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Exploring the experiences of department heads in promoting positive work ethics among educators

Abstract

Research objectives (aims) and problem(s): Poor work ethics among educators in disadvantaged schools remain a persistent challenge, undermining teacher performance, learner outcomes, and institutional effectiveness. Despite their pivotal role in enforcing professional standards, little is known about how department heads experience and navigate their responsibilities in promoting ethical workplace behaviour. This study explores the experiences of department heads in promoting positive work ethics among educators in disadvantaged schools. The study aims to examine how department heads lead efforts to promote positive work ethics and to understand the challenges they face in doing so.

Research methods: The research adopts a constructivist paradigm, using a qualitative approach to gather insights into the lived experiences of 20 department heads with at least five years of leadership experience. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using qualitative content analysis.

Process of argumentation: Through the voices of department heads, the study develops an understanding of how ethical leadership is enacted in challenging school environments. The argument is built around the actions department heads take – such as role modeling, monitoring, and fostering development – and how these actions are

constrained by contextual limitations, such as limited resources, political interference, and lack of incentives.

Research findings and their impact on the development of educational sciences: The findings reveal that department heads play a crucial role in addressing ethical challenges by fostering a culture of accountability, communication, and professional development. They set a positive example through role modeling, monitor educators' performance, and create opportunities for growth and collaboration. The study also highlights significant barriers, such as inadequate rewards, school politics, and scarce resources that affect morale and educator effectiveness. These insights contribute to educational sciences by deepening the understanding of leadership practices in ethically challenging environments.

Conclusions and/or recommendations: Addressing the identified challenges requires systemic reforms, including the implementation of transparent reward systems, the promotion of collaboration, and the reduction of workplace politics. By addressing these issues, department heads can better foster a positive work ethic, enhance teacher performance, and support improved learner outcomes in disadvantaged school contexts.

Introduction

Work ethic broadly refers to an individual's character and approach to responsibilities in both personal and professional settings. It encompasses the values, principles, and behaviors that shape one's attitude toward work (Prabhu, 2021). Work ethics can be categorized as either positive or negative. A positive work ethic reflects diligence, reliability, initiative, and continuous self-improvement (Guerrero-Dib et al., 2020). Key indicators include dependable attendance, low absenteeism, high performance, loyalty, and commitment to an institution (Fesenmyer, 2023; Zhenjing et al., 2022). In educational settings, a strong work ethic fosters teamwork, collaboration, higher employee engagement, improved school reputation, and better academic standards (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Zhenjing et al., 2022). Educators who exhibit professionalism and responsibility contribute to the overall effectiveness of an institution (Narain, 2015; Nkabinde, 2012).

Conversely, a negative work ethic is marked by behaviors that undermine productivity, accountability, and professionalism (Prabhu, 2021). In schools, educators with poor work ethics may arrive late, deliver

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substandard instruction, neglect administrative duties, or show disinterest in professional development (Debeş, 2021; Jacob, 2022; Zakaria, 2021). These behaviors negatively impact both educators and learners, leading to low staff morale, poor teamwork, declining academic performance, and damage to the institution's reputation (Furnham, 2021). Studies suggest that leadership inefficiencies, lack of accountability, ineffective delegation, and the absence of incentive programs contribute to declining ethical standards in schools (Fesenmyer, 2023). Additionally, Kaptein (2023) highlights how unethical workplace cultures can lead to poor institutional performance, legal risks, and limited opportunities for growth.

In this context, department heads play a pivotal role in shaping work culture and promoting ethical conduct among educators. As academic administrators, they oversee curriculum implementation, monitor teacher performance, manage student progress, and ensure policy compliance (Tapala et al., 2022). Beyond administrative duties, they serve as mentors, role models, and enforcers of professional standards, fostering discipline and accountability within their departments (Kalane & Rambuda, 2022).

Despite their critical role, limited research explores how department heads experience and navigate their responsibilities in fostering positive work ethics among educators. Most studies focus on teachers' professional conduct, institutional policies, and general leadership influence (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Furnham, 2021). However, there is a gap in understanding the lived experiences, challenges, and strategies employed by department heads to promote ethical workplace behavior in schools. Given their dual role as both leaders and intermediaries between school management and teachers, department heads' perspectives are essential for shaping ethical leadership practices.

Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to explore the experiences of department heads in promoting positive work ethics among educators.

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Objectives of the study

1. To generate a deeper theoretical understanding of how department heads lead the process of promoting a positive work ethic among educators in public primary schools.
2. To identify and analyze the practical challenges that department heads encounter in promoting a positive work ethic among educators, with the goal of informing contextually relevant leadership practices and support mechanisms.

Methodology

This study fits within the constructivist paradigm, which attempts to understand department heads' experiences in managing learner discipline through parental involvement (Mertens, 2005). A qualitative research approach was chosen, as it offers interpretive approaches geared towards examining phenomena in their natural contexts (Creswell, 2012). The research design employed was a generic qualitative approach, focused on uncovering and comprehending phenomena, processes, or participant perspectives relevant to the study.

Using purposeful sampling, participants were deliberately selected to best address the research objectives (Klenke, 2016). Twenty department heads from both primary and secondary (high) schools – each with a minimum of five years' experience in departmental leadership – were selected from various provinces across South Africa. Data were collected through one-on-one, semi-structured interviews. The interviews were transcribed verbatim after each session. Transcripts were then read multiple times to ensure familiarity with the data. Data were analyzed using Creswell's (2012) guidelines for qualitative content analysis, which included coding, categorization, and the development of themes. Thematic analysis highlighted barriers identified by participants. The thematic presentation and discussion of the data were guided by the research aim and informed by existing literature.

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Findings

Approaches used by department heads to promote a positive work ethic among teachers
Effective communication

Participants indicated that effective communication is crucial for department heads to lead and promote a positive work ethic among educators. Some participants shared the following insights:

"I implemented effective communication by conducting department meetings on a regular basis… I communicate with educators through multiple platforms. I clearly articulate the department's goals and expectations for work ethic and performance. I also ensure that all educators understand the standards and policies related to work ethics."

"I encourage open communication where educators feel comfortable sharing their thoughts, concerns, and suggestions. I maintain respect during conversations. I also keep the team informed about departmental changes, achievements, and areas needing improvement. I allow for open discussion."

"I listen attentively to educators' feedback and concerns, showing that their opinions are valued, and I address their concerns and feedback promptly and constructively."

"I address conflicts or issues quickly and fairly and facilitate discussions to resolve issues amicably and maintain a positive atmosphere."

"Effective communication has led educators in my department to take ownership and responsibility for their duties and has improved their overall work ethic."

The data draw attention to the pivotal role of effective communication in promoting a positive work ethic among educators, as emphasized by the participants. Department heads who regularly engage in clear and open communication set the tone for high standards and expectations within their teams. By conducting frequent meetings, using multiple communication platforms, and clearly articulating departmental goals, leaders

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can ensure that educators understand their responsibilities and the standards of work ethic expected of them.

Moreover, fostering an environment where educators feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and concerns – and where feedback is promptly and constructively addressed – not only enhances trust but also encourages educators to take ownership of their duties. In support of this approach, Huda (2022) indicates that effective communication practices are associated with higher job satisfaction and greater professional commitment among educators. Additionally, effective communication is linked to improved conflict resolution and a more positive work atmosphere, which further reinforces a culture of accountability and professionalism (Janiah et al., 2023). Thus, the implementation of effective communication strategies by department heads is crucial for enhancing educators' work ethic and overall departmental performance.

Monitoring and evaluation

Participants indicated that department heads can use monitoring and evaluation to promote a positive work ethic among educators. The following excerpts highlight participants' experiences with how monitoring and evaluation have been applied in their respective departments:

"To maintain positive work ethics among teachers in my department, I conduct regular classroom observations and informal walk-throughs to gather data on their (educators) teaching practices, punctuality, and engagement."

"I carry out performance tracking by maintaining records of attendance, participation in meetings, professional development activities, and contributions to departmental initiatives."

"I implement feedback systems, such as surveys and suggestion boxes, to understand educators' perspectives and identify areas for improvement regarding their work ethics."

"I conduct periodic performance reviews to provide educators with feedback on their work ethic and professional conduct."

"I work with educators to set specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound goals related to improving work ethic and professional behavior."

"Based on the outcome of the monitoring and evaluation, I recognize and celebrate educators who consistently demonstrate a positive work ethic through awards, public acknowledgments, and other forms of recognition. I also develop incentive programs that reward educators for meeting or exceeding expectations related to work ethics and professional behavior."

"These monitoring and evaluation practices have led to some educators having a positive work ethic in my department."

The data illustrate how department heads effectively use monitoring and evaluation to foster a positive work ethic among educators. By conducting regular classroom observations, informal walk-throughs, and performance tracking, department heads gather critical information on educators' teaching practices, punctuality, and engagement. These efforts are reinforced by feedback systems, such as surveys and suggestion boxes, which allow educators to share their perspectives and identify areas for improvement.

The collected data are analyzed to identify trends, strengths, and areas in need of development. This analysis forms the basis for periodic performance reviews and the setting of SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) goals for improving work ethic. A study by Schildkamp et al. (2023) highlights the importance of monitoring and evaluation in educational leadership, as these practices not only provide actionable insights but also foster accountability and continuous improvement.

Moreover, recognizing and rewarding educators who demonstrate a positive work ethic – through awards, public acknowledgment, and incentive programs – further reinforces these behaviors and encourages others to follow suit. According to Robinson and Harris (2022), this type of recognition boosts morale and promotes a culture of excellence and professionalism within the department. Consequently, the strategic use

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of monitoring and evaluation by department heads is instrumental in enhancing educators' work ethic, leading to improved departmental performance and a more positive educational environment.

Role modeling

Participants reported that role modeling is a key strategy that department heads use to promote a positive work ethic among educators by demonstrating the behaviors and attitudes they wish to see in their teams. The participants say:

"As a departmental head, I consistently demonstrate exemplary work habits that I want the educators in my department to exhibit. It is vital for me to lead by example by possessing a positive work ethic, as it would be hypocritical to desire that educators in my department possess a positive work ethic if I am displaying a negative work ethic. Educators in my department are more willing to take suggestions for improving work ethic, knowing that I, as the department head, am also conducting myself accordingly. These habits include punctuality, preparedness, and dedication. By being the first to arrive and the last to leave, I set a standard for commitment."

"I demonstrate a commitment to excellence and high-quality work by displaying a passion for teaching and learning by showing excitement and enthusiasm in the classroom and meetings. … producing well-prepared and thoughtful lesson plans, assessments, and reports to serve as a model for other teachers in my department."

"I actively participate in professional development opportunities and encourage teachers in my department to do the same, which has fostered a culture of continuous improvement in our department."

"Owing to the fact that I want teachers in my department to demonstrate accountability and responsibility as part of their ethical behaviour, I, as the department head, take responsibility for both my successes and failures and admit my mistakes."

"I provide guidance and support to new and less experienced teachers, which builds their confidence and competence. I believe that regular

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check-ins and offering constructive advice foster a culture of mentorship that could facilitate a positive work ethic amongst educators."

The data emphasize the crucial role of role modeling by department heads in promoting a positive work ethic among educators. Participants reported that when leaders consistently demonstrate the behaviors and attitudes they expect from their teams – such as punctuality, preparedness, dedication, and ethical decision-making – it sets a powerful example that encourages educators to follow suit. This approach aligns with leadership theories that highlight the impact of leading by example on team dynamics and performance.

According to Kouzes and Posner (2023), role modeling is one of the most effective leadership strategies, as it establishes standards for others to emulate and fosters a culture of integrity and commitment. By arriving early, preparing thoroughly, maintaining high ethical standards, and actively participating in professional development, department heads not only set expectations but also inspire educators to adopt similar practices. Furthermore, by taking responsibility for their actions and providing mentorship and support, leaders reinforce a culture of accountability and continuous improvement within their departments. This approach not only improves work ethic but also builds a cohesive and motivated team, as supported by recent studies that underscore the importance of ethical leadership in enhancing organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Serang et al., 2022). Therefore, role modeling by department heads is instrumental in cultivating a positive work ethic and fostering a professional and supportive educational environment.

Providing opportunities for growth

Department heads play a crucial role in fostering a positive work ethic among educators by providing opportunities for growth. According to participants, several strategies they employed include:

"I organize and facilitate regular workshops and training sessions on pedagogical strategies, classroom management, and the use of new

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educational technologies. I encourage and support teachers in pursuing advanced certifications and specialized training. I invite experts to share insights and innovative practices."

"In my department, I form professional learning communities to allow teachers to collaborate on solving common challenges and sharing best practices. I usually arrange for peer observations where teachers can learn from each other's strengths and strategies. Also, I established mentorship programs pairing experienced teachers with newer staff to provide guidance and support."

"I encourage teachers to take on leadership roles in school committees or task forces. At times, I assign teachers to lead special projects, such as curriculum development or school events. I do rotate departmental roles and responsibilities to give teachers varied leadership experiences. I involve teachers in decision-making processes, making them feel valued and invested in the school's success."

"I recognize and celebrate teachers' achievements and efforts publicly in staff meetings and school communications. I provide incentives for professional growth, such as additional professional development funds, awards, or stipends. I ensure teachers in my department have access to necessary resources that will enhance their positive work ethics, such as teaching materials, technology, and support staff. I allocate time within the school schedule for teachers to plan together and share resources."

"I work with teachers to set personal professional goals and create development plans that will help them to exhibit positive work ethics. I encourage reflective practices amongst the teachers in my department, such as journaling or peer discussions, to help teachers self-assess and plan for improvement regarding their positive work ethics."

"By implementing these strategies, we can promote a positive work ethic and create an environment where educators are motivated to grow professionally, ultimately benefiting the entire school community."

The data highlight the significant role of department heads in fostering a positive work ethic among educators by providing ample opportunities for professional growth. Participants emphasized strategies

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such as organizing workshops, facilitating professional learning communities, and encouraging advanced certifications to enhance teachers' pedagogical skills and classroom management. This approach aligns with contemporary educational leadership literature, which underscores the importance of continuous professional development in improving teaching effectiveness and work ethic (Abakah, 2023).

By creating opportunities for peer observations, mentorship programs, and leadership roles, department heads empower educators to learn from one another and develop leadership skills, thereby fostering a collaborative and supportive work environment. Additionally, involving educators in decision-making processes and recognizing their achievements publicly boosts their morale and strengthens their investment in the school's success, as supported by research on teacher motivation and job satisfaction (Ryan et al., 2022). Providing necessary resources and dedicated time for collaboration further reinforces a culture of professional growth and a positive work ethic. By implementing these strategies, department heads not only promote individual teacher development but also enhance the overall educational environment, ultimately leading to better outcomes for both educators and students.

Challenges in promoting a positive work ethic amongst educators
Lack of rewards

The data show that a lack of rewards and incentives can pose significant challenges in promoting a positive work ethic among educators. Participants highlighted several ways this issue can manifest:

"When educators' efforts and achievements are not acknowledged, it can lead to feelings of being undervalued and unappreciated. Without tangible rewards or incentives, there is little motivation for educators to invest additional time and effort into their work, which can lead to minimal compliance rather than enthusiastic engagement."

"Constant high demands without rewards can lead to burnout. Teachers who feel overworked and underappreciated are more likely to experience stress and exhaustion, leading to increased absenteeism and attrition."

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"A lack of incentives can contribute to low morale among staff. When educators feel that their hard work is not rewarded, it can create a negative atmosphere. Without incentives, teachers may be less inclined to collaborate and share resources, as they might not see any personal or professional benefit from doing so."

"Educators may be less willing to try new teaching methods or technologies if they do not see any reward for taking risks or stepping out of their comfort zones."

"When rewards and incentives are absent or inconsistently applied, it can lead to perceptions of inequity and favoritism, causing resentment among staff. Trust in leadership can be undermined if educators feel that their hard work is not fairly rewarded. This can result in a lack of trust in the administration and its initiatives."

The data underline the critical importance of rewards and incentives in fostering a positive work ethic among educators, with their absence posing significant challenges. When educators' efforts go unacknowledged, they may feel undervalued and unappreciated, which diminishes motivation and engagement. This aligns with Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, which identifies recognition as a key factor in job satisfaction and motivation.

Without tangible incentives, educators may meet only the minimum requirements rather than striving for excellence, which leads to a culture of compliance rather than enthusiasm. The lack of rewards can also contribute to burnout; constant high demands without corresponding recognition increase stress and exhaustion, resulting in higher absenteeism and turnover rates (Maslach & Leiter, 2022). Moreover, the absence of incentives can create a negative atmosphere, reducing collaboration and innovation, as educators may become reluctant to share resources or adopt new teaching methods when no benefits are perceived.

Inconsistently applied rewards can further exacerbate these issues by fostering perceptions of inequity and favoritism, eroding trust in leadership. Research indicates that when educators feel their hard work is not fairly rewarded, it undermines their trust in administrative initiatives,

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ultimately weakening the overall work ethic within the educational environment. Thus, the strategic use of rewards and incentives is essential in promoting a motivated, collaborative, and innovative teaching staff.

When rewards are applied inconsistently, perceptions of inequity and favoritism can arise, further eroding trust in leadership. Research indicates that when educators feel their hard work is not fairly acknowledged, it undermines their trust in administrative initiatives and weakens the overall work ethic within the school environment (Cherkowski et al., 2025). Therefore, the strategic use of rewards and incentives is essential in promoting a motivated, collaborative, and innovative teaching staff.

School politics

Research participants were aware that politics in schools can present several challenges to promoting a positive work ethic among educators. According to participants, school politics can affect work ethic among educators in the following ways:

"When promotions, assignments, or resources are distributed based on personal connections or favoritism rather than merit, perceived or real biases in how teachers are evaluated or treated can lead to negative work ethic among educators. Frequent or poorly communicated policy changes driven by political motives can create uncertainty and stress among educators…. Decisions made without input from or communication with teachers can lead to a lack of trust in leadership…. Differences in goals and priorities between school administrators and teachers can lead to conflicts. For example, administrators might focus on standardized test scores while teachers prioritize holistic education. Political maneuvering often leads to an environment where rumors and gossip thrive, which can create a toxic work atmosphere."

"Political pressures to meet certain targets or implement specific programs can lead to increased workload and stress for teachers. Overbearing supervision driven by political agendas can stifle teacher autonomy and creativity, reducing job satisfaction. Political dynamics often result in the formation of cliques or factions within the school staff, leading to a divided and competitive rather than collaborative environment.

Teachers might resist initiatives perceived as politically motivated rather than educationally beneficial, leading to stagnation and conflict."

"Political interference can undermine the authority and professional judgement of educators, making them feel undervalued and disrespected. Teachers might face ethical dilemmas when asked to comply with politically motivated decisions that conflict with their professional principles, leading to negative work ethics among educators. Political conflicts at higher levels can result in inconsistent or inadequate funding, impacting school operations and teacher morale. Political considerations might influence the distribution of resources, leading to disparities that affect teachers' ability to perform effectively."

The data illustrate how school politics can significantly undermine efforts to promote a positive work ethic among educators by creating an environment of bias, mistrust, and conflict. Participants noted that when promotions, assignments, or resources are distributed based on favoritism rather than merit, it can lead to perceptions of injustice, which weaken educators' morale and diminish their motivation to perform at their best. This is consistent with organizational justice theory, which posits that perceptions of fairness are critical to employee satisfaction and engagement (Pieters, 2018).

Additionally, frequent policy changes driven by political motives – especially when introduced without proper communication or input from teachers – can create uncertainty and stress, further eroding trust in leadership and diminishing work ethic (Men et al., 2023). The formation of cliques and factions as a result of political maneuvering fosters a toxic work environment where collaboration is replaced by competition, negatively impacting morale and productivity.

Moreover, political pressures to meet certain targets or implement specific programs often increase teachers' workloads and reduce their autonomy, leading to job dissatisfaction and resistance to change. Such interference can also undermine teachers' professional judgment, making them feel undervalued and forcing them into ethical dilemmas that conflict with their principles, which further deteriorates their work ethic

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(Guerrero-Dib et al., 2023). Overall, the influence of school politics creates a challenging environment in which educators' ability to perform effectively and maintain a positive work ethic is compromised.

Lack of resources

Participants reported that a lack of resources can significantly challenge the promotion of a positive work ethic among educators. They remarked that:

"Without funds for workshops, conferences, or courses, teachers miss out on professional development that can enhance their skills and motivation. Lack of access to current educational resources and technologies hampers teachers' ability to implement modern teaching strategies effectively. Without sufficient books, supplies, and technological tools, it becomes difficult to create engaging and interactive lessons. When resources are inadequate, teachers might stick to outdated methods and be less inclined to try innovative approaches, leading to stagnation in teaching practices."

"Teachers' continual struggles to do their jobs effectively due to resource limitations can lead to frustration and can make them feel undervalued and unsupported by their administration and district. When teachers don't have the necessary tools to implement new strategies or technologies, they may resist changes and stick to what they know. Teachers may lack the tools necessary to effectively assess student learning and provide timely, constructive feedback. Limited resources can lead to fewer extracurricular programs and activities, which are crucial for student engagement and teacher-student relationships."

"In a school where resources are scarce, teachers often need to compensate by working longer hours, which can lead to stress and burnout, which could affect their effectiveness at school. Also, insufficient support staff means teachers must handle additional administrative tasks, reducing their time and energy for teaching. Without adequate resources, there might be insufficient time and space for teachers to collaborate and share best practices. Collaboration often requires shared resources, such as technology or collaborative tools, which may be lacking."

The data stress the profound impact that a lack of resources can have on promoting a positive work ethic among educators. Participants noted that inadequate funding for professional development – such as workshops and conferences – limits teachers' opportunities to enhance their skills and motivation, which are essential for maintaining high teaching standards. This aligns with the findings of Nassereddine and Nassreddine (2024), who emphasize that continuous professional development is critical for teacher effectiveness and job satisfaction.

Additionally, the absence of up-to-date educational resources and technologies hampers educators' ability to implement modern teaching strategies, forcing them to rely on outdated methods. This stifles innovation and growth in teaching practices and may lead to frustration and a sense of being undervalued, as teachers struggle to do their jobs effectively under resource constraints. Such conditions can diminish their commitment and engagement (Kreuzfeld et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the lack of adequate resources often compels teachers to work longer hours to compensate, leading to stress and burnout, which negatively affect their effectiveness and overall well-being (Maslach & Leiter, 2022). The scarcity of resources also hinders collaboration among teachers, as successful teamwork often requires access to shared tools and technologies, which may not be available. Without sufficient support, teachers may resist adopting new strategies or technologies, further entrenching outdated practices and reducing the overall quality of education. Therefore, providing adequate resources is crucial for fostering a positive work ethic, promoting professional growth, and ensuring the effective implementation of innovative teaching practices.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of department heads in promoting positive work ethics among educators. The findings highlight the pivotal role that department heads play in fostering a culture of ethical professionalism, accountability, and collaboration

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within schools. Through effective communication, continuous monitoring and evaluation, role modeling, and the provision of professional development opportunities, department heads contribute to creating an environment where educators feel valued, motivated, and committed to upholding high ethical standards.

However, promoting a positive work ethic in disadvantaged schools presents significant challenges. The lack of rewards and incentives often leads to feelings of undervaluation, reducing educators' engagement, morale, and overall job satisfaction. School politics further complicate these efforts by fostering an environment of mistrust and division, which weakens collaboration and increases resistance to change. Additionally, limited resources hinder professional growth and innovation, increase workload burdens, and contribute to burnout among educators.

Despite these challenges, the study underscores that department heads can still cultivate a strong ethical culture by fostering open communication, setting clear expectations, and leading by example. By addressing barriers through strategic leadership, advocating for necessary resources, and implementing motivation-driven initiatives, department heads can enhance educators' commitment, resilience, and professional integrity. Ultimately, fostering a positive work ethic benefits not only educators but also the broader school community, leading to improved teaching and learning outcomes.

Recommendations

To enhance the role of department heads in promoting a positive work ethic among educators, we propose several key recommendations. Effective communication should be prioritized by ensuring clear and consistent messaging about expectations, responsibilities, and ethical standards. Regular meetings, multiple communication channels, and open forums should be established to foster transparency and mutual respect.

Additionally, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms – such as classroom observations, informal walk-throughs, and structured performance

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reviews – should be implemented. These evaluations should include constructive feedback and goal-setting initiatives to promote continuous professional growth.

Role modeling by department heads is also crucial, as demonstrating punctuality, ethical decision-making, and a commitment to professional development can inspire educators to adopt similar behaviors. Furthermore, mentorship programs and peer learning initiatives should be encouraged to reinforce ethical practices and accountability.

Providing professional growth opportunities is essential for sustaining a strong work ethic. Department heads should facilitate training sessions, workshops, and peer observation programs to enhance educators' skills and motivation. Encouraging further qualifications and involving educators in decision-making can significantly boost morale.

Additionally, structured recognition programs – including performance-based incentives, professional development sponsorships, and career advancement opportunities – should be implemented to acknowledge educators' dedication.

Addressing resource constraints is also vital. Schools should advocate for increased funding, access to modern teaching materials, and technological tools. Partnerships with external stakeholders can help bridge resource gaps and ensure a supportive teaching environment. By implementing these recommendations, departmental heads can create a more ethical, motivated, and effective workforce, ultimately improving teacher morale and student outcomes.

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