

## Relationship of Principals' Academic Decision-Making Practices with Faculty Morale: A Study of Colleges in Punjab

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### Abstract

*This study examines the relationship between principals' academic decision-making practices and faculty morale. A descriptive survey study has been adopted. The population of the study comprised all the faculty members working in public sector colleges of Punjab, province of Pakistan. Two questionnaires based on five-point Likert Scale, namely Academic Decision-Making Practices (ADMP) questionnaire to measure practices was adopted by the principals and Faculty Morale Scale (FMS) to measure morale of teaching faculty. The collected data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, correlation coefficient and linear regression model. A positive significant relationship between principals' academic decision-making practices and morale of faculty members was found. Some academic decision-making practices like decisions based on policy matter, promote academic development, power delegation, employees' participation collect information and planning are significantly correlated with morale of faculty. While, some practices such as diplomacy and use rules to suit themselves do not correlate with morale.*

**Key Words:** Academic Decision Making, Practices, Morale, Principals, Faculty, Colleges.

### Introduction

Decision-making is an integral and necessary aspect of the organisation. It is a cognitive process in which a number of alternatives are selected as best possible for solving a problem (Chang & Sanfey, 2008). This results in the selection of the best among the different choices using mental processes, such as attitude, thought and evaluation. Decision-making includes evaluating the findings, determining the value of a variety of alternatives and selecting the best alternative applicable. This can be determined by a Priority vector, which lists the various possible results or by a single number for the best result.

The significance of decision making is commonly recognized (Hoy & Tarter, 2010). This is seen as the cornerstone of the management process (Saaty, 2008). The main determinants of decision making are the consequences, assessing the various variables and choosing the appropriate course of action.

Decision making is guided by the specific goals. In order to achieve goals, plans of action are formulated. It is choosing the best among different plans to achieve goals. The impact of decision shows that the decision was systematic or not. A decision rule is developed through a program. It directs decision maker how and which decision to take. Systematic and planned decisions are usually highly organized because goals are clearly understood (Moorhead & GrifCin, 2004).

Workers in an organization think and respond with respect to decision making (Laroche, 1995). Principals take academic decisions of organizing programs, dealing with college council affairs, parents' containment, accountability, faculty matters, funding, provision of facilities and community participation in affairs of college (Govinda, 2002). Furthermore, principals take decisions related to staff members, time table, budgeting, managing available human and material resources, addressing students' matters and supervision. Therefore, it is important to assign roles, responsibilities and duties to workers. These days, alternative ways of decision making

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are preferred which may challenge the principals' traditional mental approach to make decisions ([Law & Glover, 2000](#)).

## **Literature Review**

### **Decision Making Process**

Decision making is an organized process of administering things effectively involving several steps. These steps involve formulation of decisions, diagnosis of situation, developing action plan, choosing alternatives and evaluation ([Daft, 2003](#)). Shami and [Bashir \(2007\)](#) highlighted that decision-making process comprised of situation analysis, identifying and formulating goals, devising policy, developing action plan and allocating resources. Whereas [Masch \(2004\)](#) identified four steps in decision making, i.e. identifying / recognizing problems, investigating and accumulating information, selecting and evaluating alternatives, conduct and review on the basis of that decision making.

Academic decision making is a structured mechanism in which academic matters are handled like curriculum development, supervision of classes, administering examination, staffing, budgeting ([Shami & Waqar, 2007](#)). It involves canvassing the occurring state, determining objectives, articulating policies, preparing systematic action plans and utilization of resources in college (Bashir & Shami, 2007). It is a construct of skills that can be acquired through training and practice. Principals can improve the academic decision-making practices by learning and training ([Mann, 1999](#)). Principals' ability to make and implement decision is always challenged by internal and external elements like society and innovative priorities. Academic decisions of principals have to face the challenge of criticism inside and outside institutions. Institutions can develop and maintain systems to deal the complex situations. With the mutual cooperation of administrator and faculty members, academic decision can prove helpful for attaining the mission, priorities and activities.

Wise decision makers would better manage and understand their decisions ([Kim, 2002](#)). There are several factors influencing decision making. Personality of decision makers, organizational structure, internal and external condition, and channels of communication are major factors influencing decision making ([Ozer, 2005](#)). Such factors are human and organizational factors, factors which are controllable and uncontrollable. According to [Berardi and Blackmore \(2006\)](#), there are seven factors which can influence decisions. Those involve leaders (individual or personal), circumstances in the choice (condition or condition) and rules of choice (single and multi-regulations), and the time and individuals affected by choice, as well as creative thought, models, techniques, and procedures. [Atmosudirdjo \(1987\)](#) argues that decision-maker 's nature of organization and personal abilities strongly influences decision-making processes. Personal characteristics like gender, age, experiences, personal belief and mental approach are also factors that influence decision making ([Stanovich & West, 2008](#)).

### **Morale**

Morale is defined as beliefs, spiritual and cognitive behavior of a group or individual towards an individual, group or organization (Dictionary, 2012). According to Webster, New World Dictionary, morality is the mental state in relation to bravery, discipline, zeal, community, or individual suffering. It is degree of individual satisfaction about an institution or organization ([Guion, 1958](#)). It is feelings of worker about the job of an organization ([Washington & Watson, 1976](#)). It is passion and enthusiasm of teachers toward an institution (([Bentley & Rempel, 1980](#)). This is the mental and emotional state of mind of employees. Morale is mental and emotional attitude of employees ([Mendel, 1988](#)). It is emotional and conducting principal of employees showing belongingness, feelings, performing assigned roles and responsibilities. It is the feelings of truthfulness, self-assurance, and contentment of members of an organization ([Haddock, 2010](#)).

### **Importance of Morale Among Teachers**

Morale is the basic factor that works similarly as fuel works to drive the engine ([Ngambi, 2011](#)). Morale is thinking of workers in relation to their expectations and working conditions ([Evans, 1997](#)). According to [Arora \(2001\)](#), teachers have pivotal role in developing curriculum, its implementation and evaluation, and prepare

action plans to practice curricular and co-curricular activities. In short, teachers have a significant role in social and institutional development. Teachers with high morale can perform better as compared to low morale teachers. Furthermore, achievement of students is also associated with this factor. Low morale teachers may be a burden to an organization. Teachers with high morale demonstrate punctuality, improved efficiency, communication, recruitment and creativity ([Mazin, 2010](#)). Low moral expectations for teachers can lead to reduced performance ([Willis & Varner, 2010](#)). Teachers of high morality work hard to accomplish organizational objectives and display genuine interest in the learning of students. [Houchard \(2005\)](#) also pointed out that high morale of teachers and their ability to make conducive learning environment affect positively on student achievement and learning.

High morale teachers produce good results, enjoy work, take initiatives, accept additional assignments, come up with diverse proposals to improve the operations, reduce waste, reduce costs and economize on materials, show more loyalty to institutions. Management cannot operate efficiently if the employee's morale is low. The popular notion is to believe that high morale is synonymous to high productivity ([Brayfield, Arthur, Crockett & Walter, 1955](#)).

### Factors Affecting Teachers' Morale

Researches across the globe indicate that morale of teachers is directly and indirectly associated with several factors. These factors may affect the teachers' morale in an institution. Teaching is a physically, emotionally and intellectually demanding job ([Sachs, 2003](#)). Working conditions, managerial approach, teachers' educational and occupational level, reward and future security, relationship with colleagues and principal, supervision, level of satisfaction, salary, Factor that can influence the ethics of teachers, are financial and societal status. Teacher morality is also affected by a teacher's personal condition such as physical, mental and family history and financial status ([Dinham & Scott, 1998](#)). [Evans \(2000\)](#) reported three factors that can influence morale of teachers. These include realistic expectations, individual perspective and professional orientation. In addition, low incomes, low social status and the impact of government policies are considered to be negative factors for jobs.

The research indicated that the primary factor in improving the moral and dedication of the faculty is principal ([Lester, 1990](#)). The key individual plays an important role in creating the optimal climate and in increasing the spiritual professorship of an institution ([Kelley, Thornton & Daugherty, 2005](#)). [Egley and Jones \(2005\)](#) studied the moral of the faculty and its relation with its principal. They revealed that leadership has a significant relationship with faculty morale. Visitors, while several professors who were out of the profession were examined, [Tye and O'Brien \(2002\)](#). The following explanations were given by the interviewees for dissatisfaction with the curriculum and the occupations that had changed: transparency, increased red tape, student behavior, lack of parent assistance, insufficient management, low professional status and pay. The main cause of low teacher status is low wages. The morality of the teachers may be low. The perception and learning of pupils by teachers also affect their moral standards. The second motive for low morals in teachers is behavioral problems of students ([Ramsey, 2000](#)).

[Houchard \(2005\)](#) Contributing to the achievement of students in North Carolina schools, the quantitative study on the principal leadership and morality of teachers was carried out. The overall findings have shown that teacher morality is fairly high. Learning satisfaction has led to higher moral standards. Alternatively, there was a matter with lower moral wages for teachers. School leaders have been both inspiring and promoting a common vision. There were many important connections between perceived leadership practices and moral factors for teachers. The results of the Dawn (2016) study reveal that communication strategies are used consistently by principal. According to [Darling-Hammond \(2003\)](#), investment in competitive salary is important; It is also critical in maintaining good teachers as novices and experienced teachers in key working conditions. In addition to what is widely recognized such as class sizes, the teaching burden and access to resources, including the involvement of teachers in decision making, transparent and promoting management by administrators and educational opportunities at universities.

In terms of both lower turnover and higher degree of performance, finding and retaining better trained teachers have a lot to pay-off and long-term benefits, which minimize subsequent costs for managing unnecessary student failure and unnecessary teacher failure. When calculation is made of high costs of intrusion, many of the

strategic investments necessary to support professors who are competent to stay, such as beginner mentoring and continuing learning and veteran's leadership, actually pay large bills to themselves.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Principals are considered as the leaders of colleges. The demands placed on principals as leaders of institutions are numerous. They have to take several decisions to manage administrative and academic affairs of colleges. They are also responsible to establish conducive environment where faculty feel secure and confident. Some leaders effectively manage the academic affairs. Whereas, some principals face difficulties in administering the academic matters. In today's classrooms, teachers have to deal with many challenges. The increasing expectations from the principals and faculty have made academic decision-making practices and morale of faculty, a matter of concern. This is why, it is important how principals behave, act, and take decisions.

Researches across the globe showed that colleges with high morale teachers tend to perform better and decisions by the principals can boost or lower the morale of teachers. Principals' academic decision-making practices may affect the morale of teachers. Lower teachers' morale may be a barrier to progress and development of students. Resultantly, it can affect the achievement of students studying in an institution. The prime objective of the study is to explore the relationship between principals' academic decision-making practices and morale of faculty.

### **Study Objectives**

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine the relationship among principals' academic decision-making practices and morale of college faculty.
2. The extent to which the academic decision-making practices are related with morale of college faculty.

### **Hypotheses**

The following are hypotheses of the study:

**H01:** Academic decision-making practices have no significant relationship with faculty morale

**H02:** Decision based on policy matters has no significant relationship with faculty morale.

**H03:** Principals' decisions help to regulate and promote the academic development of the college and have no significant relationship with faculty morale.

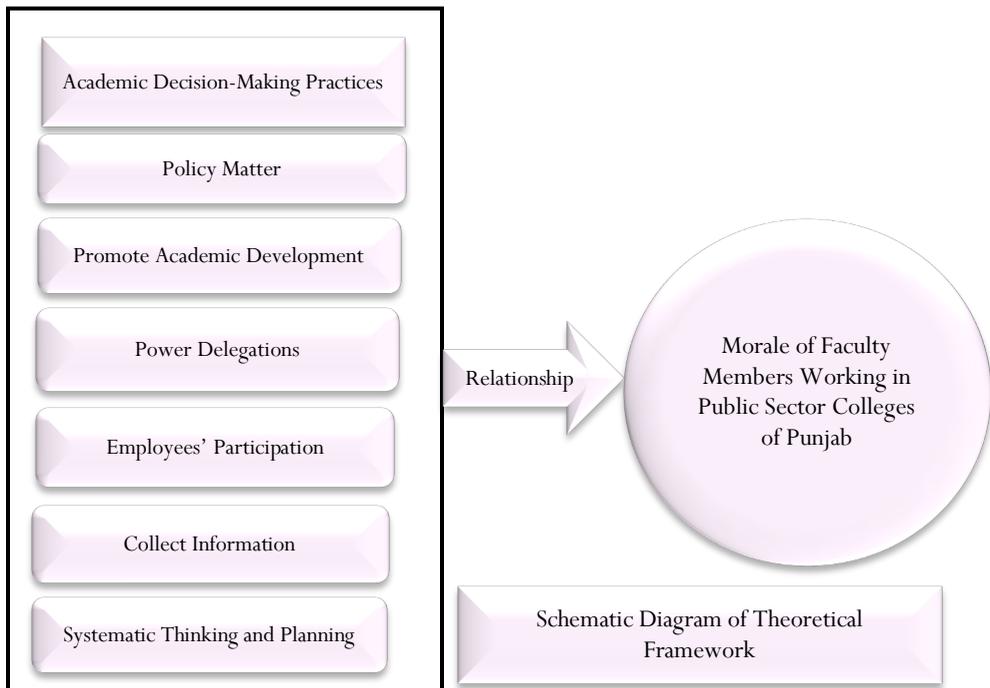
**H04:** Powers delegation has no significant relationship with faculty morale.

**H05:** Collect information from all channels of communication has no significant relationship with faculty morale.

**H06:** Systematic thinking and planning have no significant relationship with faculty morale.

### **The Conceptual Model**

The literature across the globe shows that principals' academic decision-making practices and morale are correlated. There may be some demographic variables which can play mediating role include gender, age, job title, academic qualification, teaching experience.



**Figure 1:** Schematic Diagram of Conceptual Framework of the Study

## Methodology

The investigation was quantitative and co-relative, with the aim of building a relationship between different variables. The method for conducting the survey was used. The main purpose of the research was to research the academic decision-making activities of the directors and the interaction between them and the moral faculties. The data have been analyzed in version 21 of SPSS. In order to explain further study, the descriptive statistics number, mean and standard deviation have been measured. The effect of independent variables on dependent variables was determinable by using linear regression models.

## Instrumentation

The study consisted of two main variables: academic (independent) and faculty morale (dependent) decision making practices. Via personal visits and interactions, the participants gathered the data using two questionnaires on the Likert scale showing rates of 5-1 agreement in various categories of answers, viz. Agree, Decided, Disputed, Strongly Disputed. Academic Decision-Making Practices (ADMP) questionnaire developed by (Anwer, 2008) after modification as per requirements of the study comprising six items was used to determine the academic decision-making practices adopted by the principals. Faculty Morale Scale (FMS) comprising 31 Likert scale items was used to assess morale of faculty members.

Sufficiency and appropriateness of FMS were determined through pilot testing as Johnson and Christenson (2000) were of the view that a tool be pilot tested to make it useful for research use. At first, opinion from the experts who were PhD in the field were sought to ensure its content and face validity. Secondly, it was administered to a sample of 50 faculty members to determine its internal consistency. The value of Cronbach's Alpha reliability for ADMP and FMS were calculated .830 and .816 respectively. The questionnaires were administered efficiently to faculty members working in colleges of Punjab. Coding was done to ensure objectivity and confidentiality.

## Population

The study population consisted of all faculty members who regularly work as lecturers, assistant professors, associate professors, and professors in public sector colleges in Pakistan's province of Punjab. The study population was scattered into nine divisions of Pakistan's Punjab province.

## Sample

Stratified sampling technique has been used to ensure representation of all areas of Punjab as it is the process of selecting the strata of interest and then selecting the specific number of subjects from each stratum at random. Nine strata (Sahiwal, Multan, Lahore, Rawalpindi, Bahawalpur, D. G. Khan, Sargodha, Gujranwala, Faisalabad) were identified. From each stratum 34 faculty members (17 males and 17 females) were selected randomly. The total sample comprised of 306 faculty members. The details of respondents are given in the Table 1.

## Results and Discussion

Descriptive statistics were used which included frequency, mean, and standard deviation. All response variables and the demographic profiles of the respondents were covered by descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics include the basic characteristics of variables data obtained and support further study ([Mugenda, 2008](#); [Ezirim and Nwokah, 2009](#)). The next step was to test the hypotheses developed for the study. To determine the relationship and impact of independent variable (ADMP) were performed on dependent linear variable regression models.

**Table 1.** Demographic Details of Respondents

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Male	153	50
Female	153	50
Total	306	100
<b>Job Title</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Lecturer	167	54.6
Assistant Professor	114	37.3
Associate Professor	16	5.2
Professor	9	2.9
Total	306	100
<b>Age (Years)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Below 30	75	24.5
31-40	121	39.5
41-50	80	26.1
51-60	30	9.85
Total	306	100
<b>Academic Experience (Years)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1-5	68	22.2
6-10	103	33.7
11-15	50	16.3
15-20	37	12.1
More than 20	48	15.7
Total	306	100
<b>Monthly Income (Thousands)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
40-60	149	48.7
61-80	75	24.5
81-100	38	12.4
100-120	30	9.8
Above 120	14	4.6

Total	306	100
<b>Academic Qualification</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Masters	154	50.3
Ms./M. Phil	140	45.8
PhD/Post Doctorate	12	3.9
Total	306	100

Table 1 indicates that majority of the respondents 55% were lecturers. Majority of the respondents 49% were having monthly income between the range 40-60 thousand rupees. Whereas, respondents having income above 120 thousand were 5% only. Table reveals that majority of the respondents 34% have teaching experience ranged from 1-5 years. Majority of the respondents 50% were masters, and PhD qualified were only 4%. Majority of the respondents 40% have ages ranged between 31-40 years.

### Regression Analyses

Regression analysis was performed to indicate the relationship among academic decision-making practices and morale of faculty members

**Regression Model**  $Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_i + \mu_i$

Where  $i=1,2,3,\dots,6$ . Each item variable

I.V= ADMP (Each Item) D.V= Faculty Morale

Where; Effect Size, Small=0.2, Medium= 0.5, Large= 0.8

It is deduced from the Table 2 that faculty perceived that academic decision-making practices, principals' decision based on policy matter of the college, promote academic development, powers delegation, employees' participation, Collect information, systematic thinking and planning are related significantly with faculty morale as  $p\text{-value} < .05$  or  $.01$ . As the values of Adjusted R-Square are quite low but it is bound to happen as it is done on ordinal scale. Furthermore, normality tests indicated that data were normally distributed.

**Table 2.** Regression Analysis Results

Statistical indices/variables	Parameters	Coefficients	t-ratio	Adjusted R-Square	p-value
Academic Decision-Making Practices (ADMP)	$\beta_0$	2.523	20.180	.164	0.000
	$\beta_1$	.253	7.796		
Policy Matters (ADMP1)	$\beta_0$	2.829	23.446	.088	0.000
	$\beta_2$	.157	5.514		
Promote Academic Development (ADMP2)	$\beta_0$	2.998	29.348	.069	0.000
	$\beta_3$	.127	4.861		
Powers Delegation (ADMP3)	$\beta_0$	3.143	30.823	.001	0.000
	$\beta_4$	.086	3.416		
Employees' Participation (ADMP4)	$\beta_0$	2.826	31.753	.157	0.000
	$B_5$	.176	7.616		
Collect Information (ADMP6)	$\beta_0$	3.073	35.996	.072	0.004
	$B_6$	.116	4.979		
Systematic Thinking and Planning (ADMP6)	$\beta_0$	2.913	33.065	.125	0.000
	$B_7$	.156	6.681		

Source: SPSS output; Dependent Variable: Faculty Morale Scale (FMS)

### Summary of Hypotheses Testing

The detail of hypotheses testing is given in the Table 3. It is revealed from the Table3 that Hypotheses  $H01, H02, H03, H04, H05, H06, H07$  are rejected as the p-values are less than 0.05.

**Table 3.** Details of Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses	Parameter	P-Value	Null Hypothesis	Result (Relationship)
H01	$\beta_1$	0.000	Rejected	Significant
H02	$\beta_2$	0.000	Rejected	Significant
H03	$\beta_3$	0.000	Accepted	Significant
H04	$\beta_4$	0.000	Rejected	Significant
H05	$\beta_5$	0.000	Rejected	Significant
H06	$\beta_6$	0.000	Rejected	Significant
H07	$\beta_7$	0.000	Rejected	Significant

The findings of the study showed that relationship among some decision-making practices of principals of colleges and morale of faculty members exist. The relationship between some factors of academic decision-making practices and faculty members like the academic decision-making practices aspect of decision based on academic decision-making practice (summative), policy matter, promote academic development, powers delegation, employees' participation, collect information, systematic thinking and planning are significantly correlated with faculty morale.

Many research studies support the study findings in hand, suggesting that the leadership style of a principal may also affect morale of teachers (Ballinger, 2000; Dennis, 1998; Jones, 1997). For example, Jones found that moral standards were higher when leaders practiced democratic leadership and teachers were involved in decision-making. But, from a previous Hunter-Boykin, Evans and Evans (1995) study, there is a low positive connection between the style of administrative management and the morality of teachers, as the ethics of teachers depend on countless other factors. Evans (1998) found that teachers' morals are increasing or declining based on the job

Leadership clearly influences the behavior of teachers, and the positive relationship between leadership behavior and teacher behavior is reflected in many aspects. The results support the belief that the productivity of teachers is predicted on the basis of the leadership style proposed by the Principal. Principals who use a participatory style of leadership are more likely to have teachers who are more involved and successful than teachers who use an independent style of leadership (Randolph-Robinson, 2007).

### Conclusions and Recommendations

There is a significant relationship between academic decision-making practices of principals and morale of faculty members working in colleges of Punjab. The practices adopted by principals like decision based on policy matter, promote academic development, powers delegation, employees' participation, collect information, systematic thinking and planning are significantly related to morale of faculty members, it shows that these practices should be necessarily focused. These can be helpful in increasing or decreasing morale. Resultantly, the achievement of students can be affected. A study should be carried out to further determine the academic decision-making practices using interview or some other tools of data collection.

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