



Relationship of Teachers' Social Recognition with their Self-Esteem at the Secondary School Level

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Abstract

This study investigated the potential link between social recognition and self-esteem among secondary school teachers in Punjab, Pakistan. Employing a descriptive correlational design, the research explored the participants' perceptions and the correlation between the two variables. A multi-stage random sampling technique yielded a sample of 450 teachers from 100 schools across four randomly chosen districts (Lahore, Multan, Rawalpindi, and Okara). Data collection involved administering two questionnaires (Social Recognition Scale (SRS) and the Self-Esteem Measurement Scale (SMS)), and statistical analysis utilized techniques such as mean scores, Correlation coefficient r , t -tests, and one-way ANOVA with post-hoc tests. The results revealed that teachers' self-esteem and their perceived social recognition were not correlated. Based on these results, the study recommends the implementation of specific psychological practices such as praise, thanks, and respect that are aimed at enhancing social recognition and its potential association with increased self-esteem among teachers. Further research in this area, particularly within the Pakistani context, is also warranted.

KeyWords: Social Recognition, Self-Esteem, Teachers' Social Recognition



Introduction

In ancient times, educational institutions prioritized physical aspects such as buildings, technology, and the overall atmosphere. However, there has been a notable shift towards focusing on individuals in contemporary educational settings. Institutions now emphasize the functionality of the entire system, recognizing the importance of human resources over purely physical resources. This shift demands ongoing attention to ensure that all elements of the organization are operating at their maximum capacity, effectively achieving set aims and objectives, rather than leading to the wastage of human potential (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006).

Consequently, there is a growing emphasis on enhancing various factors that impact employee performance. It is widely acknowledged that recognizing and valuing employees' contributions, particularly in the case of teachers, is crucial for their success (Losa & Filliettaz, 2014). In the modern era, organizations strive to enhance their human resources by leveraging their capabilities, insights, and expertise. This involves not only utilizing teachers' knowledge and skills but also fostering their ongoing education and practical abilities within the institutional context (Cohen, 2011). While social recognition, well-being, and employee care are distinct concepts, employees often perceive them as interchangeable (Voorde et al., 2012). Consequently, social recognition plays a significant role in enhancing teachers' beliefs (Buchanan et al., 2009) and acknowledging their additional efforts (Zeichner, 2009). Individuals who receive social recognition tend to be more motivated and exhibit greater enthusiasm for their work compared to those who do not receive such recognition. Teachers acknowledged by the heads and community work hard to achieve organizational goals. This recognition builds their self-esteem and fosters a sense of value within the institution. Consequently, teachers who feel appreciated are more satisfied with their jobs. This translates into increased effort, engagement, and productivity, ultimately benefitting both themselves and their students (McKenzie-Mohr, 2011).

Employees' expectations of recognition and support from the organization are crucial factors influencing their retention and commitment. Therefore, promoting job satisfaction through expressions of gratitude, praise, opportunities, and promotion becomes imperative for organizations seeking to retain their workforce (Markos & Sridevi, 2010). Recognizing the significance of social recognition, it becomes evident that it profoundly impacts teachers' performance, as they play a pivotal role in achieving educational objectives. Teachers hold a revered status in developed countries, where the recognition of their services is integral to national development. However, in Pakistani society, teaching and teachers may not be perceived as prestigious. It is incumbent upon teachers to elevate their status through continuous professional growth and development (Aikman & Rao, 2012).

A teacher serves as a custodian of morality, culture, civilization, and heritage, as education not only preserves these aspects but also imparts them to future generations with valuable additions. This preservation and transmission process is intricately carried out by teachers, underscoring the importance of their professional skill development to effectively achieve the nation's set aims and objectives (Gutmann & Ben-Porath, 2014). Great teachers stand out because of their skills and knowledge. These qualities are what make them respected by both



schools and the community. When teachers receive recognition for their talents, hard work, and achievements, it makes them feel valued members of the school. This sense of appreciation translates into greater job satisfaction for teachers, leading them to put in more effort, be more engaged, and ultimately be more productive (Timperley et al., 2008). Thus, investing in teachers' professional development and recognizing their contributions is crucial for fostering societal progress and cultural preservation.

On the contrary, there exists a viewpoint within a significant portion of society suggesting that teachers do not require praise or appreciation since they are compensated for their services. Many teachers themselves hold this perspective, asserting that societal recognition does not influence their teaching efforts, as they view their profession as a duty. King and Ganotice (2014) have found that in the current context, social recognition does not necessarily impact teachers' motivation and enthusiasm for their work. This could be attributed to shifts in social attitudes and socioeconomic conditions in Pakistan, as gradual changes are observed not only in educational norms and values but also in broader societal and communal norms. This study dives into how much recognition teachers get from others (social recognition) affects their sense of self-worth (self-esteem). It aims to pinpoint what exactly makes teachers well-regarded (determinants of social recognition) and see how that recognition impacts how they feel about themselves. This research endeavor is structured around addressing five key research questions aimed at gaining insights into these dynamics.

Significance of the Study

This study enables us to understand different aspects of the social recognition and self-esteem of teachers. This study also explores the relationship between social recognition and self-esteem of secondary school teachers working in the public sector. This study enables accurate and wise decision-making. This study helps to understand the trends and their implication in the education system of Pakistan. The result obtained through this study provides guidelines for teachers, administrators, and policymakers.

Research Questions of the Study

1. What is the extent of social recognition experienced by the teachers at the secondary level?
2. What is the level of self-esteem of teachers at the secondary school level?
3. What is the relationship between social recognition and the self-esteem of secondary school teachers?
4. Are there any noticeable disparities in the levels of social recognition and self-esteem among secondary school teachers based on gender?

Literature Review

This paper focuses on the theoretical aspect that teacher support their institution. Such feelings will show a sense of self-esteem among teachers and the results will be better than before. Concerning the social recognition given to them by the authorities. Recognition is considered an important factor for the institutions and their members. It plays a vital role of



stimulus and compels the teachers to work enthusiastically and consider themselves responsible for the growth and prosperity of society (Ahmad, et al., 2023). Social recognition includes recognition of contribution, accomplishment, and individual work for the organization. Recognition refers to the perception of the correct distribution of resources and misrecognition is a violation of the proper distribution of material resources (Honneth, 2007). Whereas, Ventrice (2003) considered tangible rewards as a “vehicle for delivering recognition” (p. 12). Employee reciprocates their recognition to maintain balance in exchange. Employees maintain their general opinion about the organization based on the treatment given by the organization to them (Whitener, 2001).

A teacher’s personality traits, capabilities, and achievements are valuable to the institution and society. It establishes a sense of self-esteem among teachers and they consider themselves as valuable asset of educational institutions. Support the suggestions by the teachers, and appreciation of work regularly are some prominent ways of recognition. A teacher's commitment to work, sense of security, perception of being an important member, and acknowledgment of efforts and worth of presence are some indications of being recognized as an important part of the educational institution is called social recognition. Recognition includes the feeling of individuality, influencing through accomplishments, value presence, and utilization of skills and capabilities with the impression of improvement are some indications of social recognition. Literature suggests that a person has common characteristics and few specific elements distinguish him from others (Mead, 1964).

Mead (1964) considers these specific characteristics as unique characteristics of self; who is he or she? Moreover, Mead viewed the self as a social self and pointed out that the self depicts its relationship with others. It is recognition and value others give to you in exchange for services and favors provided by you to others. It is recognized as superiority and inferiority in comparison to others.

There are some unique elements in an individual’s personality such as knowledge, talent, and capacity which make them prominent in organization and society (Mead,1967). Gradually acceptance of specific abilities and contributions by the individuals approve general patterns (Honneth, 2007). Individuals feel disrespect and humiliation if recognition is not there which consequently damages an individual’s identity. Social recognition is considered a reward that establishes the basis for teachers’ self-respect and value but it is always debated what level of respect and recognition they deserve from the educational institution and the society. This process indulges teachers in comparing how much they are contributing to the institution and



the society and in return how much value and appreciation they are getting in return. Resultantly, this process can increase or decrease their level of commitment, retention, loyalty, and enthusiasm. If a teacher thinks that he is given proper recognition by society and organization, he works hard to maintain his position and worth. Teachers should feel empowered, autonomous, and influential (Grönroos, 2000; Stewart, 1997).

Self-esteem

Human beings value self-respect, self-worth, and self-esteem. The word “self” was first introduced by the Lock in its new and novel meanings. According to William James individual’s thinking, character, traits, profession, physical characteristics, belongings and profession build his personality and concept of self (Carlock, 2013). Another meaningful aspect of knowing oneself is an individual’s relationship with others. Sigmund Freud described the self as what an individual thinks about himself. Furthermore, the idea of “a looking-glass self” was given by (Coolery, 1902). He elaborated that the self of a person is influenced by the perception of others regarding his personality.

Secord and Backman (1964) clarified that the self is an individual thinking about himself. Self-esteem is one of the major concepts discussed in social sciences research. Self-esteem is relevant to every aspect of life (Orth, Robins, & Widaman, 2012). Self-esteem refers to self-worth and self-regard or self-concept and with every passing day have changed and improved. According to Hall and Lindzey (1978), individual thinking, and behavior are considered as self. Teachers’ self-esteem influences their results and teaching methodology as esteemed teachers remain unable to produce good results and motivate students.

Self-esteem is the self-evaluation of the individual. It is the feeling of the individual about himself. It is the personality concept and judgment of an individual about one’s personality. (Trautwein et al. 2006). Previous studies have depicted that if a person is highly self-esteemed, he will be more passionate about work and prove beneficial for the school of organization. (Kuster, Orth, & Meier, 2013; Orth, Robins, & Widaman, 2012). Studies show that societal factors form and influence self-esteem. Along with it, place of work, social background, relations and accomplishments, and experience also affect self-esteem (Murray, Mertens, Scott, & Richard, 1996; Twigg, 2008). Literature suggests that self-esteem is affected by the achievements and success of individuals (Scott, 1999; Orth et al, 2011). Self-esteem is positively affected by the capacity to control emotions, be polite, and be patient while dealing with others (Caprara et al, 2013). Teachers’ feelings about his competency, behavior, working conditions, and perception of the reputation of the institution show his



self-esteem. Highly self-esteemed teachers produce good results, and success (Baumeister et. al, 2003; Orth et. al, 2011). Emotions, thinking, and thoughts are basic feelings for self-esteem. Highly self-esteemed teachers teach confidently and a sense of superiority and success make them good teachers.

Research Methodology

This quantitative study was conducted to explore the relationship between social recognition and the self-esteem of teachers at the secondary school level. As such, a quantitative research methodology was employed, utilizing a descriptive and correlational research design.

Population

The study's population comprised male and female secondary school teachers in the Punjab region. Secondary-level educators were chosen for their perceived willingness to participate in the study, as well as their representation of a sizable portion of the educational landscape in the province of Punjab. These teachers work with the most senior students in over 6,000 schools for both boys and girls across all 36 districts in the province.

Sampling

Due to constraints in time and resources, it was impractical for the researcher to survey the entire population. Consequently, a multi-stage sampling approach was employed to select a representative sample of the study. Four districts (Lahore, Multan, Rawalpindi, and Okara) were randomly selected. Hundred (50 boys and 50 girls) secondary schools from urban and rural areas were selected from these districts. Finally, a total sample size of 450 teachers was chosen, selecting five teachers from each selected school.

Data Collection

To gather information for this study, the researchers created two surveys: the Social Recognition Scale (SRS) and the Self-Esteem Measurement Scale (SMS). Both instruments utilized a five-point Likert scale for respondents to indicate their levels of agreement or disagreement.

Table 1
 Details of selected sample

Locality	Rural	Urban	Selected Teachers
Boys' schools	25	25	225
Girls' Schools	25	25	225
Total	50	50	450



Data Analysis and Discussion

The researchers used computer programs like SPSS and Excel to analyze the information they collected from the surveys. They ran specific tests (like t-tests, correlation coefficients, and ANOVA) to answer their research questions about the relationship between recognition and self-esteem. The results of these tests are explained in the inferential statistics section of the study. Additionally, post hoc tests were conducted on variables to examine differences among subjects. Effect sizes for each t-test were also calculated to measure statistically significant differences in variables or groups.

1. What is the extent of social recognition experienced by secondary school teachers?

Table 2

How much respect and appreciation do secondary school teachers receive from others?

Variables	N	Mean	SD
Social Recognition	450	3.91	.70

Note: SD = Standard Deviation

Based on the calculations indicated in Table 2, the mean value (3.91) is above the level of agreement (agree). It indicates the agreement of the majority of the respondents. So, it can be reported that teachers working at the secondary school level perceive a high level of social recognition.

2. What is the level of self-esteem among secondary school teachers?

Table 3

Level of Self-Esteem among secondary school teachers

Variables	N	Mean	SD
Self-Esteem	450	4.26	.59

Note: SD = Standard Deviation

Based on the information presented in Table 3, secondary school teachers appear to have a relatively high level of self-esteem (mean = 4.26). A standard deviation of 0.59 suggests that there is some variation in self-esteem scores, but the mean itself is closer to the upper end of the scale which could be indicative of a positive self-regard.



3. What is the relationship between social recognition and the self-esteem of secondary school teachers?

Table 4

Relationship between social Recognition and self-esteem

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r- value	P-value
Social Recognition	450	3.91	.70	.091	.081
Self-Esteem	450	4.26	.59		

Based on the results in Table 4, it can be concluded that there is a statistically non-significant correlation between social recognition and teachers' self-esteem ($r = 0.091$, $p\text{-value} = 0.081$) as the p -value is greater than the .05 benchmark. In other words, teachers' self-esteem does not appear to be dependent on their level of social recognition. This disassociation between social recognition and self-esteem shows that there may be some other factors that can boost self-esteem. There may be some cultural aspects associated with this insignificant correlation.

4. Are there any noticeable differences in the levels of social recognition and self-esteem among secondary school teachers based on gender?

Table 5

Difference of Social Recognition and Self-Esteem Based on Gender

Demographics	Wilk's Lambda	F-value	df	df	Significance
Gender	.93	7.032	4.000	381.000	.001

In Table 5, Researchers examined whether men and women scored differently on the various parts of a self-esteem test (the Self-esteem Measurement Scale or SMS). They used a special statistical method (multivariate analysis) to see if there were overall differences across these sub-scores based on gender. The results showed a significant difference ($p\text{-value}$ of .0010, which is less than the commonly used benchmark of 0.05). This means that men and women, on average, did not score the same on all the different parts of the self-esteem test.

5. Do variations in teaching experience among secondary school teachers lead to significant differences in their levels of social recognition and self-esteem?



Table 6
Teachers' Social Recognition and Self-Esteem Based on Teaching Experience

Demographics	Variables	Groups	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
Teaching Experience	Social Recognition	Between Groups	5.38	3	1.80	5.20	.001
		Within Groups	121	447	.34		
		Total	126	450			
	Self-esteem	Between Groups	.33	3	.12	.40	.790
		Within Groups	98.98	447	.30		
		Total	99.29	450			

In Table 6, One-way ANOVA was employed to examine the differences in the Self-esteem Measurement Scale (SEMS) scores based on teaching experience and to identify differences in social recognition based on teaching experience. The analysis looked at whether teachers with more experience had higher self-esteem than those with less experience. The results (F-value of 0.40 and p-value of 0.790) suggest there's no significant difference. In other words, teachers' self-esteem seems to be similar regardless of their years of teaching. This part investigated if teachers with more experience received more recognition (respect, appreciation) in their workplace. Here, the results (F-value of 5.18 and p-value of 0.002) show a significant difference. This means teachers with more experience likely receive noticeably more recognition compared to their less experienced colleagues.

This study examines the link between social recognition and self-esteem among secondary school teachers in Punjab, Pakistan. The teaching profession in Pakistan faces distinct challenges, often lacking the prestige seen in developed countries (Naeem, Ali, & Ahmed, 2022; Jabeen, Ali, & Ahmad, 2023). This lower social recognition can impact teachers' self-esteem. The research explores this connection, considering factors like gender, location (rural/urban), academic qualifications, and teaching experience (Ali, et al., 2023). Interestingly, the study found no significant correlation between social recognition and self-esteem. Some research, like Donnellan and colleagues' study in 2005, suggests these two things are not linked. In other words, how valued teachers feel by others does not necessarily affect their self-esteem, and vice versa. Anderson and Honneth (2005) found related results.



However, Danermark and Moller's work in 2008 came to a different conclusion. They suggested that social recognition is important for boosting teachers' self-esteem (Haider, Ahmad, & Ali, 2024).

Interestingly, this study found that female teachers felt more recognized than their male colleagues. This aligns with research by Griffiths and Ward (2011) who also found females perceived more recognition at work. However, other studies have not found any gender difference in social recognition (Ahmad, Rashid, & Ali, 2023; Shah, Ali & Ahmad, 2024). The research also showed no difference in how much social recognition teachers felt based on where they working location rural or urban (Raza & Ahmed, 2017; Imran, et al, 2023). This aligns with Orth and colleagues' findings (2012) that location did not impact how recognized employees felt.

The study also investigated whether teachers' academic qualifications, teaching experience, and self-esteem were linked to social recognition (Mankash, Khan, & Ali, 2023). They found no connection between qualifications or experience and how recognized teachers felt (Ahmad & Hamid, 2021; Ali, Ahmad, & Sewani, 2022). This aligns with previous research by Trautwein et al. (2006) and Marsh et al. (2008) on teachers' self-esteem. However, the study did find a link between experience and social recognition. Teachers with more experience tended to feel more recognized, similar to Ferkany's (2008) findings with employees. This contradicts Kang et al. (2010) who saw no experience-related difference in social recognition (Ali, et al., 2023).

In summary, this research suggests social recognition may not be a major factor influencing teachers' self-esteem. This aligns with some previous studies. Cultural factors may play a role, where valuing others' opinions might be less emphasized. These findings pose a challenge for educators and policymakers seeking to improve teacher well-being. While the study does not provide clear answers on boosting self-esteem, it sheds light on the complex relationship between social recognition and this important aspect of teacher well-being.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study found that secondary school teachers felt well-respected by their schools (high social recognition). Interestingly, this sense of respect from their colleagues and superiors did not necessarily translate into higher self-esteem for the teachers. Another interesting finding is that female teachers felt more respected than their male colleagues. However, where the



teachers lived (rural vs. urban) and their level of education or teaching experience did not seem to influence how respected they felt or their self-esteem.

- The impact of social recognition on teacher self-esteem remains unclear. This may be due to cultural factors as teachers in the Pakistani context do not bother about their recognition. Place of work, social background, relations, accomplishments, and experience also affect self-esteem. Resultantly their self-esteem is not affected by the social recognition they receive. Future research in Pakistan could explore how social recognition practices might be designed to improve teacher well-being. This could involve psychological interventions and a deeper understanding of the cultural context.
- Since this study relied on surveys, future research could benefit from using additional methods like interviews and observations. This would provide a better-rounded picture of the relationship between social recognition and teacher self-esteem.
- This study focused on secondary schools. It would be valuable to replicate this research with teachers at higher education levels to see if the same challenges exist.

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