



A Study on the Factors affecting Morale of College Faculty in Darjeeling District

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INTRODUCTION

Teachers play a very crucial role in the successful and holistic development of a child. Their expertise, intuition, analytical skills, wisdom, positive values, and a passion for nurturing and guiding young minds toward a brighter tomorrow makes the future seem hopeful. It is only in the capacity of a mentor to instil hope in an individual. Without their efforts, enthusiasm, and zeal for teaching it would be impossible to spread education. But what happens when the needs of these vanguards of education, culture, and hope are not fulfilled?

As important as it is to look after the job satisfaction levels of the employees in the corporate sector, it is equally essential to take care of the needs of the teachers who are also employees in the educational sector. More importance should also be given to the morale of teachers because it contributes to the scholastic achievement of students (Anderson, 1953). Hindt (2012) also stated in his research the existence of correlation between teacher morale and student achievement. With the increase in teacher morale, the students' achievement increases as well.

The concept of morale has been approached by different schools of thought. The psychological perspective states that morale is a cooperative attitude or mental health of several people who are related to each other in one way or the other (Spriegel, W.R., 1952). According to Dale S. Beach, morale is the total satisfaction that a person derives from his job, his work group, his boss, his organization, and his environment. Morale is also impacted by the personality of the individual in question. Additionally, morale also pertains to the general well-being, satisfaction, and happiness among people.

Hoy and Miskel (1987) express morale as interest and desire towards the job for the accomplishment of organizational objectives, a healthy environment that facilitates team spirit, and mutual liking toward other teachers. Webster's dictionary (2010) defines morale as team spirit, courage, hard work, determination, and a feeling of accomplishment. At the same time, Bentley and Rempel (1980) define morale as "the professional interest and enthusiasm that a person displays towards the achievement of individual and group goals in a given job situation." Similarly, Bentley & Rempel (1970) defined 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." Hence, morale has been viewed and explained by different theorists from myriad dimensions.

Morale is an important factor across all industries. Korsak (2017) states that morale matters, he maintains that when people are happy, they display an amazing ability to proficiently accomplish more work than an unhappy team. Likewise, a study conducted by Giangreco, Edelman, and Broer (2001), suggests that workers who experience positive job satisfaction are more productive. And yet again Pendino (2012) in his research concludes

how low morale can lead to negative characteristics within the culture of a school. He further elucidates that in the workplace, positive morale is crucial as it supports employees who are loyal to an organization, who feel they have meaningful goals, and who work together. The following work environment is one of confidence, high self-esteem, and a positive attitude which automatically contributes greatly to higher productivity and a positive inclination towards work. Millor (1981) added that a teacher morale can be impactful on the attitude and learning of students. Raising teacher morale makes learning more enjoyable for students, creating a conducive environment for learning.

Likewise, the morale of a teacher or professor is affected by multiple factors. A study conducted by G. Lingaperumal and Dr. S. Rosita (2016) confirms that growth, recognition, salary, organizational environment, and self-motivation all these factors together contribute to the job satisfaction of the mentors in academic setup.

A Research conducted on the teacher's morale reported that a teacher's first moral obligation is to provide excellent instructions. Teachers with a large level of moral professionalization have a deep obligation to help students learn (Dr. K. GOVINDARAJAN, 2012). According to Wynne (1995), teachers with that sense of obligation demonstrate their moral professionalism by being regular to work; being well informed about their student matters; planning classes with care; regularly reviewing and updating instructional practices; co-operating with colleagues, and observing school policies so the whole institution works effectively. Liu & Meyer (2005) pointed out in their research that student discipline can influence teachers' morale, along with administration and school leaders. Other factors like praising teachers, instructional leadership, technical leadership, and supporting professional growth can impact teachers' morale positively (Miller, 1981).

However, one of the major contributing factors to an elevated sense of morale is job satisfaction. It must be noted that job satisfaction and morale are two highly correlated variables (Evan, 1976). The higher the morale, the higher will be the job satisfaction of an employee. Khalil (2013) confirms that when job satisfaction is high, the individuals' confidence will be high which leads to high morale, and the teachers' contentment, working environment, reward, and payments would be higher. Subsequently, Perderon (2012) highlighted that one of the reasons for teachers' low morale was frustration, among other characteristics such as fear of supervision, insecurity, confusion, futility, lack of confidence, resistance to change, and teacher absences (Pendino, 2012).

Hence, the lack of motivation and reduced job satisfaction lead to low morale and decreased enthusiasm toward work. In a study by Noll (2004), it was observed that the teachers' relationship with the administration and the working environment affect the levels of job satisfaction among the teachers. In another study conducted by Neog and Barua (2014), it was reported that among a host of factors salary was the primary factor influencing the job satisfaction of a teacher. The results showed that the majority of the teachers were underpaid and hence experienced an average level of job satisfaction. Another interesting finding by Wong et. al., (2017) suggests that poor teacher-student relationships, diverse needs of the students, and lack of student progress often lead to teachers changing jobs, and abandoning their profession, thus, low teacher morale. Similarly, Tye & O'Brien(2002) studied about teachers quitting their profession and found that the "accountability factor, adding clerical work, student attitudes, lacking of parental support, unresponsive administration, low professional status and low income" affect teachers' morale.

On the flip side, many researchers have made significant contributions to the understanding of elements that make up high morale. Researchers such as Pittenger et al. (2014) identify one of the positive factors of high morale and job satisfaction as the feeling that comes from taking care of the educational and behavioral needs of children with disabilities. Additionally, factors such as access to the materials that are needed, feelings of the appropriate level of responsibilities, support received from co-workers, and belief that the environment was a safe one in which to work, directly leave a positive impact on morale experienced by novice educators. (Pittenger et al.,

2014). Whitaker, Whitaker & Lumpa (2000) also stated that teacher morale can be boosted by appreciating the constructive steps taken by the teachers in their day-to-day work at school.

Many studies argue that the morale of the teachers is directly proportionate to the quality of education (Lester W. Anderson, 1953). With reduced confidence among teachers, the quality of education gets majorly impacted too. In a longitudinal analysis, Sanders and Rivers (1996) reported that higher efforts on the teacher's end resulted in more extraordinary scholastic achievement among the students. The results from this study, thus, indicate the impact of morale on the extent of efforts by the teachers which in turn leads to an enhanced quality of education. Another research by Bousquet (2012) confirms the idea yet again that a teacher's morale has a direct impact on a student's achievement. More specifically, a teacher's attitude sets the tone for the entire class. Jones, Young, and Frank in their research conducted in 2013 observed that low morale in novice teachers results in decreased commitment in teachers and negatively impacts students' academic achievement. Further, they assert that teachers who exhibit a lower level of commitment may also demonstrate less effort in terms of achievement of overall goals at school.

However, there is a noticeable gap in the literature when it comes to viewing the levels of morale among college professors. Even though morale has been studied greatly at the school level, a dearth in the study of morale among professors persists. Hence, the current study is a venture into identifying the factors that directly impact the morale of college faculty in the Darjeeling district.

METHODOLOGY

Objective- The purpose of this non-experimental quantitative study is to explore the factors that possibly determine teacher's morale among university faculty (Senior and Junior, Male and Female, P.G. and PhD teachers) at the district of Darjeeling, West Bengal.

Hypotheses-

1. There exists a significant difference in the Teacher Morale scores of Male and Female professors.
2. There exists a significant difference in the Teacher Morale scores of Post-graduate and Doctorate professors.
3. There exists a significant difference in the Teacher Morale scores of Senior and Junior professors.

Tools

The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire is the only tool that has been used to assess the study variable. It is a 100 item Likert type questionnaire on a 4-point scale, that is designed to assess morale of educators on 10 dimensions. Bentley and Rempel (1980) elaborated on the 10 dimensions-

- The first is Teacher rapport With Principal that explains how teacher's affective attitude about the principal on their competency, awareness of the teachers and work, their communication skills.
- Satisfaction With Teaching being the second factor refer to teacher-pupil relationships and their gratification from the teaching experience.
- The third factor of Rapport Among Teachers emphasises interrelationships of the teachers in any educational institution and the need for cooperation through. preparation, ethnics, influence, interests, and competency of his peers.
- The fourth factor of Teacher Salary focusses on a teacher's attitude towards their current pay scale and salary policies.
- Teacher Load as the fifth factor signifies the required office administrative work, "red tape," and other such community pressures on teacher's time.
- Sixth factor, Curriculum Issues refers to the teacher responses regarding the school curriculum in terms of student's overall needs.

- The seventh factor, Teacher Status sections approaches of the teacher about the security benefits and attached social status of being in the profession.
- As the eighth factor, Community Support of Education was defined as the extent to which teachers support a complete educational program.
- School Facilities and Services as the ninth factor, deals with the suitability of amenities, materials, and the availability of obtaining the same.
- The last factor Community Pressures was identified as the consideration towards community prospects with respect to the teacher' values, contribution beyond school and freedom of expression within classroom setting.

PROCEDURE

Data was collected through questionnaires assessing teacher morale and basic demographics of age, gender, educational qualification and years of experience. Sample was gathered from COLLEGE NAME – in Darjeeling District, West Bengal. Purposive sampling method was followed to collect the sample. The total number of respondents was 124, comprising of 62 males and females each. The respondents were found to be having the highest qualification of either a post-graduate degree in specified fields or a Doctorate degree (82 of the 124 being only Postgraduates and 40 candidates holding a Doctorate degree). The sample's average job experience, in terms of years, till the time of data collection was found to be 7 years. As per the average working experience, seniority of professors was determined as working for up to 7 years for Junior Faculty and above 7 working years was considered as Senior Faculty. 48 teachers out of the 124 respondents were found to be falling under the Senior category and rest 76 were categorized as Junior faculty.

The data collected from these 124 participants was then statistically determined through the SPSS software v.20. T- test was conducted to determine mean, S.D. and the presence of a significant difference in teacher morale scores between male and female faculty; Post graduate and Doctorate faculty, and the third category Senior and Junior faculty, if any.

RESULTS

Table 1: Mean, SD, and T -value of Teacher Morale of Male and Female Teachers at the University level (N=Male = 62, Female = 62).

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation (S.D.)	Sig.	T- value
Male	62	292.95	52.81	0.009	-1.496
Female	62	305.09	36.00	0.009	-1.496

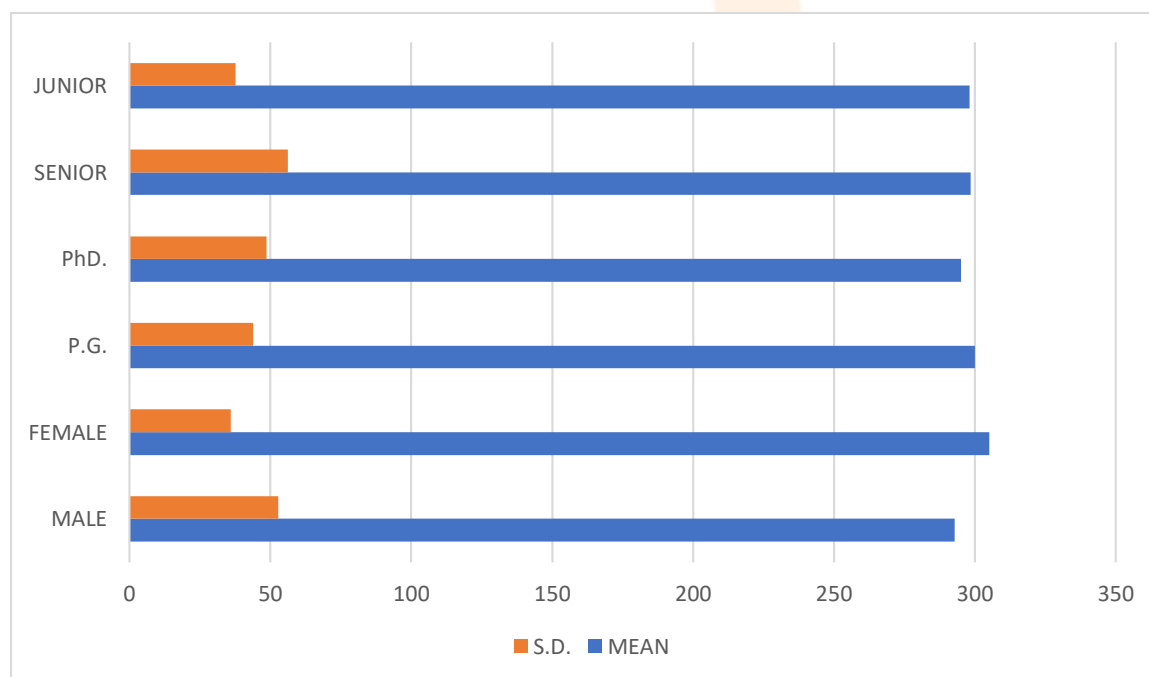
Table 2: Mean, SD, and T -value of Teacher morale of P.G. and PhD Teachers at the University level (N= P.G. = 82, PhD. = 40).

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation (S.D.)	Sig.	T- value
P.G.	82	300.02	43.93	0.672	0.564
PhD.	40	295.07	48.67	0.672	0.564

Table 3 : Mean, SD, and T -value of Teacher Morale of Senior and Junior Teachers at the University level (N= Senior =48, Junior = 76).

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation (S.D.)	Sig.	T- value
Senior	48	298.58	56.16	0.13	0.051
Junior	76	298.15	37.53	0.13	0.051

Figure 1-Graph representing mean and S.D. of all the categories, namely, Male and female faculty, P.G. and PhD. Qualified faculty , Senior and Junior faculty.



The mean and S.D. of teacher morale of male teachers is 292.95 and 52.81 respectively and the mean and S.D of teacher morale of female teachers is 305.09 and 36.00 respectively (Table 1). T test indicates a significant difference at $p < 0.01$. The results indicate thus that there is a significant difference between male and female teachers pertaining to teacher's morale, namely of Teacher Rapport, Satisfaction with Teaching, Rapport among Teachers, Teacher Salary, Teacher Load, Curriculum Issues, Teacher Status, Community Support of Education, School Facilities and Services and Community Pressures. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is accepted (There is a

significant difference in Teacher morale scores between male and female faculty of a college in Darjeeling district of West Bengal, India)

Table 2 indicates that there is no noticeable difference between P.G. and PhD. Teachers at 0.672 level of significance, with respect to teacher's morale, namely, of Teacher Rapport, Satisfaction with Teaching, Rapport among Teachers, Teacher Salary, Teacher Load, Curriculum Issues, Teacher Status, Community Support of Education, School Facilities and Services and Community Pressures.

Scores in Table 3 indicates the absence of significant difference in the Teacher Morale scores of Senior and Junior Faculty of the professors in Darjeeling, West Bengal. Hence hypothesis 3- There is a significant difference in Teacher Morale scores of Senior and Junior Faculty remains rejected.

DISCUSSION

From the results it can be interpreted that there exists a significant difference in teacher morale in male and female teachers. It can be seen that the morale of the female teachers is higher than that of the male teachers. Female teachers, generally, are seen to be more satisfied in their role than male teachers (Mendel et. al, 1987) It is also seen that compared to male instructors, female teachers had a more professional attitude, more job satisfaction, and higher levels of performance. (Mahmood, 2011) Major gender variations has been observed in the job satisfaction of teachers by Ngimbudzi, Fredy Wilson (2009). The current study is parallel to the present findings hence affirming the higher teacher morale of female faculty as compared to the male teachers.

In the present study, no significant difference was found in the level of teacher morale of teachers holding either a Post graduate degree or a Doctoral degree. Earlier studies also suggested that there exists no significant difference in teacher morale with respect to higher qualifications which are parallel to the present study (Din et al., 2011).

Hence, in general there is no difference between the morale of junior and senior teachers. However, a study by Bivona, 2014 shows that higher experience leads to higher morale, as with experience teachers learn to deal with their stress and also become more efficient. The same study shows that teachers with lesser experience have heavier workload as they are trying to grasp how to teach and formulate curriculums, which as shown earlier does lead to lower morale. As a result of which, they spend more of their leisure time on work-related activities, thereby draining themselves in the process. Teachers with more experience have higher efficiency, leading to higher morale, because they are accustomed to their work – grading assessments, administrative work, formulating curriculum, etc. Certain studies also recommend that since junior teachers are more prone to low morale, the senior teachers can lessen their workload and help them become more efficient by educating them on how to manage classrooms, plan lessons, etc. (Bivona, 2014).

CONCLUSION

The following conclusion can be drawn from this study –

1. Female professors at the college level have high morale and are satisfied in their role.
2. Teacher morale is not necessarily affected by educational qualification.
3. Experience in terms of time dedicated to the service of education, does not affect teacher morale

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