

SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING PROCESS IN EASTERN PROVINCE, KENYA

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to investigate the teachers' participation in decision making process in secondary schools of Eastern Province, Kenya. The objectives of the study were to identify the key decision makers in selected management tasks in public secondary schools as perceived by teachers and to find out the adequacy of their involvement in decision making. It was also aimed at establishing if there is a difference between the teachers' perception on the adequacy of their involvement in decision in decision process and the gender and the teaching experience of the teachers, and the type of school. Data was collected by the use of a questionnaire. Data was analyzed by the use of descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings of the study were that the key decision makers in curriculum and instruction programme were the principals and teachers while in students' management and welfare, the key decision makers were the principals, teachers and Boards of governors. In school finance management, the key decision makers were identified as the Principals and Boards of Governors. It was also found out that there was an association between the teaching experience of teachers and their perception on the adequacy of their involvement in decision making process in secondary schools of Eastern Province, Kenya.

Key Words: Decision Making, Participation, Management Tasks

1.0: Introduction

In order to ensure that many of the decisions are made and owned by the stakeholders within the school system, educationists have advocated for the decentralization of education. Decentralization refers to devolution of the centralized control of power and decision making from government into private initiatives at state, provincial, local government and school level (Uwakwe, Falaye, Emunemu and Adolore, 2008). The reasons for educational decentralization tend to be associated with four distinct objectives; democratization, regional or ethnic pressures, improved efficiency and enhanced quality of schooling (Winkler, 2002). Samad (2000) further points out that "the transfer of decision making authority to the school level promotes democratization in education sector, and gives broad opportunities for educational stakeholders in schools to participate in the management of educational programs and to a great extent eases the central government burdens"(p. 187).

In Kenya, there were reforms in educational management in the year 2005 and the policy of transfer of some decision making authority to the District Education Boards and the stakeholders at school level was adopted (Republic of Kenya, 2005). The educational reforms were necessitated by

several challenges which included political interference, poor learning environment and weak early child development and education (ECDE) program (Institute of Policy Analysis and Research, 2008). Other reasons include inadequate coverage of the school formal curriculum, lack of appropriate counseling and career programmes in schools and poor employer motivation and poor management practices. The students, parents, teachers and other stakeholders' reactions to these challenges have been strikes, unrests and demonstrations as a way of communicating their grievances to the authorities. The most outstanding cases of students strike in the recent past are the St. Kizito tragedy of July 13th, 1991 where 19 girls died and 70 were raped, and Nyeri High School strike of May 24th 1999 where four prefects were locked in their cubicles and burnt to death. The worst calamity happened on 25th march 2001 at Kyanguli Mixed Secondary School in Machakos district, where 67 students were burnt to death and many injured when their dormitory was set on fire by two boys who petrol bombed the school (Juma, 2008).

Due to these unrests, running of secondary schools in Kenya became almost impossible in 2008 and short term remedial measures were taken. These included the ban of cell phone use in schools, removal of videos from school buses, expulsion of student culprits and a ban on extra tuition. A special committee instituted by the government to investigate the causes of school unrests blamed the school managers and administrators for what they said was a failure to give students, teachers and other stakeholders an avenue of expressing their grievances. This is an implication that decision making process in secondary schools is an issue that has not been fully addressed. To some degree, it points to non-participatory governance in schools. The ever increasing school unrests and strikes in Kenya and particularly in Eastern Province make one doubt whether the decision making practices are in harmony with the policy of participatory decision making. Furthermore, there is little evidence of studies on decision making process in secondary schools in Kenya, especially after the educational reforms. Therefore it was found necessary to carry out a study on the decision making process in secondary schools of Eastern Province, Kenya. The study was done with a view of making recommendations for an effective and more participatory decision making in secondary schools.

1.1 Objectives

The objectives of the study were:

- 1) To identify the key decision makers in selected management tasks in secondary schools of Eastern Province, Kenya as perceived by students and teachers.
- 2) To find out the teachers' perception on the adequacy of their involvement in decision making in secondary schools of Eastern Province, Kenya.
- 3) To establish if there is a difference between the teachers' perception on the adequacy of their involvement in decision making process and the following:
 - i) Gender
 - ii) Teaching experience of the teachers
 - iii) Type of school

1.2 Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated in line with the objectives to guide the study.

- 1) Who are the key decision makers in selected management tasks in secondary schools of Eastern province, Kenya as perceived by teachers?

- 2) What is the teachers' perception on the adequacy of their involvement in decision making in secondary schools of Eastern Province, Kenya?

1.3 Research Hypothesis

HO₁: There is no difference in teachers' perception of their adequacy of involvement in decision making process and gender.

HO₂: There is no difference in teachers' perception of their adequacy of involvement in decision making process and teaching experience.

HO₃: There is no difference in teachers' perception of their adequacy of involvement in decision making process and types of schools.

2.0 Methodology

The design adopted for the study was descriptive survey research design. The study was confined to secondary school teachers in Eastern Kenya. It was also confined to the following management tasks; Curriculum and instruction, students' management and welfare, and financial management in secondary schools in Eastern Kenya. The target population for the study was the 5064 teachers in the secondary schools in Eastern Province (Ministry of Education, 2012). The sample for the study was selected through multi-stage sampling. The first sampling unit for the study was the district. Through stratified simple random sampling three districts were selected from the 13 districts of Eastern province. This was meant to subdivide the province into smaller homogeneous units in terms of population density in order to get more accurate representation. The province was divided into three strata which are lower Eastern, central Eastern and upper Eastern. A district was selected from each stratum through simple random sampling. The districts selected through stratified random sampling were Machakos, Mbeere and Isiolo. The numbers of secondary schools were 145, 37 and seven (7) for Machakos, Mbeere and Isiolo districts respectively. The second sampling unit was secondary schools. Through stratified proportionate random sampling procedure a total of 60 secondary schools were selected. From each of the 60 secondary schools, six (6) teachers were randomly selected making a sample of 360 teachers. Data was collected by the use of a questionnaire. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical procedures. The descriptive analysis procedures included frequencies, percentages and Mean while Chi-Square test for independence was the inferential statistics used. Computer based packages for quantitative data (SPSS Version 11.5) was used to analyze the data and where possible was presented in tables and charts.

3.0: Result

The results were presented according to the objectives and the hypotheses were tested.

3.1 Key Decision Makers in Selected Management Tasks

The management tasks were curriculum and instruction program, students' management and welfare, and school finance management.

3.1.1 Key Decision Makers in Curriculum and Instruction Program

Teachers' response on key decision makers in curriculum and instruction program was as shown in table 1.0 below. From the teachers' response, principals were the most involved in making decisions in curriculum and instructional programs with a mean score of 17.54. The least involved were parents with a weighted mean of 9.88. The midpoint was set at 12 (3x4) hence those stakeholders who scored less than 12 (4 to 11) were taken as less involved in decision making in curriculum and instruction program while those who scored more than 12 (12 to 20) were treated as the key decision makers. Therefore the key decision makers in curriculum and instruction as per the teachers' response were the principals and the teachers only. Teachers indicated the key decision makers in curriculum and instructional program as the principals and the teachers themselves. Teachers did not perceive students as key decision makers in curriculum and instruction. As argued by some researchers, this could be attributed to the feeling among teachers and school heads that it was more of their duty to decide for pupils because of their immaturity (Shumba, Maphosa & Shumba, 2008).

3.1.2 Key Decision Makers in Students' Management and Welfare

Stakeholders were involved in various aspects of students' management and welfare in the following order starting with the most involved as suggested by the teachers: Principals (37.02), Teachers (30.57), Boards of Governors (24.83), Students (18.38) and Parents (16.32) (Table 2.0). The key decision makers on students' management and welfare as per the teachers' response were the principals, teachers and boards of governors. The students and parents were less involved. Principals are the chief executive officers of the schools hence are viewed as the key decision makers since all decisions made by other stakeholders always comes to him or her for implementation. Teachers, by virtue of their position which has given some legitimate power are also key decision makers in students' management and welfare. Boards of Governors (BOGs) members who have been identified as one of the key decision makers in students' management and welfare, have powers delegated by the minister of education through the Basic Education Act of 2013 to manage secondary schools in Kenya. This was collaborated by the finding that many school governance teams and teachers have not yet grasped the concept of students' participation in decision making and still regard students as 'children' and not partners in education (Ngubane, 2005).

3.1.3 Key Decision Makers in School Finance Management

Principals made many decisions in this area with a mean of 23.59 (Table 3.0). The least decision makers in this area were students who had a mean of 6.44. In summary, the various stakeholders were involved in the following descending order in making decisions on school financial management: Principals, Boards of Governors, Teachers, Parents and Students. The mid-point was set at 15 (5x3) in order to determine the key decision makers in school financial management implying that any group that scored less than 15 (5 to 14) was treated as less involved while any group that scored 15 and above (15 to 25) was treated as the key decision makers. From table 2.0, the key decision makers in school finance management were the principals and boards of governors. Other stakeholders including teachers, parents and students were less involved. Although teachers have been mandated by the Public Procurement and Disposal Act of 2005 to take charge of procurement and tendering in schools this seems not to have been implemented (Wanderi, 2008).

This has been collaborated by the research finding that that there is very little teacher consultation and involvement in secondary school budgeting (Okech, 2005). The reason why stakeholders within the school are not among the key decision makers could be because of corrupt practices that have been inherent in the secondary school systems and have been perfected by principals and some support staff

3.2 Teachers' Perception on the Adequacy of their Involvement in the Decision making Process of the Secondary Schools of eastern Province, Kenya

In order to answer the question on the adequacy of teachers' involvement in decision making process, they were first required to indicate whether is important to involve teachers in decision making. Majority 96.7% (285) of the respondents indicated that teachers should be involved in decision making while only 3.0% (9) were against the involvement of teachers in decision making. This finding is fully supported by the argument that people will always want to experience a sense of control of their lives (Dewey, 1916). In support of the importance of participation of other stakeholders in the decision making process in secondary schools, it is argued that this strengthens a commitment to and understanding of democracy (Landsdown, 2001). The participation in the decision making process, especially by the students is said to improve academic performance and reduce the frequency of school strikes (Karanja, 2010). The respondents were further required to indicate how significance it is to involve them in decision making process. 49.0% (144) indicated that the involvement of teachers in decision making was very significant while 38.8% (114) indicated it as significant. 8.5% (25) indicated the involvement of teachers in decision making as not significant while 3.7% (1) indicated it as very insignificant. Therefore a total of 87.8% (258) of the respondents indicated that the involvement of teachers in decision making was very significant or significant while only 12.2% (36) responded in support of not significant or very insignificant. Those who had either indicated it as very significant of significant argued that teachers were the major curriculum implementers in schools hence must be involved in making major decisions especially in curriculum matters and also that once they are involved , they are likely to own the programmes. Some opined that a variety of ideas are always very health for any educational institution and that as potential heads of schools, as they make decisions, they learn the art of facilitation of decision making which is a major duty of the principals.

From the table 6.0, 17.3% (51) of the respondents rated the adequacy of involvement of teachers in decision making process in secondary schools as very adequate, 42.2% (124) as adequate, 30.6% (90) inadequate, while 9.8% (29) indicated it as very inadequate. Those who had indicated their involvement in decision making process as very adequate or adequate gave some of their reasons as that 'teachers are the ones who come up with some of the major decisions in schools especially in curriculum and instructional programs, and students' management and welfare'. They also argued that teachers are the ones who either add value or refine any decisions made by other stakeholders for implementation in schools. They also pointed out that they do facilitate some of the decision making by getting opinions from other stakeholders especially parents and students. A reason given by those who indicated their involvement in decision making process as either inadequate or very inadequate was that they only get reports of decisions that had already been made and that they are required to implement them.

3.3 Hypotheses Testing

The hypotheses for the study were tested and discussed as follows:

H₀₁: There is no difference in teachers' perception of their adequacy of involvement in decision making process and gender in secondary schools of Eastern Province, Kenya

From table 7 .0, the Chi-Square value obtained was 7.361, the degree of freedom was 3 and the significance level (2-sided) was .061. The critical value of the Chi-Square at 3-degrees of freedom and alpha-level of 0.05 is 7.82. Thus the test statistic (obtained critical value of 7.361) falls outside the critical region. Thus we fail to reject the null hypothesis that '*there is no difference in teachers' perception of their adequacy of involvement in decision making process across gender in secondary schools of Eastern Province, Kenya*'. Thus there is no association between gender and the teachers' perception on the adequacy of their involvement in decision making process in secondary schools of Eastern Province, Kenya.

H₀₂: There is no difference in teachers' perception of their adequacy of involvement in decision making process across teaching experience in secondary schools of Eastern Province, Kenya

From table 8.0, the Chi-Square value obtained was 19.882, the degree of freedom was 9 and the significance level (2-sided) was .019. The critical value of the Chi-Square at 9-degrees of freedom and alpha-level of 0.05 is 16.919. Thus the test statistic (obtained critical value of 19.882) falls into the critical region, thus the null hypothesis which states that: '*There is no difference in teachers' perception of their adequacy of involvement in decision making process and teaching experience in secondary schools of Eastern Province, Kenya*' was rejected. Thus there is an association between teaching experience and the teachers' perception on the adequacy of their involvement in decision making process in secondary schools of Eastern Province, Kenya. This is confirmed by Olorunsola and Olayemi (2011) who found out that there is a relationship between teachers' teaching experience and participation in decision making in Nigeria. This could be attributed to the differences in experiences. It is likely that those teachers who have taught for long are likely to be more rational in making decisions than those who are relatively young in the teaching profession.

H₀₃: There is no difference in teachers' perception of their adequacy of involvement in decision making process and type of school in Eastern Province, Kenya

The Chi-Square value obtained was 10.806, degrees of freedom was 6 and the significance (2-sided) was .095. The critical value of the Chi-square at 6 degrees of freedom and alpha level of 0.05 was 12.592. The test statistic (10.806) does not fall into the critical region and therefore we fail to reject the null hypothesis which states that: '*There is no difference in teachers' perception of their adequacy of involvement in decision making process and type of schools in Eastern Province, Kenya*'

4.0 Conclusion

The study established that teachers perceived themselves as key decision makers in curriculum and instruction programme and also in students' management and welfare, but not in school finance management. The school principals were perceived to be the key decision makers in all the management tasks discussed. There was found to be an association between teachers' teaching experience and the adequacy of their involvement in decision making.

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Tables

TABLE 1.0
Decision Making in Curriculum and Instructional Program

Task Area	Parents	BoGs	Principal	Teachers	Students
Determining the size of classes	1.69	3.26	4.62	3.09	1.38
Determining the non-formal curriculum	1.49	2.33	4.20	4.13	3.37
Determining entertainment and recreational activities	2.09	2.91	4.48	4.05	3.31
Determining school rules and regulations	2.11	3.16	4.82	4.26	2.00
Determining how responsibilities should be delegated to students	1.52	2.28	4.65	4.48	2.49
Disciplinary action against students	2.33	3.74	4.92	3.78	1.80
Organizing boarding facilities	2.73	3.85	4.64	3.59	2.02
Determining type of food provided for lunch and supper	2.36	3.30	4.69	3.19	2.01
Total	16.32	24.83	37.02	30.57	18.38

TABLE 2.0
Participation in Decision Making on Students' Management and Welfare

Task Area	Parents	BoGs	Principal	Teachers	Students
Determining the size of classes	1.69	3.26	4.62	3.09	1.38
Determining the non-formal curriculum	1.49	2.33	4.20	4.13	3.37
Determining entertainment and recreational activities	2.09	2.91	4.48	4.05	3.31
Determining school rules and regulations	2.11	3.16	4.82	4.26	2.00
Determining how responsibilities should be delegated to students	1.52	2.28	4.65	4.48	2.49
Disciplinary action against students	2.33	3.74	4.92	3.78	1.80
Organizing boarding facilities	2.73	3.85	4.64	3.59	2.02
Determining type of food provided for lunch and supper	2.36	3.30	4.69	3.19	2.01
Total	16.32	24.83	37.02	30.57	18.38

TABLE 3.0
Decision Making in School Finance Management

Task Area	Parents	BoGs	Principal	Teachers	Students
Deciding how money from the ministry of education is spent	1.92	4.38	4.80	2.12	1.23
Deciding what to buy and who to buy from	1.69	3.68	4.74	2.68	1.34
Making estimates of income and expenditure (Budgeting)	1.87	4.39	4.73	2.51	1.18
Recruitment of non-teaching personnel	1.66	4.38	4.76	2.32	1.20
Deciding any income generating activities that the school may be engaged in	2.03	4.02	4.56	2.87	1.49
Total	9.17	20.85	23.59	12.50	6.44

TABLE 4.0
Whether Secondary School Teachers should be involved in Decision Making

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	285	96.7
No	9	3.0
Total	294	100.0

TABLE 5.0
Significance of Teachers' Involvement in Decision Making

Significance	Number	Percent
Very significant	144	49.0
Significant	114	38.8
Not significant	25	8.5
Very insignificant	11	3.7
Total	294	100.0

TABLE 6.0
Adequacy of Teachers' Involvement in Decision Making

Rate	Number	Percent
Very Adequate	51	17.3
Adequate	124	42.2
Inadequate	90	30.6
Very inadequate	29	9.8
Total	294	100.0

Table 7.0

Gender and Teachers' Perception on the adequacy of their involvement in Decision Making Process

Perception on the adequacy of teachers' involvement in decision making	Gender		Total	χ^2	df	Sig. (2 Sided)
	Male	Female				
Very Adequate	24	27	51	7.361	3	0.061
Adequate	79	45	124			
Inadequate	43	48	91			
Very Inadequate	16	12	28			
Total	162	132	294			

Table 8.0
Teaching Experience and Teachers' Perception on the adequacy of their involvement in
Decision Making Process

Perception on the adequacy of teachers' involvement in decision making	Frequency	Teaching Experience				Total	χ^2	Df	Sig. (2 Sided)
		<1	1-5	6-10	>10				
Very Adequate	Observed	13	13	16	21	63	19.882	9	.019
	Expected	13.1	15.9	12.6	21.4	63.0			
Adequate	Observed	24	28	18	37	107			
	Expected	22.2	26.9	21.5	36.4	107.0			
Inadequate	Observed	20	13	14	33	80			
	Expected	16.6	20.1	16.1	27.2	80.0			
Very Inadequate	Observed	4	20	11	9	44			
	Expected	9.1	11.1	8.8	15.0	44.0			
Total	Observed	61	74	59	100	294			
	Expected	61.0	74.0	59.0	100.0	294.0			

Table 9.0
Type of School and teachers' perception of the adequacy of their involvement in Decision making process

Perception of Teachers' Adequacy of Involvement in Decision making process	Frequency	Type of School			Total	χ^2 Value	d f	Sig. (2 Sided)
		Boys' Only	Girls' Only	Co-Educational				
Very Adequate	Observed	19	13	31	63	10.806	6	.095
	Expected	14.4	16.7	31.9	63.0			
Adequate	Observed	26	23	58	107	10.806	6	.095
	Expected	24.4	28.4	54.2	107			
Inadequate	Observed	18	25	37	80	10.806	6	.095
	Expected	18.2	21.2	40.5	80.0			
Very inadequate	Observed	4	17	23	44	10.806	6	.095
	Expected	10	11.7	22.3	44.0			
Total	Observed	67	78	149	294	10.806	6	.095
	Expected	67.0	78.0	149.0	294.0			