

PARTICIPATORY DECISION MAKING FOR THE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: THE CASE OF GOVERNMENT HIGH SCHOOLS IN FAKO DIVISION, SOUTH WEST REGION, CAMEROON

Ambe Christabel Neh

The University of Buea, SWR, Cameroon, Central Africa

ABSTRACT: This Study investigated the extent to which Participatory Decision Making influences the Effective Management of Educational Organizations. More specifically, the study examined the significant influence of teachers' participation in decision making on the effective management of educational organizations.

The Survey research design was used in this study. A total sample of 450 respondents being 300 teachers, 50 parents, 60 students and 40 principals/vice principals was used in the study. The simple random sampling technique was also used to select teachers while the purposive sampling technique was used to select principals, parents and students. The Chi-square test of independence was used to verify the hypothesis. The results showed that there a positive relationship between the variable and effective school management. Based on the results, some recommendations were made to school administrators and to teachers.

KEYWORDS: Participatory, Decision Making, Effective Management, Educational Organizations, Government High Schools, Fako Division

INTRODUCTION

The 6.5.2.3 system of education introduced recently in Cameroon by the National Education Forum (1995), where pupils spent 6 years in Primary School, 5 years in Secondary School, 2 years in High School and 3 years in the University introduced new dimensions in education trends by, for instance, laying more emphasis on technical subjects, as well as training for self-reliance and attitudinal change towards appreciation of dignity of manual labour. Coupled with the changes in the educational system, is a changing society where for example, there are more enlightened students due to technological and social changes (Barth, 1990; Fullan, 1999). Fullan (2003) acknowledges that, the context of school environment has changed tremendously such that the management styles should change too. Changes have also been experienced in staffing where schools are increasingly being staffed with more qualified teachers than ever before. The changes in educational system call for rethinking, reformulation and restructuring of educational policies both at national and school levels. At School level the changes in education are a challenge to principals and other educational administrators harboring the traditional approaches to administration which according to Jone (1985) are autocratic and bureaucratic in nature. For effective decision making in schools, those in authority

will not be expected to act like technocrats in different areas of school management. Rather, they are expected to display modern management styles which are bottom up, participative, consultative, team and task oriented. The style also includes listening and responding to the real needs rather than telling and prescribing (Bell, 1992).

Due to the growing appreciation of the need for valid and knowledgeable inputs in administrative decision making from various organizational levels, the need for involving stakeholders in decision making is paramount (Wekasa,1987). Among others, those important to involve in making decision in schools are the principal, parents (Community by extension), teachers and students. Most importantly to assist principals in decision making are teachers who are custodians of instruction, implementers of school policies and co-organizers of school activities along with principals.

Different writers have argued in favour of participatory decision making. Bachelor (1980), Armstrong (1984), Dwived (1988), and Maritim (1988) observe that involving subordinates in decision making improves the quality of the effectiveness of the organizational goals.

Tyree (1969) arguing in support of teacher involvement in decision making says: "If we accept the tenet that in a democracy those who are affected by decisions should participate in making decisions, the demand of the professional staff form a significant part in the decision making process in the school system... The days of the principal's paternalism are fast coming to an end and in a democracy the school, like government is of the people and by the people".

Halliday (1993) observed that raising the flagging morale and motivation of teachers in most sub-Saharan African countries is a major challenge because many teachers lack self esteem and commitment to their profession. He attributes this lack of commitment and self esteem partly to lack of participatory management styles, which he claims are poorly understood or applied in Africa. Cameroon teachers are no exception in this situation because they are at the end of the educational pipeline. They seem to be mostly recipients of decisions and instruction to be implemented at the school level of decisions made either at national, provincial or district levels (Maranga, 1993).

Gibbs (1991) comments that, in the traditional model of decision making, students were isolated from operational and policy decisions but in the newly shared decision model, students especially older students, may influence policies by providing advice and input through participation in decision making. Close to students he continues, are parents who, in yesterday's model, were mostly uninformed and underutilized resources and, like students, were isolated from decision making and operations of the school.

At the school the principal is placed in a position of responsibility and authority where all major decisions; curriculum and instruction, management of student discipline, school organization and staff personnel matters, financial matters, school and community relations among others are centered to his/her office. This makes him/her wield a lot of power in line with the view that, "I have the responsibility, I must have the power" (Musgrove, 1971). Barth (1990) states that "if the principal tries to do all of it, much of it will be left undone by anyone". For the school to be effectively managed therefore, the principal has to perform a participatory and collaborative style of management.

Effective school researchers (Brvokover et al. 1979; Edmonds et al. 1979; Rutter et al. 1979 and Goodlad, 1982) assert that the quality of leadership provided by the principal is a key determinant of school effectiveness. The problem is therefore, how to make school leaders become better administrators so as to lead an effective match towards the creation of a conducive working and learning environment for both teachers and students.

BACKGROUND

The perennial challenge facing school systems worldwide is how to improve student learning outcomes. In the pursuit of improvement, educators introduce various innovations. Today, most of these innovations are being introduced in the field of educational management to encourage decentralization and implementation of collaboration or participatory school governance (Anderson, 1998; Chan and Chui, 1997 and Walker and Dimmock, 2000). Doran (1999) says the formal change in the function of school governance that leads to a more democratic administrative approach in which planning and decision making are devolved in the individual school is known as school-based management.

Practicing participatory decision making has been long acknowledged as an essential ingredient in the quest for better schools. In characterizing successful schools, researchers commonly list five school-level factors, which include collaborative planning/collegial work and parental/community participation (Creemers, 1994; Edmonds, 1979; Joyce, 1991; Marzano, 2003 and Purkey and Smith, 1983). Golarz and Golarz (1995) assert that “high levels of parental involvement and support, collaborative collegial instructional planning, individual school autonomy and the resulting flexibility” are effective school characteristics that justify the implementation of participatory governance. In fact, Cheng and Cheng (2003) have observed that efforts to enhance organizational effectiveness since the 1990s have featured participative management. As Caldwell and Spinks (1992) point out, securing a “synergy of communities” is the key to the attainment of educational benefits; It should be noted, however, that attempts to involve stakeholders should be geared beyond mere participation but towards meaningful involvement (Walters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003).

The form of decision making affects, in a vital way, the process and the subsequent outcome produced by that method. The ultimate superiority of shared decision making is supported by numerous writers in that this form of decision making promotes the development of synergy and commitment (Sergiovanni, 1984; Meadows, 1990 and Weiss, 1993).

Sergiovanni (1984) stresses that strong evidence exist, that shared decision making is associated with increase in worker ego-involvement, sense of ownership and commitment to work. Meadows (1990) believe in the value of shared decision making because several heads produce better decisions than one. As well, she finds that decisions are put into practice more successfully when those doing so have participated in the decision making process and are therefore, committed to the end product. Shared decision making enhances leadership that, in turn, promotes the conditions which are conducive to successfully manage the organization.

The assertion is made that shared decisions are more appropriate than those made by individuals due to such things as increased information and the resultant synergy (Piper, 1974). Increase in information can lead to better decisions since more ideas will be presented and a larger array of possible solutions can be formulated. Synergy can produce dynamic decisions. The concept of

synergy is aptly defined by English (1987): “synergy is the cooperative action of staff members working together that produces a greater result than the sum of their efforts taken independently and in isolation would produce”. Cherry (1991) maintains staff ownership can be achieved only in the climate where the concept of synergy is understood and promoted by the principal. English (1987) also promotes synergy as a benefit in achieving remarkable breakthroughs in performance and effectiveness. He contends, “Staff synergy can make mountains” it would seem that mountain moving is what effective management is all about.

A lack of commitment to the solutions selected is often a weakness in the decision making process. Bartunek and Keys (1979) highlight the increased commitment shared decision makers feel for the decisions made. Essentially, a shared decision making leads to agreement that represents a value system for living together and that provides the basis for decisions and action (Sergiovanni, 1990)

The Role of Principals in Participatory Decision Making

There is little disagreement about the importance of principal leadership in school improvement efforts. Numerous scholars have written extensively about the characteristics of school principals that are necessary for successful school reform and student achievement (for example Hallinger & Heck, 1996). According to Wohlstetter and Smyer (1992) cited in S.A. Mohrman et al. (1992), a successful principal “...helps the school develop a vision, sets goals, and establishes high expectations”. Other critical dimensions of principal’s leadership that have been identified include inspiring shared vision, focusing on culture, challenging existing practice, modeling integrity, providing support, fostering dialogue and learning, and developing leadership in others (Ronneberg, 2000). Organizational management theorists agree that, “The behavior of managers is a critical determinant of the effectiveness of any organization, particularly a high involvement organization” (Lawler, 1992). Just as the manager is pivotal in a business, the principal is widely believed to be pivotal in the successful operation of participative decision-making systems in schools (Reitzug, 1994; Somech, 2002). This chapter now turns to a consideration of the specific role of the principal in developing and sustaining participative approaches to decision-making within schools.

As early as 1967, Bridges emphasized the importance of the principal and the unique opportunity he or she has to facilitate participation. Bridges (1967) provided a detailed description of how the principal can lead actual decision-making meetings, and concluded with the suggestion that principals would do best to encourage risk-taking and involvement by “...withholding evaluation and criticism of proposals and by avoiding a show of surprise when unusual ideas come forth from the group” (Bridges, 1967). Bridges also argued that principals must build the group’s skills by encouraging reflection on communication and discussion patterns.

Other scholars have underscored the need for principals to be supportive facilitators of teacher participation. According to Somech (2002), “Leaders must be willing to let go of traditional authority roles, not only allowing teachers to have a greater voice but helping to prepare them, providing support and establishing an environment of trust”. Similarly, “...administrators must know how to create conditions that foster empowerment and release their control over teachers, alter their roles, and engender commitment, trust, and respect” (Acker-Hocevar & Touchton, 1999). The literature on teacher leadership, a component of which is teacher participation in shared decision-making, suggests that principals must develop and facilitate strong relationships with their teachers (Barth, 2001; Childs-Bowen, Moller, & Scrivner, 2000; Crowther et al., 2002). The relationship established

between teacher leaders and their principals is consistently identified as a strong influence on teacher leadership. “Where we have seen teacher leadership begin to flourish, principals have actively supported it or, at least, encouraged it (Crowther et al., 2002)”. Principals clearly are viewed as the person with the greatest power, and the one who sets the tone for the relationship between principal and teachers.

In many ways, a principal is the most important and influential person in school. These functions are clearly spelt out in the Handbook for Heads (MINEDUC, 1996). They are administrative, pedagogic, financial and social functions.

The leadership of a school has increasingly been seen as the Key element for success in schools. Parents, Policy makers and other stakeholders rely on principals to make a difference even though changing times and the daily cycles of events, in a school have made jobs more demanding. Principals are powerful catalyst for school effectiveness as good schools are led by good principals. It is the principal’s leadership that sets the tone for the school, the climate for learning and teaching, the level of professionalism morale of teachers, the kind of decision making and the attainment of goals. The principal is the main link between the larger world and the school (MINEDUC, 1996).

He or she has management, supervisory, instructional, financial, interpersonal, decisional, and informational and other roles (Griffin 1987; Lashway, 2003). Thus, the principal holds the school in his/her hands and can either make or mar, construct or destroy, promote progress or manure stagnation (Mbua, 2003). He /she is the main actor to guarantee effective management in school through his leadership style. He/she is to ensure that the school perpetuates what society holds dear as well as meet the personal, social, cultural, economic and political expectations of the school. Benis (1989) states that the factor that empowers the people and ultimately determines which organizations succeed or fail are the leadership of those organizations. The principal is therefore very important because the success and an effective management of a school depend on the quality of in-school administration.

Teachers’ Participation in Decision Making and Effective School Management

One aspect of leadership that has been promoted as an important component of school reform efforts is participative decision-making (PDM). PDM refers to the practice of principals and teachers jointly making decisions that traditionally would have been made by the principal alone. Greater involvement of teachers in decision-making is an important aspect for the effective management of educational organizations and an alternative to the top-down bureaucratic system of schooling. Teacher’s participation in decision making is being proposed as a method to decentralize and debureaucratize school control (Guthrie, 1986) and to promote shared decision-making within schools for effective management (Brown, 1990).

Teacher involvement in school decision-making facilitates better decisions for effective management of schools since they are closest to students and do know how best to improve schools because they are in the best position to implement decisions. The participation of teachers in decision-making is perceived as a forging link between administrators and teachers (Sergiovanni, 1992). Also, the participation of teachers in decision-making is viewed as a change initiative focusing on an alternative strategy for effective school management (Conley & Bacharach, 1990; and Goldman, 1992).

There is a common view that schools will be more effectively managed if teachers are given more autonomy and are involved in school decision-making (Brown, 1990; Murray, Grant & Swaminathan, 1997; and Wallace, 1992). This gives rise to those educational reforms which strongly advocates PDM (Henkin et al, 2000; Johnson & Short, 1998; Rumbaut, 1992; Taylor & Bogotch, 1992).

Arguments for Teacher Participation in decision making

Arguments for teacher participation in organizational decision-making are generally grounded in four theoretical orientations (Margulies & Black, 1987): democratic, socialist, human growth and development, and productivity and efficiency. The democratic argument for participation has also been called an ethical approach (Somech, 2002). It reflects the belief that offering the opportunity to participate in the governance of an organization is a moral imperative because individuals have the right to exercise some control over their work and their lives (Dachler & Wilpert, 1978). In the school setting, this argument suggests that teacher participation is necessary to professionalize and democratize teaching. Furthermore, a democratic school environment is believed to encourage children to participate in and sustain our country's system of government (Barth, 2001). Though the connection of participation with democratic and pluralistic values is often cited, the emphasis on participation for professionalization or equity reasons has been found to be less prevalent among school principals than other emphases (Blasé & Blasé, 2000).

Another argument for worker participation in decision-making is socialist theory, which is based on the belief that, in order to prevent the treatment of labor as a commodity and the resulting alienation, workers must participate in and ultimately control the production process (Dachler & Wilpert, 1978). This argument for worker participation is explored in detail by Greenberg (1975), who traces the roots of worker participation movements to the struggles of mid-twentieth century workers in Europe and South America and to the writing of the Italian revolutionary theorist Antonio Gramsci. According to Greenberg, Gramsci envisioned worker participation as "...natural proletarian institutions in which the seeds of a revolutionary life could flower" (1975). This socialist argument is grounded in the works of Marx (1867), who harshly criticized the capitalist economic system.

A third argument for participation, human growth and development, advocates "...assigning greater importance to the intrinsic motivational properties of work itself by allowing greater employee influence, autonomy, and responsibility..." (Dachler & Wilpert, 1978). This orientation toward participation views the involvement of teachers as a means of enhancing their lives by providing the opportunity for growth and learning within the workplace. The assumption of the human growth and development theory of participation is that work must provide intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and must satisfy psychological needs of workers such as affiliation, power, and self-esteem (Keith, 1996). Keith is somewhat critical of the human growth and development rationale. She suggests that human growth outcomes are actually another way to achieve higher productivity and efficiency and are not sought for their own sake. In this regard, she argues, "...administrative discourse seems concerned less with reducing administrative controls than with achieving them in different ways" (1996). This review found no other researchers that agreed with Keith's allegation.

Finally, and most commonly, worker participation is promoted as a way to increase the productivity and efficiency of an organization. Greenberg (1975) refers to this school of thought as "The Management School." Somech (2002) calls it a "pragmatic" rationale. In the educational setting,

where this rationale is widespread, teacher participation is believed to improve the quality of educational decisions, and therefore to improve instruction (Conley, 1991). This theory can be summarized as follows: "...flatter management and decentralized authority structures carry the potential for achieving outcomes unattainable by the traditional top-down bureaucratic structure of schools..." (Somech, 2002). In a study of 45 principals affiliated with the League of Professional Schools, in which schools partner with University of Georgia faculty in the process of working toward shared governance, Blasé and Blasé (2000) found that most of the principals cited the improvement of teaching and learning as the primary purpose for employing participatory decision-making structures. In the language of business and organizational literature, worker participation yields "...higher quality products and services, less absenteeism, less turnover, better decision making, better problem solving, and less management overhead – in short, greater organizational effectiveness" (Mohrman et al., 1992). As Conway (1984) explains, "The rationale of this school (of thought) is expediency rather than humanitarianism". Actually, the argument has been made that increasing teacher satisfaction is the best way to improve student outcomes (Imber & Neidt, 1990).

Despite the various arguments cited for teacher participation in decision-making, there is still a lack of clarity about what teacher participation is and how it is specifically related to effective management of educational institutions. The subsequent section will dwell on how educational organizations can be effectively managed if teachers are involved in school decision making.

Benefits

The literature likewise suggests that allowing teachers to participate in decision making increases their commitment levels to the organization (Bacharach, Bamberger, Conley, & Bauer, 1990; Balfour & Wechsler, 1996; Conway, 1984; Dunham, Grube, & Castañeda, 1994; Gamage, 1996a; Kushman, 1992).

Commitment, as used in this paper, refers to the willingness of the teachers to go beyond the expected levels of participation in order to attain educational goals. Other ways by which commitment is enhanced are: providing good quality work experiences (Balfour & Wechsler, 1996; Kushman, 1992); sharing accurate information or incorporating high degree of communication (Meyer et al., 1991; Ulrich, 1998; Whitney & Lindell, 2000); offering continuous learning and development through training (Cheng, 1998; Hagen & Nelson, 2001); allowing people to work freely (O'Neil, 1995/1996; Ulrich, 1998); and maintaining harmonious relationships through people-centered leadership and management (Hagen & Nelson, 2001; Lee, 2003; Ulrich, 1998).

Studies have also shown that teachers tend to show enthusiasm, devotion, ingenuity and high morale when they participate in the planning process of the school. Wolf (1978) supported this idea when he discovered in his study that teachers would want to participate in decisions that affect them and they would readily implement a program they helped to design. In fact, they tend to show enthusiasm, devotion, ingenuity and high moral when they participate in the planning process. That is why Udoh and Akpa (1994), said staff and students' involvement in decision making develop initiative, cooperation, and team spirit. They insist that teachers input encourage the overall effective management of educational organizations.

Research in the early 1950s found that teachers who had the opportunity to participate in school decision-making processes were more satisfied with their work (Bridges, 1967). According to Bridges, "The opportunity to share in formulating policies apparently is an important factor in the

morale of teachers and their enthusiasm for the school system.” At the time, the main rationale for teacher participation was improving teacher morale and work satisfaction. Thirty years later, the idea of participative decision-making had developed into a strategy for improving the quality of instruction (Riesgraf, 2002; Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2001).

Rice and Schneider (1994), in a study of teachers’ participation in decision making, found that there is a positive relationship between teachers’ level of involvement and their job satisfaction. Principals who share decision-making authority with teachers have been found to have more loyalty from teachers (Hoy & Sousa, 1984). Smylie (1994) suggested also that “...initiatives grounded in collective and professional orientations toward teachers’ work and change are more likely to be associated with effective school reforms than initiatives based on individualistic, hierarchical, and bureaucratic orientations.”

Theoretical Background

This study is based on three categories of theories namely Management Theories, Systems Theories, and Motivation Theories due to their relevance in the study. These theories are discussed extensively in chapter two.

Management Theories

Two management models are discussed here- the human relations model and the human resources model. These theories were advanced by Miles (1975). According to Miles, there are three management models theories but managers mostly subscribe to the human relations and human resources models. The traditional model is almost out of place.

The human relation model gives attention to the social and egoistic needs of workers and it recognizes the fact that fair treatment and pay are not enough to help subordinates achieve performance aims. This model sees the manager as a developer and facilitator to help subordinates achieve their expectations. People share a common set of needs- to belong, to be liked, to be respected and feel useful to their organization which is very essential for organizational effectiveness. According to the human relations model, people tend to cooperate willingly and comply with goals and the needs to belong and liked are fulfilled. The expectations for subordinates are to share information with them and involve them in school decision making to help satisfy the basic needs of belonging and individual recognition. Satisfying these needs will reduce friction that makes the school executives’ job easier.

The human resources model professes that, people not only share the needs to belong and be respected, but also desire to contribute effectively and creatively to the accomplishment of worthwhile organizational objectives. People not only feel useful to their organizations, but they are capable of exercising far more initiative, responsibility, and creativity than their present job or work circumstances require or allow. Subordinates’ expectations in this model are that the overall quality of decision making and performance will improve as school executives make use of the full range of experiences, insight and creative ability which exists in their schools. They will be satisfied as a result of improved performance and the opportunity to contribute creatively to this improvement.

System Theories

The social system theory and stakeholder theory are very crucial in this study. The social system theory was derived by Parsons (1951) but the basic application of the system theory to school

administration was delineated by Getzels and Guba (1957). A social system is a system in which the components are people. This system views organizations as not only influenced by environments but also dependent on them. This theory assumes that the social system is an open system affected by the values of the community and outside forces; they are people-oriented and consist of interdependent parts. When one part is affected, a ripple goes through the system. The school must relate with its environment in order to procure and dispose of inputs and outputs respectively. The school is a social system and therefore, has to work together and involve all the stakeholders in and out of the school in order to be effective.

The stakeholder theory holds the same views of the social system theory. Morrison (2003) says in the formation of objectives and goals in any organizational setup, a number of interested parties including the external and local community should be considered. Stakeholders are those effecting change in the community or school by a symbiotic relationship between the school and the community.

Motivation Theories

The motivation theories include Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, Herzberg's motivator-Hygiene theory and Ouchi's theory Z.

Maslow's Hierarchy of needs theory (1954) explains human behaviour in work place. The main premise of the theory is that human behaviour is generally driven by needs which are hierarchically arranged based on theory pre-potency. These needs include Physiological needs, needs for security/safety, need for affiliation with other people (belongingness), need for self-esteem, and need for self actualization. At particular points in time subordinates may be found on the different levels of the hierarchy of needs. Leaders need to determine these different levels for various subordinates to be able to help provide for needs in a way that will stimulate them and encourage trust. This will lead to increase in productivity and goal attainment.

Herzberg's Two-factor Theory was postulated in 1959. This Theory is also known as the motivator-hygiene Theory. Herzberg referred to these hygiene and motivator factors as positive or "satisfiers" and negative or "dissatisfiers" respectively. To him, negative factors or hygiene factors often cited were, organizational policy and administration, working condition, salary, job security, and interpersonal relationship. On the other hand, positive factors or motivator or satisfiers most often cited were work itself, achievement, possibility of growth, responsibility, and advancement, (Glickman, 1985).

Elimination of dissatisfiers did not improve an individual's performance. But motivators, if met, did encourage teachers to work harder. Principals have to identify the motivators in order to bring out the best from subordinates because effective management or administration is that which increases productivity, attains goals and stimulates subordinates. If a teacher for instance, is given increased responsibility to make decisions, he/she will work harder to see that he/she succeeds. Satisfiers thus, are the key motivators to increase productivity.

Ouchi's Theory Z was postulated by William Ouchi (1981). The theory says that involved worker's are the key to increased performance in an organization. The basic premise of the theory is concern for people and participative and consultative decision making. For an organization to be effectively

managed, managers or administrators need to adopt a participatory approach especially in decision making at all levels

Motivation

Motivation is another important concept related in this study. According to Luma (1983) “motivation is the force or drive in individuals which causes them to act or do certain things. It is at the base of most human learning and behaviour”. Motivation can be viewed as an inner striving of individuals that direct behaviour. Unsatisfied desires create motivation to act with purposeful behaviour to achieve gratification. People who are committed to achieving organizational objectives generally out perform those who are not committed. Those who are intrinsically rewarded by accomplishment in the work place are satisfied with their jobs and are individuals with high self-esteem. Therefore, an important part of personnel management and administration for principals is to help make work more satisfying and rewarding for teachers and to keep teachers motivation consistent with school objectives. With the diversity of contemporary workplaces, this is a complex achievement which presupposes a lot of collaboration. But true collaboration however, is a problem that plagues companies or institutions when trying to develop a team work environment (Becton et al, 2002). The place of collaboration or team work in institutions cannot be overlooked. Working with and through the services of others to accomplish goals therefore requires collaboration and shared decision making.

Effective Management

According to Francis (2007), the quality of the manager or the administrator and effective management styles can determine the culture of the organization, the productivity of its staff, and ultimately, success or failure. He also opined that, to be an effective manager you must know yourself, your strengths and your weaknesses, and those of the people around you. You must know your objectives and have a plan of how to achieve them. You must build a team of people that share your commitment to achieve those objectives, and you must help each team member to achieve their best which will be able to attain a common goal.

Statement of the Problem

The quality and kind of decisions made in an organization is an essential determinant of the effectiveness and productivity of that organization. The present era of Management faces a mixture of problems and pressures of varying complexities from both institutions themselves and the society such as over enrolment of students; societal demands resulting in changes in institutional policies; changes in institutional techniques as a result of technological advancement; the high cost of education, biting economy and tight budgets; etc.

Decision making is very crucial to the running of an organization. Cooper and Hills (1978) stated that, “whether one is a project director, school principal, or superintendent of a school or college, decision making is crucial”, in solving problems. Their reasons were two fold: Pressures exerted from the state and federal legislators, and the demand for greater participation in the process of decision making by the constituents of education organizations. It seems safe to say that participatory decision making is a viable option to solve the daily increasing problems that are mounted on educational organizations by educational administrators.

Despite the fundamental role that participatory decision making can have on the life and management of organizations as shown by researchers, a close observation of the working life and practices of

those who are the main actors in our schools does not portray that such administrators and their subordinates are aware of the important role this value can have towards the existence of an effective management system in our schools. This is so because of the insufficient use of some elements vital for the existence of participatory decision making. These elements include true collaboration, effective communication, delegation of power and empowerment. These elements do not seem to be very visible in the school milieu in our society. Thus the problem here is to find out from the main actors of our secondary schools whether participatory decision making can enhance effective school management.

Objective

- To find out if teachers' participation in decision making can enhance effective management of educational organizations.

General Question

To what extent does teachers' participation in decision making enhance the effective management of educational organizations?

Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis (H₀₁): There is no significant influence of teachers' participation in decision making and effective management of educational organizations.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_{a1}): There is a significant influence of teachers' participation in decision making and effective management of educational organizations.

Methodology

This study was carried out using the survey research design. According to Nworgu (1991), in a survey research, a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analyzing data from a few who are representative of the entire group. Thus in this study, opinions of people involved in the sample were gathered through the use of questionnaires constructed in relation to the variable under investigation. The responses gathered were analyzed and the results generalized to the entire population.

The target population of the study was made up of all the principals/vice principals, teachers and student leaders of Government High Schools in Fako Division and parents of students in these schools.

The sample for this study was limited to ten selected Government High Schools in Fako Division and was made up of 450 respondents being 40 principals/vice principals, 300 teachers, 50 parents and 60 students.

From the table of krejcie and Morgan, for a population of 700, a sample of 248 is conventional for the study. The researcher decided to use one-third of the accessible teacher population (959) which is approximately equal to 300 teachers.

For the selection of the sample of principals/vice principals, all the principals in the accessible schools were selected and in each of these schools, three vice principals were selected randomly.

The purposive sampling technique was used to select the parents for the sample. In this wise, five parents of students in each of the accessible schools formed part of the sample, since they possess the characteristics needed for the purpose of this study. This same sampling technique was used to select the sub-division in Fako with Idenau excluded because it has just one high school.

For the selection of the sample for students, the simple random sampling technique was used. To do this,

- The researcher in each of the accessible schools wrote the names of the posts of the student leaders, each on a slip of paper.
- The slips were each folded and put in a basket.
- The researcher picked a folded slip.
- It was unfolded and the post of the student recorded.
- The recorded slip was refolded, put into the basket for another picking after reshuffling.
- Any element that was drawn once was ignored whenever it was drawn in a subsequent occasion.
- This process of picking, unfolding and recording of names continued until 50% of the names of student leaders in the accessible population of each school was achieved.

This process of picking and replacing gave each student an equal chance of being represented in the sample.

This sample procedure was used to select the teachers involved in the accessible population and also the number of schools in each sub-division. Two schools each were selected in each sub-division of the accessible area with Buea having an exception of four schools. This is because Buea alone consists of almost half the population of the target population.

The questionnaire was the main instrument designed for this study. Four questionnaires were constructed; one for principals/vice principals, one for teachers, one for parents and one for student leaders. The questionnaires were constructed in conformity with the research questions and hypotheses.

The cover page of the questionnaire states the address of the researcher and the purpose of the study. The anonymity of the respondents was guaranteed in order to get honest and truthful responses. This was to ensure that the responses are a representative of what is intended to study.

The direct delivery technique was used to administer the questionnaires. This technique was preferred because the researcher wanted to personally have contact with the respondents, so as to give answers and clarifications where necessary. The researcher visited accessible schools, met the principals who directed her to see the vice principal or senior discipline master. In collaboration with these authorities, the selected teachers and students included in the sample were given a copy of the questionnaire to answer. After about an hour in school, the respondents answered the questionnaire and the copies were retrieved. Some questionnaires of Principals and teachers could not be collected immediately because of tight schedule. The researcher revisited the schools to collect the remaining

copies of the answered questionnaires two weeks later. In all, the exercise took about five weeks and ran from the 21st of April to the 28th of May.

Both Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze data.

For descriptive statistics, frequencies, percentages and bar-charts were used to describe the responses registered. Percentages (%) are determined by

$$\% = \frac{\text{Number of particular responses}}{\text{Sample size}} \times 100$$

For inferential statistics, the chi-square test of independence was used to verify the hypotheses. The chi-square (χ^2) is determined by

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}, \text{ where } O = \text{Observed frequency}$$

E = Expected frequency

Σ = Sum of

The expected frequencies are determined by $E = \frac{fr \times fc}{N}$, where

fr = Total frequency of row

fc = Total frequency of column

N = Sample size

The degree of freedom (df) is determined by $df = (c-1)(r-1)$,

Where c = number of columns

r = number of rows

FINDINGS

Findings of this study are presented base on the research question under investigation

Description of Respondents in Relation to Teachers' Participation in Decision Making

Teacher's Participation in Decision Making	Frequency	Percentage
Low	271	86.0
High	44	14.0
Total	315	100.0

The responses of principals / vice principal and teachers in relation to teachers' participation in decision making were scored by using the response format and weighing in chapter 3. 86.0% of the respondents were classified under low teachers' participation while 14% were classified under high.

VERIFICATION OF HYPOTHESIS

Hypothesis 1

Null Hypothesis (H₀₁): There is no significant influence of teachers' participation in decision making and the management of educational organizations.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_{a1}): There is a significant influence of teachers' participation in decision making and the management of educational organizations.

Presentation of Observed and Expected Frequencies Relating Teachers' Participation in decision making and the Management of Educational Organizations.

Teachers' Participation in Decision Making	Management of Educational Organization		
	Ineffective	Effective	Total
Low	258 (226.3)	13(44.7)	271
High	5 (36.7)	39 (7.3)	44
Total	263	52	315

The figures in brackets are the expected frequencies while those without brackets are the observed frequencies. Out of 271 respondents whose responses indicated that teachers' participation in decision making is low, 258 were of the opinion that management of educational organizations is ineffective, while 13 were of the opinion that it is effective.

Out of 44 respondents who indicated that teachers' participation in decision making is high, 5 stated that management of educational organizations is ineffective, while 39 said that, it is effective.

Calculation of chi-square value for hypothesis 1

Observed (O) Frequency	Expected (E) Frequencies	O – E	(O – E) ²	$\frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$
258	226.3	31.7	1007.2	4.5
13	44.7	-31.7	1007.2	22.5
5	36.7	-31.7	1007.2	27.4
39	7.3	31.7	1007.2	138
				$\sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E} = 192.4$

Results

X² calculated value = 192.4

Alpha level of significance (α) = 0.05

Degree of Freedom (df) = 1

X² critical value = 3.841

Interpretation of Results

Since chi-square calculated value (192.4) is greater than chi-square critical value (3.841) we reject the null hypothesis (Ho) following the decision rule. Inference made leads us to conclude that there is a significance influence of teachers' participation in decision making and the management of educational organizations. The magnitude of the influence is determined by comparing the contingency coefficient value (C.C) to the contingency maximum value (Cmax). These values are determined by using the formulae in chapter 3.

$$C.C = \sqrt{\frac{192.4}{507.4}} = 0.62, C_{\max} = 0.71$$

Magnitude of Influence

Range	Magnitude	Cmax
0.48 – 0.71	High	0.71
0.25 – 0.47	Moderate	
0 – 0.24	Low	

Since 0.62 lies within 0.48 and 0.71, the magnitude is high. This implies that there is a high influence of teachers' participation in decision making on the management of educational organizations.

The research findings show that there is a high influence of teachers' participation in decision making on effective school management. The findings of this study conform to the findings of other studies by Urachi, Usman, Ahmed, Miller, Maritim and Chapman et al.

Urachi (1986), Usman (1994) and Ahmed (1993) indicated that teachers who participate regularly and actively in policy-making were more enthusiastic about their school system than those who did not. The studies further revealed that participatory decision making promotes a higher degree of staff morale. This is corroborated by Chapman et al (1993) who said that "... broadened participation in decision making is... a goal of organizational effectiveness... and a means of increasing administrative success". Where this is lacking, the administration cannot win the confidence of the teacher and they are not committed to academic excellence. From the few instances narrated above, it is very clear that getting teachers to participate in decision-making is very crucial for managing schools effectively.

In this study it was also revealed that teachers are not satisfactorily involved in decision making the way they desire to. From the results, about 86% of the respondents agreed to the fact that teachers do not actually participate in decision making the way they really desire. This could be because of some fears by principals to involve them. Wekesa (1994) argues that some principals could be in fear of allowing teachers to participate in decision making lest they loose their authority in running their schools to the teachers. However, this should not be the case because if teachers are allowed to make decisions on matters that affect them, they would be more comfortable and they would be motivated to work hard to achieve what they have contributed in deciding upon.

Miller (1984) and Maritim (1988) in their study also found out that teachers expressed the need to be involved in decision making more than they were actually involved. This clearly confirms that the need for more teacher participation in decision making is crucial in schools owing to the advantages which include increased rate of output production, making use of expert knowledge in decisions,

producing positive staff morale and commitment, improved employee relations, staff developing a sense of ownership, improved quality of management decisions, making teachers improve the quality of their profession and workplace resulting into a less stressful, more satisfying and motivating environment; staff are adequately prepared for any changes in their lives by being involved in the decision making process (Armstrong, 1984; Dwivedi, 1988; Bell, 1992; Halliday, 1993; Bezzina, 1997; and Fullan, 2003).

The model of management advanced by Miles (1975) is complimented by the responses given by teachers and the findings obtained from the analysis in that people not only feel useful to their organization but they are capable of exercising far more initiative, responsibility and creativity than their present jobs or work circumstances require or allow. The same model on the kind and amount of participation professes that subordinates believe that they are useful and important members of the team. This is the same thing teachers are saying when they desire more involvement in decision making.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Akanji, J. A. (1988). Management Concepts: Techniques and Cases. Ibadan: Julab Publishers Ltd.
2. Armstrong, M. A. (1984). Handbook of Personnel Management Practice. London: Kogan Page Ltd.
3. Austin, J. E. (2000). *The collaborative challenge: How nonprofits and businesses succeed through strategic alliances*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
4. Bachelor, R. (1980). "Human Relations or Human Resources." Manpower Management. An integrated approach to personnel management and labour relations. New Delhi: Prentice Hall.
5. Barna, G. (2001). The power of team leadership: Achieving success through shared responsibility. Colorado Springs: Waterbrook Press.
6. Barth, R. S. (1990). Improving schools from within. Teachers, Parents, and Principals can make the difference. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
7. Bass, B. M. (1990). Bass and Stogdill's handbook of leadership: Theory, research & managerial applications (3rd ed). New York: Macmillan.
8. Batey, C. S. (1996). Parents are lifesavers- A handbook for Parent Involvement in San Francisco: Crown Press.
9. Bell, L. (1992). Managing teams in secondary schools. London: Routledge.
10. Bloomer, K. (1991). Decentralizing the education system London: Common
11. Wealth Secretariat.
12. Bolman, L. G. & Deal, T. E. (1997). Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice, and leadership (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

13. Brown, C. (1993). Employee involvement in industrial decision-making: Lessons for public schools. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
14. Cascio, W. F. (1989). Managing Human Resources productivity, quality of Work life profiles. New York: McGraw-Hill.
15. Crowther, F., Kaagan, S. S., Ferguson, M. & Hann, L. (2002). Developing teacher leaders: How teacher leadership enhances school success. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.
16. Crozier, G. (2000). Parents and schools. Partners or protagonists? London: Trentham Books. Department Of Education (1997).
17. Dwivedi, R. S. (1988). Dynamics of Human Behaviour at work. New Delhi: Oxford Publishing Ltd.
18. Edem, D. A. (1990). Introduction to Educational Administration in Nigeria. Ibadan: Spectrum books Ltd.
19. Fletcher, J. K. & Kaufer, K. (2003) Shared leadership: Paradox and possibility. In Pearce, C. & Conger, J. (Eds). Shared leadership: Reframing the hows and whys of leadership. London: Sage.
20. Fullan, M. (2003). The moral imperative of school leadership. San Francisco: Corwin press.
21. Gaynor, C. (1998). Directions in development: Decentralization of Education – Teacher Management. Washington: World Bank.
22. Griffin, G. (1994). School mastery; straight talk about boarding school
23. Management in Kenya. Nairobi: Lectern publication Ltd.
24. Griffin, R. W. (1987). Management (2nd Edition). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
25. Halliday, L. (1993). Why delegate? A Resource book for Educational Administration. London: Commonwealth Secretariat.
26. Hiatt-Michael, D. B. (2001). Promising Practices for Family Involvement in Schools. Connecticut: Information Age Publishing.
27. Hoy, W. K., and Miskel, C. G. (1996). Educational Administration: Theory, Research and Practice (5th Edition). New York: McGraw-Hill Inc.
28. Johnson, D. (1990). Parental Choice in Education. London: Unwin Hyman.
29. Jones, A. (1985). Leadership for tomorrow schools. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
30. Karue, M. M. (1980). Decision making in primary schools. Unpublished Masters project university of Nairobi.

31. Leithwood, K. A. (2005). Educational Leadership. (Rev. ed), New York, San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
32. Maritim, S. (1988). Teacher participation in decision making: The
33. Relationship between the need to participate and Status in schools.
34. Unpublished project, Dalhousie University.
35. Mbua, F. N. (2003). Educational Administration: Theory and Practice. Limbe: Presprint.
36. Mestry, K. (2004). The Assessment of Parent Involvement as an aspect of Whole school evaluation (unpublished dissertation. Johannesburg: Rand Afrikaans University.
37. Miles, R. E. (1975). Theories of Management; Implications for organizational behavior and development. New York: McGraw Book Co.
38. Morgan, I. (1989). The politics of parental involvement. Lewes: Palmer.
39. Musgrove, F. (1971). Patterns of power and authority in English Education.
40. London: Methuen.
41. Ndongko, T. M. (1998). A Handbook on Secondary School Administration. Ibadan: Heineman Educational Book Limited.
42. Ogawa, R. T. & Bossert, S. T. (2000). Leadership as an Organizational quality. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
43. Peretomode, V. F. (1992). Educational Administration: Applied Concepts and Theoretical Perspectives. Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Ltd
44. Squelch, J. (2000). Governance of Education. Sandton: Heinemann.
45. Tamajong and Fonkeng. (2003). Secondary School Administration and Principalship. Yaounde: Presses Universitaire d'Afrique.
46. Tambo, L. (2003). Cameroon National Education Policy since the 1995 Forum. Limbe: Design House.
47. Thompson, J. G. (1966). Organization in Action. New York: McGraw-hall, Inc.
48. Torrington, D. and Weighton (1994). Effective Management: People and Organization (2nd Edition). Englewood Cliff: Prentice Hall.
49. Wekesa, G. W. (1994). Teacher empowerment through shared decision making. Unpublished paper presented at staff seminar. Faculty of Education, Moi University Eldoret.
50. Williams, R. B. (1997). The relationship between personal characteristics and situation complexity and decision making style flexibility in New Brunswick school principals. Dissertation Abstract International, 58 (04):1174.

JOURNALS

1. Alutto, J. A., & Belasco, J. A. (1972). A typology for participation in organizational decision making. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 17(1), 117-123. Quarterly, 9(1), 27-41.
2. Bacharach, S. B., Bamberger, P., Conley, S. C. & Bauer, S. (1990). The dimensionality of decision participation in educational organizations: The value of a multi-domain evaluative approach. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 26(2), 126-167.
3. Barth, R. S. (2001). Teacher leader. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 82(6), 443-449
4. Black, J. S., & Gregersen, H. B. (1997). Participative decision-making: An integration of multiple dimensions. *Human Relations*, 50(7), 859-878.
5. Blasé, J., & Blasé, J. (2000). Principals' perspectives on shared governance leadership. *Journal of School Leadership*, 10(1), 9-39
6. Bridges, E. M. (1967). A model for shared decision making in the school principalship. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 3(1), 49-61.
7. Chan, M. T., Ching, Y. C. & Cheng, Y. C. (1997). Teacher participation in decision making: The case of Hong Kong SMI schools. *Education Journal*, 46(3), 205-232.
8. Conley, S. C. (1989). Who's on first? School reform, teacher participation, and the decision-making process. *Education and Urban Society*, 21(4), 366-379.
9. Conley, S., Schmidle, T. & Shedd, J. B. (1988). Teacher participation in the management of school systems. *Teachers College Record*, 90(2), 259-280.
10. Conway, J. A. (1976). Test of linearity between teachers' participation in decision making and their perceptions of their schools as organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 21(1), 130-139.
11. Conway, J. A. (1984). The myth, mystery, and mastery of participative decision making in education. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 20(3), 11-40.
12. Duke, D. L., Shower, B. K. & Imber, M. (1980). Teachers and shared decision making: The cost and benefits of involvement. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 16(1), 93-106.
13. Hill, N. E., Craft, S. A. (2003). Parent-school involvement and school performance: Mediated pathways among socioeconomically comparable African American and Euro-American families. *J. Educ.*
14. Holt, A., & Murphy, P. J. (1993). School Effectiveness in the Future: the empowerment factor. *Sch. Org. J.* 13:175-186.
15. Khan, M. B. (1996). Parental Involvement in Education: Possibilities and Limitations. *Sch. Community J.* 6: 57 – 58.
16. Little, J. M. (1982). "Norms of Collegiality and Experimentation: Workplace conditions of school success". *America Educational Research Journal* 19 (3): 325-340

17. Maranga, J. S. (1993). 'Improving teaching administration supervision of basic education. Forum Vol. 3.
18. Slater, L. (2004).Collaboration: A Framework for School Improvement. International Electronic Journal for Leadership in learning, 8(5).
19. Smit, A. G. and Liebenberg, L. (2003). Understanding the dynamics of parent involvement in schooling within the poverty context. South Afric. J. Educ., 23 (1): 1 -5.