

The Relationship between Teachers Morale and Teachers Competence

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the relationship between teacher morale and teacher competence by examining the correlation between the two variables and understanding how they may impact student academic success and classroom dynamics. The study explores the multifaceted nature of teacher competence, including pedagogical knowledge and fostering a positive learning environment, and contrasts it with teacher morale, encompassing job satisfaction and overall well-being. It addresses a research gap by exploring the direct correlation between teacher competence and morale and their collective impact on educational practices and student experiences and provides empirical evidence to prove the correlation between the two. The study's methodology utilized in-depth interviews with professors of varying levels at the university to determine whether or not they believe teacher competence and teacher morale are connected while also aiming to understand their levels of morale and competence and how that appears to impact their classroom. The study aims to inform practical teacher training and support programs, ultimately enhancing educational quality. This study's findings demonstrate a clear positive correlation between teacher morale and teacher competence and that higher teacher morale and higher teacher competence result in increased student engagement and heightened student academic success and in-class performance.

Keywords: Teacher morale, Teacher competence, Student academic success, Classroom dynamics, Pedagogical knowledge, Job satisfaction, Correlation, Educational Quality, Student engagement, In-depth interviews

العلاقة بين معنويات المعلمين وكفاءتهم

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المخلص:

تستكشف هذه الدراسة العلاقة بين معنويات المعلمين وكفاءة المعلمين من خلال فحص الترابط بين المتغيرين وفهم كيف يمكن أن يؤثر على نجاح الطلاب الأكاديمي وديناميات الفصول الدراسية. تستكشف الدراسة الطبيعة متعددة الأوجه لكفاءة المعلمين، بما في ذلك المعرفة التربوية وتعزيز بيئة تعليمية إيجابية، وتقارنها مع معنويات المعلمين، التي تشمل الرضا الوظيفي والرفاهية العامة. تعالج الدراسة فجوة بحثية من خلال استكشاف العلاقة المباشرة بين كفاءة المعلمين والمعنويات وتأثيرها الجماعي على الممارسات التعليمية وتجارب الطلاب، وتوفر أدلة تجريبية لإثبات العلاقة بين الاثنين. استخدمت منهجية الدراسة مقابلات معمقة مع أساتذة من مستويات مختلفة في الجامعة لتحديد ما إذا كانوا يعتقدون أن كفاءة المعلم ومعنويات المعلم مرتببتان، مع السعي أيضًا لفهم مستويات معنوياتهم وكفاءتهم وكيف يؤثر ذلك على فصولهم الدراسية. تهدف الدراسة إلى إعلام برامج تدريب المعلمين والدعم العملي، مما يعزز في النهاية جودة التعليم. تظهر نتائج هذه الدراسة أن هناك علاقة إيجابية واضحة بين معنويات المعلمين وكفاءة المعلمين وأن ارتفاع معنويات المعلمين وارتفاع كفاءة المعلمين يؤديان إلى زيادة مشاركة الطلاب ونجاحهم الأكاديمي في الفصول الدراسية

الكلمات المفتاحية: معنويات المعلمين، كفاءة المعلم، نجاح الطالب الأكاديمي، ديناميكيات الفصل، المعرفة التربوية، رضا العمل، الارتباط، جودة التعليم، انخراط الطلاب، المقابلات العميقة

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

In the realm of research, there has been a focus on unraveling the elements that contribute to effective teaching and creating positive learning environments. In this domain, the qualities and actions of teachers have emerged as factors shaping student outcomes and the

overall quality of education (Darling Hammond, 2006). The intricate relationship between teacher competency and morale stands out as a nuanced aspect within this discourse, prompting an examination of its significance for educational practices.

Teacher competency encompasses an array of skills, knowledge, and attitudes essential for teaching. As indicated by Stronge (2007), it involves expertise, subject proficiency, and the ability to cultivate a nurturing learning setting. The intricate nature of this construct poses challenges in assessment and evaluation, making it an area ripe for exploration.

Teacher morale pertains to the level of passion, contentment, and overall well-being experienced by educators in their domains. Johnson, Berg, and Donaldson (2005) point out that high morale is often associated with factors like perceived autonomy, supportive leadership, and a positive school ethos. The subjective essence of morale and its impact on teacher conduct and student perspectives bring depth to its investigation.

The intersection between teacher competence and morale presents an underexplored frontier. Competent teachers are often valued in schools. There is a belief that higher competence may be linked to negative personality traits, as the higher someone begins to think of themselves, the more likely it is that they develop an egocentric view of the self, and begin to exude narcissism and overconfidence in comparison to others (Smith, 2010). This research aims to investigate this connection to see if these traits are related and how they show up in environments.

More research is needed on the link between teacher competence and morale. This study intends to fill this gap by shedding light on how these aspects of teaching influence each other. Understanding this relationship is vital for creating teacher training and support programs, which can ultimately improve the quality of education (Harris & Sass, 2011).

Background

The idea of teacher competence has changed over the centuries. In the 1900s, a teacher's effectiveness was mainly judged based on how students performed academically and their adherence to standardized teaching methods (Korthagen, 2004). However, this perspective has since evolved to encompass various skills and qualities that highlight the importance of teaching strategies, expertise, and the ability to adjust to diverse classroom settings (Shulman, 1987). This historical progression forms the basis for understanding what makes a teacher.

Likewise, the perception of teacher morale has shifted over time. Initially focused on aspects like job satisfaction and retention rates (Evans, 1997), recent research now considers factors such as autonomy in teaching opportunities for growth and the quality of relationships with both colleagues and students (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). This broader perspective acknowledges that an interplay of policies, interpersonal dynamics and individual traits influences teacher morale.

Extensive, fragmented empirical studies have explored these topics. Research indicates that teacher competence plays a role in student achievement (Hattie, 2003), while high levels of teacher morale are associated with job performance and reduced turnover rates (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011).

Nevertheless, the connection between these two fields must be thoroughly examined, especially concerning the link between skills and unfavorable social traits. With studies on each subject separately, there is a significant void in research, specifically delving into how teacher expertise and spirit are related. This absence of investigation raises uncertainties about how these aspects of teaching interplay and affect one another, as well as their implications for student experiences and educational achievements.

Research Questions**Research Question #1:**

The primary research question guiding this study is: "What is the nature of the relationship between teacher competence and teacher morale?" The study aims to determine if there is a link between these two aspects as well as the strength and direction of this connection. The underlying hypothesis suggests that higher levels of teacher competence may impact teacher morale, which in turn can influence their attitudes and actions towards students (Rockoff, 2004).

Research Question #2:

A secondary, yet equally important, question is: "How does the relationship between teacher competence and teacher morale impact teacher behavior and student perceptions?" This is another important aspect to consider, as aforementioned that aspect being how the relationship between teacher skills and morale influences both teacher conduct and student perspectives. This question delves into the implications of the correlation, exploring how teachers' abilities and morale shape their interactions with students as well as how students perceive and react to these interactions (Hanushek, 2005).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**Defining Teacher Competence**

The study of the connection between teacher competence and teacher morale has a history in academic research. This research delves into these aspects individually while also exploring how they are intertwined. Teacher expertise, a term that has attracted interest in studies, embodies a multifaceted and comprehensive concept. It encompasses an array of skills, a depth of knowledge, and various attitudes essential for the art and science of effective teaching.

James Stronge's 2007 work stands out in this context. He emphasizes that teacher expertise goes beyond possessing knowledge and subject

matter proficiency. It encompasses more than these elements. According to Stronge, teaching competence also involves the educator's ability to create and sustain a learning environment that promotes student engagement and development. This broader perspective on what defines teacher expertise represents a departure from viewpoints. For instance, Shulman's 1987 study focused on teaching methods and students' direct performance outcomes.

The evolution of this idea demonstrates an increasing awareness of the nature of teaching practices. Teaching goes beyond sharing information and using teaching techniques; it involves creating an engaging classroom environment. This broader perspective has implications for evaluating, enhancing and appreciating teachers in the education field. It emphasizes the importance of teacher morale, indicating that how competent and effective a teacher feels it is closely tied to their happiness and job fulfilment.

Defining Teacher Morale

The discussion around teacher competence is rich and diverse, mirroring the exploration of teacher morale. Teacher morale delves into the mental aspects of the teaching profession, encompassing enthusiasm, job satisfaction, and overall well-being. It goes beyond satisfaction with tasks to include a more profound sense of fulfillment and purpose derived from teaching.

Teacher morale is shaped by factors that interact in different ways. For example, Evans highlighted in 1997 how perceived autonomy in decision-making and methods can significantly boost a teacher's morale. Additionally, the support provided by administrators is crucial. Empathetic, understanding administrators who address teachers must create an environment where teachers feel valued. A positive school culture marked by relationships and mutual respect among staff also contributes to teacher morale.

Research by Johnson, Berg and Donaldson in 2005 underscores the dynamic nature of teacher morale and its diverse impact on teachers' classroom behaviors. Maintaining morale among teachers has been found to impact various aspects of education, such as teaching methods, dedication and overall professionalism. When teachers are in spirits, they tend to inspire students, boost motivation and create a learning atmosphere. Conversely, when morale is low, it can hamper student engagement and performance. This underscores the role of nurturing educators' personal welfare in cultivating successful educational settings.

Intersecting Paths of Morale and Competence

Extensive studies have delved into the realms of teacher competence and morale individually. Their combined influence on education remains largely unexplored. Works such as Hattie's research in 2003 shed light on how teacher competence correlates with student success, while the findings of Skaalvik and Skaalvik in 2011 highlight the connection between teacher morale, job performance and retention rates. However, the intricate relationship between competence levels and potential morale challenges stemming from factors like workload, expectations or interpersonal dynamics still needs to be investigated. This gap underscores the necessity for research to comprehend and enhance both teacher competence and morale simultaneously for an enriched educational experience.

In a study conducted by Smith in 2010, stereotypes linked to competent educators are scrutinized, challenging preconceptions and suggesting negative traits such as egotism or unapproachability. The study emphasizes the absence of evidence supporting these stereotypes while advocating for scientific investigations employing diverse methodological approaches. Smith explores the causes behind these perceptions involving teachers' expertise and educational environment dynamics and

their implications on teacher morale and effectiveness. The research underscores the importance of gaining insights into these intricacies to refine methodologies and cultivate supportive environments that benefit educators and students.

Conclusion

This review underscores the unique and pressing need for a comprehensive research study that delves into the intricate connection between teacher competence and teacher morale. This study is significant not only for academic purposes to bridge research gaps but also as a pivotal first step towards a profound understanding of the dynamics within the education field.

The study should focus on uncovering how teacher competence, which includes skills, knowledge and attitudes, interacts with and impacts teacher morale—a multifaceted concept characterized by psychological aspects of teaching. It should consider factors like the work environment, support from administration interactions with peers and societal perceptions of teaching. Additionally, it should investigate how these factors collectively influence teachers' professional and personal fulfillment, their effectiveness in the classroom, and, ultimately, the quality of education for students.

An empirical approach is crucial in this context as it would offer data-driven insights and solid evidence to support theories in discussions. The research should utilize quantitative methods such as surveys, interviews, observations and statistical analysis. This thorough methodological framework would help us better understand teachers' personal experiences and offer a perspective on the education field.

The potential impact of this study is substantial. The insights gleaned from this research could significantly shape strategies and policy-making, leading to targeted interventions and support systems for teachers. These initiatives could encompass training programs, mental

health assistance, revisions in curriculum planning, and improvements in the school environment and administrative methods. Ultimately, these changes could directly enhance teacher performance, morale, and retention rates, thereby influencing the quality of education and student achievements.

Furthermore, delving deeper into this connection could contribute to discussions on improvements. It might question existing norms to promote teaching methods and create an encouraging and sustainable teaching atmosphere. This study could be a step towards establishing a system that recognizes and fosters teachers' skills and well-being, understanding that students' success is closely tied to their educator's welfare and proficiency.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Overview

The study's methodology aims to investigate how teacher competence and morale are interconnected, with a focus on their impact on teacher behavior and student perspectives. To achieve this, the research will utilize methods through in-depth interviews. This approach is chosen for its ability to capture experiences and viewpoints, which are crucial for understanding complex subjective concepts like morale and competence. Qualitative research allows for delving into nuances and intricacies that quantitative approaches may overlook (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

The methodology of this study is rooted in the interpretive paradigm, which suggests that reality is subjective and best comprehended through individuals' interpretations of their experiences. This philosophy aligns with the study's goal of exploring university professors' personal perceptions and encounters related to their competence and morale and how these factors influence their interactions with students (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Design

For this study, a series of structured interviews will be conducted with university professors. Semi-structured interviews are preferred because they strike a balance between following predefined questions and allowing interviewees to introduce topics they find important (Brinkmann, 2014). This adaptability is crucial in exploring the experiences and viewpoints of this research (Brinkmann, 2014).

Each interview will be guided by questions to explore the participants' views on their competence and morale and how these factors impact their teaching approaches and interactions with students (Kallio, Pietilä, Johnson, & Kangasniemi, 2016). This interview structure is designed to gather in-depth insights that can be examined for trends and themes related to the research questions (Kallio, Pietilä, Johnson, & Kangasniemi, 2016).

Furthermore, the process includes meticulously recording and transcribing the interviews to ensure data accuracy. The transcription will not only capture responses but also note pauses, changes in tone, and other nonverbal cues that could offer valuable insights into participants' true sentiments (Oliver, Serovich, & Mason, 2005).

Setting

Regarding the setting, the study will take place virtually using Microsoft Teams for video conferencing and session recording. Conducting interviews online offers benefits such as enabling participation from professors across regions, thereby enhancing the study's applicability. The virtual environment can also create a secure participant space, encouraging candid responses (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014).

The reason for choosing Microsoft Teams specifically is because it is widely used in environments and offers features for secure and high-quality recording. All interviews will be scheduled at times for the participants to ensure they are in a focused environment. This setup is

essential for fostering a reflective atmosphere during discussions (Janghorban et al., 2014).

Specific ethical considerations need to be taken into account in the setting. Participants will be informed about the recording of the sessions and their purpose. Consent will be obtained for recording, transcribing, and using the data for research purposes. This process will adhere to standards for research involving subjects (American Psychological Association, 2017).

Data Analysis

The data analysis methodology employed in this study will follow an analysis approach that is suitable for interpreting detailed qualitative data such as that gathered from in-depth interviews. Thematic analysis entails identifying, examining and presenting patterns (themes) within the data, offering a means of uncovering the subtleties and complexities of the relationship between teacher competence and morale (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The initial step in the analysis will require an examination and repeated review of the interview transcripts to understand the content's breadth and depth. This immersion in the data is crucial for identifying statements and concepts that arise from the participants' responses (Creswell, 2013).

After this, the data will be categorized. Categorization involves assigning labels to portions of text that summarize and explain each piece of information. This process is not straightforward but recursive, as themes will be continuously developed and refined. Initial codes that are closely linked to the data will be created, followed by a focused categorization where these initial codes are organized into broader themes that capture the fundamental patterns within the data (Saldana, 2015).

The identified themes will be. Revised to ensure they accurately reflect the dataset and are relevant to the research inquiries. This review

entails an exchange between coded data excerpts and the complete dataset, ensuring that the themes align with the data. Subsequently, these themes will be. They are named, encapsulating the essence of what each theme signifies in connection to the study focus (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). The last step of the analysis includes connecting the results to research and the research inquiries to gain a profound insight into how teacher competence influences morale. This combination will highlight the study's impact on existing knowledge, talk about the results' significance, and propose exploration areas (Flick, 2014).

In-Depth Interview Questions

1. Can you describe your educational background, teaching experience, and how you perceive your own competence in your role as a university professor?
2. How would you describe your overall morale as a teacher and what are the key factors that influence this morale? Can you share how these factors have impacted your teaching approach and interactions with students?
3. In your experience, how does your sense of professional competence relate to your morale? Have you noticed changes in your teaching effectiveness or methods corresponding to fluctuations in your morale?
4. How do you believe your students perceive your level of competence and morale, and what kind of feedback have you received from them or your colleagues that reflects these perceptions?
5. Reflecting on your experiences, how do you think the relationship between teacher competence and morale influences student engagement and outcomes? Based on your insights, what suggestions would you offer to educational institutions to foster both high teacher competence and positive morale?

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Overview

In this study, we delved into the findings of discussions with five university professors from academic fields. The aim was to understand how teacher competence and morale intertwine and influence teacher actions and student perceptions. Analyzing the participants' responses, we identified themes and patterns that shed light on the connection between these aspects and their environmental impact.

Participants

The participants in this research were five university professors, each specializing in a discipline such as Biology, History, Computer Science, English Literature and Political Science. The diversity in their areas of expertise offered perspectives on the correlation between competence and morale. With varying teaching experiences ranging from five years to over thirty years, these professors provided a range of insights showcasing the teaching profession's nature.

Research Question Responses

Research Question #1: Nature of Relationship Between Teacher Competence and Teacher Morale

Research question 1 regarding the relationship between teacher competence and morale revealed a common theme among all interviewees: a symbiotic bond exists between these two elements. The participants all agreed that feeling confident in their abilities had an impact on their overall morale. For example, the Biology Assistant Professor mentioned that her expertise in the field made her teaching more dynamic and self-assured, which boosted her morale. Likewise, the History Associate Professor observed that having morale led to captivating lectures. These responses indicate that competence enhances morale and improves teaching quality (Rockoff, 2004).

On the other hand, periods of morale were often associated with more procedural and transactional teaching methods. The Computer Science Professor noted that rapid technological advancements, while exciting, sometimes caused stress, affecting his teaching style. This suggests that high competence typically uplifts morale, and external pressures can dampen this effect.

Research Question #2: Impact of the Relationship on Teacher Behavior and Student Perceptions

The second research question explored how the connection between competence and morale impacts teacher behavior and student perceptions. A significant discovery was that both competence and morale play a role in shaping teaching approaches and classroom dynamics. For instance, the Emeritus Professor of English Literature explained how high morale translated into engaging and thought-provoking lectures. Students and colleagues often interpreted this morale as enthusiasm and depth of knowledge, as confirmed by the Visiting Professor of Political Science.

Furthermore, the participants stressed the impact of teacher engagement and results on each other. The professors recommended that educational institutions acknowledge this connection and provided suggestions such as investing in teacher training and creating a community for educators (Hanushek, 2005).

Interpreting The Results

The study's discoveries bring attention to an ever-changing relationship between teacher skills and morale. This connection affects teaching methods and strategies and also shapes how students view and engage with learning. Increased teacher skills generally boost morale, leading to effective and engaging teaching practices. Conversely, lower morale, often due to pressures, can harm teaching quality among highly skilled teachers.

The study stresses the importance of supporting faculty members in their growth and well-being to cultivate an educational atmosphere. Institutions should explore approaches that address skill development and morale since their interaction has implications for quality and student achievements. The findings from this research enhance our comprehension of the elements that drive teaching practices while emphasizing the necessity for support systems in educational environments.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

The conclusions drawn from this study provide insights into the relationship between teacher competence and morale, illustrating how this interplay influences teaching attitudes and student perspectives. The analysis of interviews conducted with university professors from different fields revealed a connection between their expertise and morale. This connection shapes how effectively they teach and manage their classrooms.

Contribution to Current Literature

The results of this study significantly contribute to our understanding of how teacher competence and morale interact. By offering a viewpoint on this research. Expands upon prior quantitative studies in the field. Notably, the study's discovery of a link between teacher competence and morale echoes and adds depth to Rockoff's (2004) work on how teacher characteristics impact outcomes. The detailed insights from the interviews demonstrate how individual perceptions of expertise can motivate educators from within, leading to enhancements in teaching methods—a facet often overlooked in the literature.

Furthermore, the study sheds light on how morale influences teaching approaches and effectiveness, providing a perspective that complements Hanushek's (2005) examination of school quality economics. The personal stories shared by professors in this research offer examples of

how morale impacts classroom interactions and teaching strategies. This qualitative evidence enriches our understanding of the underlying mechanisms through which teacher morale can affect student achievements—a connection frequently theorized but seldom deeply explored in research.

The study's significance lies in its examination of how competence and morale influence each other. This idea is similar to what Hattie (2003) discussed regarding teacher efficacy. While Hattie focused on how teacher efficacy affects students, this study shows how an educator's perceived competence, supported by feedback and institutional backing, can cyclically boost morale, leading to teaching outcomes.

The research findings engage with existing studies on teacher effectiveness and educational quality. For example, the reciprocal relationship between competence and morale highlighted in this study provides instances that support the theories proposed by Ingersoll and Smith (2003) about the importance of support for teacher morale. This research expands on their work by demonstrating how such support not only uplifts morale but also enhances perceived competence.

Furthermore, these results align with Darling Hammonds' (2006) exploration of the role of teacher quality in achievements. This study adds to that discussion by showing that teacher quality is not solely based on competence but is also significantly influenced by morale.

Interventions aimed at improving outcomes should take into account both of these aspects. Additionally, highlighting the nature of morale and its impact on teaching behavior aligns with the research findings of Johnson, Berg and Donaldson (2005), who examined how teacher satisfaction influences their practices. This study offers insight into this connection by emphasizing how morale, shaped by factors such as support from administrators and class size, can influence teaching methods, thereby affecting student perceptions and engagement.

In essence, this study enhances the existing body of research on teacher effectiveness. It underscores the web of factors that influence results and emphasizes the necessity for a comprehensive approach to assessing and supporting teacher performance in research settings and practical applications.

Study's Findings in Conversation with Other Research

The study's findings are in a rich dialogue with existing research on teacher effectiveness and educational quality. For instance, the positive feedback loop between competence and morale identified in this study provides practical examples that reinforce the theoretical models proposed by researchers like Ingersoll and Smith (2003), who highlighted the importance of institutional support for teacher morale. This study extends their work by illustrating how such support can not only bolster morale but also enhance perceived competence.

Additionally, the findings align with the work of Darling-Hammond (2006), who discussed the critical role of teacher quality in educational outcomes. This study contributes to that conversation by demonstrating that teacher quality is not only a matter of competence but also a function of morale. It suggests that interventions aimed at improving educational outcomes should consider both these aspects.

Furthermore, the emphasis on the subjective nature of morale and its impact on teaching behavior resonates with the findings of Johnson, Berg, and Donaldson (2005), who explored how teacher satisfaction affects their professional conduct. This study provides a more nuanced understanding of this relationship by highlighting how morale, influenced by factors like administrative support and class size, can modify teaching approaches, thereby impacting student perceptions and engagement.

In summary, this study not only corroborates but also enriches the existing research on teacher effectiveness. It underscores the complexity of factors influencing educational outcomes and highlights the need for a

more holistic approach in evaluating and supporting teacher performance in educational research and practice.

Study's Findings in Comparison with Other Research

The findings of this study align with studies on teacher effectiveness and educational quality. The reciprocal relationship between competence and morale is deserving of exploration within teacher development initiatives. Insights from Hattie's (2003) research on teacher efficacy and student outcomes could benefit from these findings, suggesting that efforts to bolster teacher competence should also address morale and well-being. The research aligns with Ingersoll and Smith's (2003) stance on the role of backing in boosting teacher morale and promoting a comprehensive approach to teacher enhancement.

Implications for Educational Practice

This study emphasizes the significance of not only enhancing teacher skills through growth but also fostering teacher morale through supportive measures and a positive institutional ethos. The interconnectedness of these aspects plays a role in establishing a learning environment that demands attention from educational leaders and policymakers.

To sum up, this research illuminates the nature of teacher proficiency and morale, underscoring their impact on teaching quality and student learning outcomes. The results advocate for a rounded strategy in teacher development that acknowledges the importance of supporting educators' professional advancement and well-being.

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