explore the factors affecting teachers' morale in school. Teachers are the main part of education system. Only the motivated teacher supports to students for quality education. A motivated teacher has high morale then less motivated one. Teachers also need to be motivated for productive and professionally efficient. Motivation improves morale. Teacher morale could suffer due to the stress. Improving teacher morale has many benefits that can help teachers to maintain a positive attitude. It gives teacher satisfaction at their job. There are six dimensions of teachers' morale which have a significant influence on the job namely the relationship with the principal, relationship among teachers, curriculum issue, teachers' status in the community, facilities and school services, and community pressure. Various literatures suggest that teacher morale is at an all time low in schools with teachers feeling undervalued, frustrated, unappreciated and demoralized. Finally, teacher morale and student learning have reciprocal relation. Students in some schools may not be getting the best possible value from teachers affected by low morale.*

Keywords: *Teachers' morale, school, motivation, attitude, stress.*

INTRODUCTION:

Morale is the professional interest and enthusiasm of a person that displays towards achievement of individual and group goals in a given job situation. Morale is set within the framework of organizational theory with an individual progression toward the achievement of organizational tasks and his/ her perceived job satisfaction within the total organization (Bentley & Rempel, 1980).

Teachers' morale describes the overall outlook, attitude, satisfaction and confidence that teachers feel at work. When teachers are positive about their job, they believe that they can meet their career. Positive attitude towards teaching heightens teachers' morale. Circumstances of teaching and teaching environment have their impact on employee's morale such as the role of Headteacher, the quality of their interaction with the people, employ, and the way teachers interact with each other in the day-to-day workplace.

School leader create an environment; strengthen teaching and learning culture in school; such as, positive factors are valued for Teachers' morale. While the demands upon teachers have increased, there has been little change in patterns of employment, compensation and career advancement of teachers (Kelly, 2000). Intensification of the teaching role (Sachs, 2003 & Smyth, 2001) and deterioration of working conditions are recognized in the literature. However, it is suggested that workload is a major contributor to stress. Stress lessens morale. Sachs (2003) argues that teachers are generally able to maintain a focus 'upon the best interests of their students, even if the system appears to let them down'. Perhaps this is the reason why systems do not see a need to address the crisis in teacher morale. Therefore the main objective of this study was to explore the influencing factors of teachers' morale in school situation.

High morale in the workplace is important to teaching for overall success. Teachers who rank high on the morale scale generally exhibit their positive attitude towards their job in a number of ways: better student, more focused on student or environments, increased communication between co-student and teachers, better work attendance and timeliness, enhanced care about the student and fewer workplace-related accidents. Millor (1981) states teacher morale can have a positive effect on pupil attitudes and learning. Raising teacher moral level is not only making teachers more pleasant but also learning more pleasant for the students. This creates an environment that is more conducive to learning. Teachers are the vital part of educational system. They provide motivation and supports that students need in order to succeed. Yet, teachers also need to be motivated and supported in order to be productive. Teacher morale could suffer due to the constant stress of trying to meet educational goals, or due to a change in leadership or policies. Improving teacher morale has many benefits in that it can help teachers to maintain a positive attitude and be happier at work.

In the context of Nepal, poor management of teachers and education system can lead to overcrowded classrooms, the children being turned away from school due to insufficient number of teachers, inequality in teacher deployment policies, and low teacher pay. These problems can contribute to low teacher morale leading to teacher palliation, teacher absenteeism and low quality of education delivered to children. Where teachers are not regularly present in the classroom with high morale, this will have negative impact on quality of education, which will lead to high repetition and dropout rate (Santwona Memorial Academy (P) LTD Educational Research and Consultancy Centre, 2012). Hence, this study intends to explore the factors affecting teachers' morale in school situation and seeks to come up with strategic recommendations to improve teachers' morale.

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE:

Morale or mental condition is respect to cheerfulness, confidence and zeal (Macquarie Dictionary, 1997). When teacher morale in a school is high, the school environment is healthy; teachers feel good about themselves, each other and their teaching, which in turn impacts on student morale and achievement (OECD, 2000 & Young, 1998). Low morale for teachers can lead to decreased productivity and detachment from the teacher role, colleagues and students. Teachers with low morale may begin to 'lose heart', take increased sick leave, look for alternative employment and develop a cynical approach to students, teaching and the education system (as cited in Mackenzie, 2007). People with high morale see obstacles as challenges which need to be solved (Ramsey, 2000). If we accept a reciprocal relationship between teacher morale and student learning (Ramsey, 2000 & Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2000), students in some schools may not be getting the best possible value from teachers affected by low morale. Young (1998) claims that morale is often influenced more by outside factors than internal ones. Rogers (1992) identifies both internal and external factors as influencing morale, highlighting 'pace of bureaucratic change; discipline and management concerns; staff and staff relations; time and workload pressures' as the most common stressors for teachers.

Verdugo, Greenberg, Henderson, Uribe and Schneider (1997) claim that 'the closer schools come to developing a community, the greater will be teachers' job satisfaction. Lumsden (1998) suggests that it may be impossible to separate the issues of school culture, leadership and teacher morale arguing that although individuals can take steps to maintain their professional satisfaction. Many teachers in Australia perceive that the government has retreated from education with constant 'brawls between Commonwealth and State Ministers over funding' and that this contributes to what has become a 'serious crisis of morale amongst teachers. Too many young teachers who initially begin their career with enthusiasm and positive expectations are looking for a change in direction after only 3-5 years (Hicks, 2003), while experienced teachers 'suffering from low morale are retiring early or leaving the profession to seek other employment' (O'Donnell, 2001).

'Personal morale' results from an individual teacher's personal circumstances, including health, family situation and financial stability. Although the status of the profession and in-school experiences will impact upon 'personal morale' many factors which influence 'personal morale' remain private and personal. 'School morale' is influenced by 'personal morale' and vice versa. Morale which is inextricably intertwined with the status of teaching as a profession is referred to here as 'professional morale' or 'morale of the profession'. 'Professional morale' may impact on 'personal morale' and 'school morale' but may not impact on the day-to-day lives of teachers to the same extent as 'personal' and 'school morale'. These three

overlapping forms or levels of morale create 'teacher morale'; personal morale (largely within the control of the individual); school morale (which the individual teacher may have some influence over); and professional morale (which the individual may feel they have little or no influence on). That is: Personal morale + School morale + Professional morale = Teacher morale (as cited in Mackenzie, 2007).

Morale affects more than just productivity, efficiency and student achievement. Von Burg (1963) says, "Call it rapport, morale, spirit, enthusiasm, or what you will. It is something easy to overlook and yet it can make a school stand ahead of the rest." Why teachers quit the profession was examined by Nelson and Thompson (1963). Out of a list of 17 reasons, the one given most frequently was salary. Others near the top included teaching loads, inadequate supervision, and poor assignment during first year at teaching, discipline problems, pressure groups, marriage, and inadequate preparation in the subject field.

Dropkin and Taylor (1963) conducted a similar study with relation to first-year teachers only. The problems that these teachers faced were, in descending order of difficulty: discipline, relations with parents, methods of teaching, evaluation, planning, materials and resources, and classroom routines.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The objectives of this study are to explore teachers' morale and factors affecting teachers' morale in school. The study also aims to find out the consequences of high and low morale of the teachers.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY:

This study was undertaken within an interpretive/constructivist paradigm with document study. The research paper was highly based on theoretical, policy document, research report, and dissertation reviews. It was also played introspective design for examining one's own perception and sensory experiences for carrying out this study. So, this study was in descriptive and qualitative in nature. The sample of study was selected purposefully in order to explore factors affecting teachers' morale in school and find out the causes of high and low morale of teachers. Research data were from secondary resources for collecting and analyzing them included the websites, based on document study, reviewed related articles, and journals in this study. The data collection tools were taken from self-reflection. The data were collected in the introspective diary and journals using the explanatory mode for analyzing them. The data informing this paper provide support to the idea that morale is low and offer some suggestions for ways to improve morale.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION:

This study was consistent with factors affecting teachers' morale in school with reviewed literature document,

articles, and journals as given below:

Perspectives on Teachers' Morale

According to Webster's Dictionary (2010), morale is a person's mental state that is exhibited by assurance, control, and motivation to perform a task. Bentley and Rempel (1970) define teacher morale as the degree to which the needs of a person are satisfied, and the person's perception of how the job situation brought the state of satisfaction of the worker to fruition. As cited in the Administrator's Handbook for Improving Faculty Morale (Andrews, 1985), Smith defines morale as a confident state of mind that progressively looks to achieve an essential and shared function. The assumption that 'education is not fulfilling its potential' (OECD, 2000) has led to a focus on 'acceptable end products', state-wide testing and performance appraisal techniques aimed at 'value for money' (Smyth, 2001). Numerous causes for low teacher morale have been suggested: poor status in the community; poor salaries (relative to other professions); poor student behavior; excessive workload; poor leadership; poor working conditions; and increasing government accountability measures.

Teachers' morale, in human resources, is defined as the job satisfaction, outlook, and feelings of well-being and teachers have within a workplace setting. Dissatisfied and negative employees portray negative, low employee morale about their work environment. Positive or highly confident employees that are happy and positive at work are said to have high morale. Staff morale is the overall viewpoint of individuals in the workplace, including emotions, attitudes, outlook, and satisfaction level. It is the result of working conditions and attitudes, rather than the cause. Good morale among staff leads to positive, confident, and satisfied staffs, while low morale can be observed in negative, angry, and uncaring staffs who fail to maintain productivity and safe business practices (Ramachandran & Shibu, 2017).

High and Low Morale Teachers:

Administrators need to conduct frequent and accurate evaluation of teachers' morale and behavior. Effective evaluations should include the collection and reflective analysis of a wide range of information drawn from various sources on teaching, such as self-assessments and reflections, observations, interviews, teacher portfolios and input from supervisors and administrators, as well as from multiple measures of student performances. A teacher's first moral obligation is to provide excellent instructions. Teachers with large level of moral professionalization have a deep obligation to help student learn.

According to Wynne (1995), teacher with that sense of obligation demonstrate their moral professional by;

coming to work regularly; being well informed about their student-matter; planning and conducting classes with care; regularly reviewing and updating instructional practices; confronting parents of under achieving students; co-operating with colleagues and observing school policies so the whole institution works effectively; and, tactfully, but firmly criticizing unsatisfactory school policies and proposing constructive improvement.

When Teachers have confidence in the capability of their intuitional leadership they tend to have positive morale. When they share a vision for, where the school is headed and are positive about the direction, employees have high morale. Feeling part of goals that are bigger than themselves and their job contributes to positive teachers' morale. A deep focus on serving the needs of their students, their reason for existing at all, also promotes positive teacher morale. Communication is another significant factor in positive teachers' morale. They need current information so that the decisions they make are congruent with their success in the school. The interaction of teachers with their immediate headmaster and co-workers plays a role in teacher's morale. Effective, harmonious, interpersonal relationships strengthen teacher's morale and make teachers feel that coming into work highly (as cited in Ellenburg, 1972; Krishnamoorthi, 2012).

If teachers are negative and unhappy about their workplace, feel unappreciated and as if they cannot satisfy their goals and needs, teacher's morale is negative or low. If teachers dislike their headmaster and compete with co-teachers for attention and appreciation, morale is generally low. If teachers lack confidence in the school leadership and direction, morale is affected. High morale can be characterized by interest and enthusiasm for the job. While low morale is characterized by feelings of dissatisfaction and frustration. Low teacher morale is the result of low leadership morale. Stress also affects teacher morale. It can "result in emotional and physical fatigue and a reduction in work motivation, involvement and satisfaction". Low pay, lack of respect create crisis in teacher morale (Reid, 2010).

Low teacher morale has been linked to lack of recognition. Recent research findings emphasize that teachers were dissatisfied with the amount and type of recognition and respect they received as teachers in the school (Huysman, 2008; Mackenzie, 2007; Reed, 2010). Miller (1981) conceded that teachers were more productive when they were provided opportunities to participate in the decision making process. Teacher praise, instructional leadership, technical leadership, and supporting professional growth were all practices that impacted teacher morale. Miller (1981) argues that student learning and teacher morale were related to a positive school

culture that was characterized by respect, shared decision making, communication, and administrative support. Before school leaders can be successful change agents, it may be important to know the factors that affect teacher morale.

Another study revealed that a significant percentage of the teachers (88%) believed that the government should raise teacher salaries (Mackenzie, 2007). Although, it is evident in the literature that other factors affect teacher morale, it can be implied that teacher compensation has a significant impact on teacher morale. Recent research findings emphasized that teachers were dissatisfied with the amount and type of recognition and respect they received as teachers in the district (Huysman, 2008; Mackenzie, 2007; Reed, 2010). Within the context of recognition and respect, teachers saw mainstream media as an adverse opponent to the teaching profession because teachers were often characterized in the news by negative incidents (Mackenzie, 2007).

Relationship between Teacher Morale and Student Achievement:

Teacher morale and its affect on student achievement have been positively correlated. Student achievement is adversely affected by low teacher morale. Boosting morale will do more than save a teacher. It will save a student. It will save a school. Ellanberg (1972) found that where morale was high, schools showed an increase in student achievement. inversely, low levels of satisfaction and morale can lead to decreased teacher productive and burnout, It is associated with a loss of concern for and detachment from the people with whom one works, decreased quality of teaching, depression, greater use of sick leave, efforts to leave the profession and dehumanized perception of students (as cited in Krishnamoorthi, 2012).

Andrews (1985) asserted that teachers with high morale put more work into their jobs and students. Students who had good relationships with their teachers felt a closer connection with teachers with high morale because these teachers showed a deeper interest in their development, thus possibly increasing achievement. Lumsden (1998) asserted Andrews' position that teacher morale influenced student achievement. In addition, he believed that low teacher morale negatively affected worker productivity and those teachers became detached from the students. Low teacher morale was identified as the possible reason for low student achievement, unfavorable school and classroom climate, and poor personal health (Lumsden, 1998).

Improving Teacher's Morale:

There is not one single issue that will improve teacher morale. Factors that can contribute to positive teachers' morale include are not limited. Positive work

environment for teachers helps to build teachers morale. The most common way to improve teacher morale is increasing conducive working environment, allocation of workload, supportive leadership, media attention and recognition of groups and individuals, improved working conditions (reduced stress), better pay/professional salaries, provide access to high quality training and development, treat employees with respect, and improve career structures. Similarly, provide regular teacher recognition to make decisions about their job, offer open and regular communication about factors important to teachers, provide feedback, offer above school average benefits teachers the opportunity to develop their professional skills and their careers, provide teachers materials and school activities, and manage teachers within a positive success framework of goals, measuring employee satisfaction, and clear expectations.

To improve the level of teachers Morale, it is better to consider following suggestions:

- Keep employees 'feeling of us' with their work.
- Take time to creatively celebrate accomplishments.
- Sharing the instructional problems with members.
- School Teachers to develop positive attitudes.
- Provide opportunities to teachers.
- Management should reduce the work load of the employees.
- Introduce suggestions scheme system for the employees.
- Management should recognize the needs of employees and encourages employees' special talents.
- Management should provide incentives to employees for boosting in their morale and productivity.
- Headteacher should maintain coordinial relationship with teachers and offers recognitions of the teachers.
- Management should provide motivation and potential appraisal in regularly.
- Management should provide opportunities for career development.

- School management should provide performance awards to teacher.

CONCLUSION:

Morale is psychological concept. Morale may be range from very high to very low. Through this study it is clear that various factors that influence morale and productivity of the teachers as social security measures, welfare facilities, salary status, bonus, health condition and recognition of work are getting much importance. Effective educational leader serves as guardians of teachers' instructional time, assist teachers with student discipline matters, allow teachers to develop discipline codes, and support teachers' authority in enforcing policy. In this paper, the findings of the study are supported by the literature. It is suggested that teacher's efficiency is directly linked to high morale. This study identified many reasons for high and low morale. High morale strengthens productivity and low moral lessens the quality. A current lack of political and community confidence in the quality of teaching leading to increased accountability and standardized testing aimed at accountability, competition, ranking, choice and 'value for money' suggests a lack of regard for the professionalism of teachers. The status of teaching is influenced most at the macro level of society, while morale is influenced more at the system and school level. Links are identified between morale and status, leadership, salaries, workload, media coverage and student welfare. Improving the status of the profession could have a positive impact on the collective morale of the profession. Improved salaries and working conditions have the potential to improve the status of the 'professional morale' and the desirability of teaching as a career. Teachers are responsible towards improving the status of the profession. School communities should be supported in their ability to promote positive 'school morale' of all teachers. Finally, good teacher morale helps to success of the school. If teachers have poor morale a possibility of teachers disharmony and also affect smooth running of the school.

REFERENCES:

1. Andrews, L. D. (1985). *Administrative handbook for improving faculty morale*. Retrieve from Ericdatabase: <http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/search/detailmini.jsp?>
2. Bentley, R. & Rempel, A. (1980). *Manual for the Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire West Lafayette*. IN: Purdue University, Centre for Instructional Services.
3. Bentley, R. R. & Rempel, A. M. (1970). *Manual for the Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire*. West Lafayette, IN: The University Book Store.
4. Day, C. (2000). Change and professional development, in C. Day, A. Hernandez, T. E. Hauge, & J. MoUer, eds.. *The life and work of teachers: International perspectives in changing times*. London and New York: Ealmer Press.
5. Dropkin, S. & Taylor, M. T. (1963). Perceived problems of beginning teachers and related factors. *The Journal of Teacher Education*, XIV, pp. 384-390.
6. Ellenburg, F.C. (1972). Factors affecting teacher morale. IRA, Dover: The International Reading Association.
7. Eltis, K. (1997). *Fighting for the teaching profession*, Australian College of Education, NSW Chapter, Monograph no.31, Supplement to the NSW Chapter Newsletter, December, 102.
8. Hicks, P. (2003) Teachers: feeling the heat. *Directions in Education*, Australian Council for Educational Leaders, vol. 12, no. 16.
9. Huysman, J. (2008). Rural teacher satisfaction: An analysis of beliefs and attitudes of rural teachers' job satisfaction. *The Rural Educator*, 29 (2), 31-38.
10. Kelly, J. A. (2000). Advanced professional certification for teachers: Catalyst for broad band-width educational reform. *Unicorn, The Journal of the Australian College of Education*, vol. 26, no.1.
11. Krishnamoorthi, G. (2012). Teachers' morale. *International Journal of Behavioral, Social and Movement Sciences*, (1) 2, 57-61.
12. Lumsden, L. (1998). Teacher morale. *Eric Digest*, 120 - March, 1998, viewed 15 July 2001.
13. Mackenzie, N. (2007). Teacher morale: More complex than we think? *The Australian Educational Researcher*, (34) 1, 89-101.
14. Miller, W. C. (1981). Staff morale, climate, and educational productivity. *Educational Leadership*, 36 (6), 483-486.
15. Nelson, H. & Michael, L. T. (1963). Why teacher quit? *The Clearing House*, XXX VII, pp. 467-472.
16. O'Donnell, B. (2001). Prospects for the profession of teaching in Australia in the new millennium. Unicorn On-line Refereed Article No, 08, Australian College of Educators, viewed 17 July 2003.
17. Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2000). *Program for International Assessment (PISA) in brief from Australia's perspective*. Victoria, Australia: Australian Council for Educational Research.
18. Ramachandran, S. & Shibu, N. S. (2017). A research study on school teachers morale and involvements job on Tamilnadu. *JOSR Journal of Business and Management*, (19) 9 VIII, pp.34-38.
19. Ramsey, G. (2000). Teacher-driven curriculum or curriculum-driven teachers: A new look at an old dilemma. *Quality Teaching Series, Paper no.3*, Australian College of Education, ACT, Australia.
20. Reid, K. (2010). Teacher plead against cut backs. *The Record*. Retrieved from http://www.recordnet.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20100331/A_NEWS/3310319/1/a_special0258 (Seyfarth J T 2005 Human resources management for effective.
21. Sachs, J. (2003). Learning to be a teacher: professionalism and activism, in F. Crowther, (Eds.) *Teachers as leaders in a knowledge society. College Year Book 2003*, Australian College of Educators, ACT, Australia, pp. 83-94.

22. Santwona Memorial Academy (P) LTD Educational Research and Consultancy Centre (2012). *A study on the status of teacher management in community school in Nepal*, Kathmandu: Author.
23. Smyth, J. (2001). Critical politics of teachers' work: An Australian perspective. *Studies in the postmodern theory of education*, vol. 138.
24. Verdugo, R. R., Greenberg, N. M., Henderson, R. D., Uribe., O. Jr & Schneider, J. M. (1997). School governance regimes and teachers. Job Satisfaction: Bureaucracy, Legitimacy, and Community, *Education Administration Quarterly*, vol. 33, no. 1, pp. 38-66.
25. Von Burg, F. (1963). Faculty morale rests with administrator. *Review of Educational Research*, XXX III, pp.267-269.
26. Webster's Dictionary (2010). Morale. In Merriam-Webster's Dictionary. Retrieved from <http://www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/morale>
27. Ying-Leh, L. (2016), Teachers' morale and school effectiveness in secondary schools of Sibu, Sarawak. *International Journal of Education, Culture and Society*, (1) 2, pp.52-57.
28. Young, D. J. (1998). Teacher morale and efficacy in moral Western Australia. Paper presented to the Australian Association for Research in Education, 1998, Annual Conference, Adelaide.