Assessment of Teachers' Participation in Decision Making Process in Public Secondary Schools of Moshi Municipality, Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

Participation in decision making is an important aspect for proper functioning of any kind of organization, educational institutions included. In response to this fact, this study sought to investigate on teachers' participation in various aspects of decision making among Public Secondary Schools of Moshi Municipality, Tanzania, using descriptive survey research design. A random sample of 260 teachers from 14 schools participated by filling the questionnaire. A group of research experts from the University of Arusha went through the questionnaire against three research questions that guided this study and gave comments where necessary adjustment was needed before data collection was done. To ensure acceptable reliability of data, a pilot study was conducted in one school which was not part of the study sample and Cronbach's Alpha of greater than 0.7 was obtained in each category of the questionnaire. Data analysis was done through descriptive statistics in terms of mean scores and standard deviations. The study came up with a conclusion that the level of teachers' participation in planning extra-curricular activities, allocation of resources, determining sources of income and allocation of budget was limited. Proper channels for them to air out their views on curriculum planning and change were very low. Based on these conclusions, it is recommended that school administrators need to change their attitudes and consider teachers as key partners in the process of decision making. They also need to establish a collaborative atmosphere in which teachers can freely share their ideas regarding different aspects of school planning and development.

Keywords: Participation, Curriculum, Planning, Decision Making, Secondary Schools, Tanzania.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Participation in decision making is important in any kind of organization, educational institutions included. According to Ndu and Anogbov (2007), lack of teacher's involvement in decision making results into teachers behaving as if they are strangers within the school environment. Thus, they will not put in their best to have full sense of commitment and dedication to the school. Teachers can take a greater role in the success of the school when they are fully involved as active participants in decision making process. According to Olorunsola and Olayemi (2011), decision making is the canter for administrative process and leadership in schools. Glew, Griffin, O'Leary-Kelly and Van fleet (1995) define participative decision making as organization's effort to provide those at a lower level with a greater voice in organizational performance. This definition suggests that participative decision making represents a deliberate attempt from a management system to avoid upper-level management team making all decisions regarding organizational policies and functioning. According to Jewell (1998), collaborative decision making is the way to solicit employee's ideas for effective running of organizations. It's expected that people who participate in decisions that affect them will understand the issues better and accept the decisions more readily.

A study from South Africa (Wadesago, 2012) found that insignificant teachers' participation in decision making issues resulted in low staff morale. This implies that failure to include teachers in the process of decision making may lead to detrimental effects in schools and education system at large. According to Lunenburg (2010), decision making is one of the most important activities in which school administrators engage daily; the success of schools is linked to effective decisions. According to Keung (2008), teacher's participation in decision-making is one of recommendations for proper management system and is one of the key characteristics of an effective school management. Teachers' participation in school decision making is mandatory for the attainment of school goals and objectives (Wadesango, 2011). This suggests that teachers must be given opportunity to play their defined and legitimate roles in decision making processes (Mokoena, 2011).

Researchers around African countries identified contradictory results on teachers' participation in decision making. Olorunsola and Olayemi (2011) examined teachers' involvement in decision-making in secondary schools of Nigeria and found that teachers were significantly involved. On the contrary, a study of Mokoena (2011) in South African secondary schools, found that heads of schools hindered participatory decision making. The present situation in secondary schools in Ethiopia shows that teachers are not given opportunity to participate in decision making process. A study done in Assosa Zone by Bademo and Tefera (2016) indicates that the decision-making process in secondary schools did not seem participatory and the efforts made by school management to empower teachers were not satisfactory. Particularly, teachers were excluded in setting organizational goals, policies and procedure even though involvement of teachers in setting organizational goals, policies and procedure is essential for proper school functioning (Hoy and Miskel, 2011). A study in Kenya by Kiprop and Kandie (2012) revealed that teachers' participation in decision-making was very low. In fact, teachers did not participate in decision-making as they desired. According to Udo and Akpa (2007), where teachers are adequately involved in decision making process, there would be commitment and the realization

of school goal will be easy; furthermore, teacher's opposition will be minimized, something which will increase teamwork and thus, school objectives can easily be realized.

Failure for teachers' involvement in decision making has also been a problem in Tanzanian school systems. The study of Daud and Mabagala (2015), reported that the main decision makers in secondary schools in Tabora Municipality, for instance, were heads of schools. In an interview with teachers, it was revealed that most of decisions in the schools were made by the heads of schools while teachers were mostly concerned with curriculum implementation. On the aspect of finance and business management, teachers were least involved while the major decision makers in all functions related to school finance and business were the heads of schools. Based on background of this study, it was deemed necessary to assess level of teachers' involvement in decision making in order to give necessary recommendations.

1.1 Theoretical Perspectives

This study is based on collegial model which emphasize that decision-making should be shared by all members of the organization. The model advises that organizations should determine policy and make decisions through the process of discussion leading to consensus. Power should be shared by all members of the organization who are thought to have a shared understanding about the aims of the institution. Collegial model reflects the perspective that management should be based on agreement, that decision making should be based on democratic principles (Bush & Bell, 2002).

Collegial model further assumes that decisions should be reached by consensus and that there are common values and shared objectives leading to the view that it is both desirable and possible to resolve problems by agreement. Collegial model seems to be appropriate for organizations such as schools and colleges that have significant number of professional staff. According to Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995), collegiality is seen as a key aspect of teacher's professional development and a vehicle to increase teachers' knowledge. According to Everard, Morris and Wilson (2004), collegiality is participative in nature in different types of decision making. It is said to have advantages in that it entails a wide variety in expertise and professional knowledge that helps to make sound decisions for the institution. It is also argued that with collegiality, the implementation of decisions made becomes effective and more likely to work due to the involvement of teachers who happen to have been involved in the formulation of policies (Bush and Bell (2002). Bush and Bell (2002) further hold that there are three main arguments in favor of collegial approach to management. The first one is that teachers wish to be involved in decision making. Secondly, the quality of decision making may be better when educators participate in the process. The last one is effective implementation of decision is more likely to succeed if teachers 'own' the outcomes through their participation.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Rationale for Teachers' Participation

Considerable attention has been devoted to teachers' roles in decision making participation for school effectiveness. According to Everard and Morris (1999), effectiveness of a school depends on the head of schools' collaborating with the teaching staff to achieve a common and explicit vision. Teacher participation in decision-making increases students' achievement, creates a

sense of community, increases teacher morale and helps schools meet academic standards (Wyman, 2000). Also decision-making if used correctly, it can bring together teachers, parents, administrators, and community members. According to Cheng (2004), teachers become partners rather than employees when they are involved in decision making. They also act as facilitators and coordinators to reinvent the organizational culture in school.

Teachers' participation in decision making has been advocated for a variety of reasons. Most often, participation is thought to enhance communication between teachers and administrators and improve the quality of educational decision making. It is also thought that participation may contribute to the quality of teachers' work life (Algoush, 2010). Furthermore, because teachers have an opportunity to be involved in and to exert influence on decision making processes, their participation is believed to increase willingness to implement them, hence to promote educational productivity (Somech, 2010).

The participation of teachers in decision making is perceived as an important link between administrators and teachers (Sergiovani, 1992). The importance of participative decision making in educational organizations has been recognized as a key function required by administrators. Participatory decision making is crucial to the overall effective operation of the school (Pashiardis, 1994).

Participative management ensures that members in organizations take ownership of the decisions, and are willing to defend such decisions taken through collaborative means. This means that participative decision making results in a great sense of commitment and ownership of decisions. In most cases the responsibility for obtaining school objectives depends on teachers, also participative decision making is an important contributor to successful educational management. It does not only facilitate implementation of decisions but also leads teacher to feel respected and empowered. Moreover, such approach builds trust, helps teachers acquires new skills, increases school effectiveness and strengthens staff morale, commitment and team work (Pashiardis, (1994) and Lashway (1996), cited in Gardian and Rathore (2010).

According to Mohrman and Lawer (1992), participation of teachers in making decision enables higher quality products and services, less absenteeism, less turn over, better problem solving and, greater organization effectiveness. In addition, Pashiardis (1994) suggest that, increasing amount of teacher participation in making decisions and extending their involvement in the overall decision process makes school policy and management more responsive to societal needs.

2.2 Participation in Curriculum and Instruction

According to Carl (1995) teachers should exercise their professional autonomy on curriculum and instructional decision-making, something which enhances the effectiveness of learning and teaching process during implementation. Teacher's involvement in this area includes creating the curriculum they will use. Lunenburg (2011) argues that teachers can control learning experiences through the manipulation of environment which results in stimulating situations required to evoke the kind of learning outcome desired. Malebye (1999) argues that teachers should make decisions concerning each lesson, the time for each concept, different tasks and the instructional placing for each skill area.

According to Munazza (2004), involvement of teachers in curriculum decision making leads to understand the nature of learning, pose challenging tasks, encouraging students to articulate their ideas, setting goals for instruction, creating appropriate contexts and posing problems that have relevance and meaning to their learners. The rationale of teachers' involvement lies in the fact that teachers have the potential to create an overall approach to curriculum development rather than follow a prescribed course of action (Wasil, 2014).

2.3 Participation in School Budget and Planning

Financial management in education is concerned with the cost of education sources of income to meet the educational costs and the spending of income in order to achieve the educational objectives (Brain & Kinight, 1993). Mamba (1992) cited in Balcha (2012) states that school budget is a financial plan for producing an educational program in a school context. Budget preparation is therefore not only the responsibility of heads of schools but rather it needs teachers and staff participation. Teacher should participate in all areas of school finance because they are well placed in identifying what is lost or fulfilled regarding school resources. Newcombe and McCormick (2001) noted that teachers are required to attend meetings such as budget and finance planning committees. They are actually encouraged to be involved in a wide variety of financial issues.

According to Newcombe and McCormick (2001) there are two areas of financial decisions: technical and operational financial decision in which teachers can directly be involved. Whereas technical financial decisions are concerned with the provision of resource for classroom teaching (e.g., preparing a subject department budget and allocating financial resource within a teaching area), operational financial management decision issues are primarily concerned with the purchase and maintenance of plant and equipment unrelated to teaching and approving expenditure in other areas. Obviously, involving teachers in these areas requires creation of conducive atmosphere by heads of schools.

According to Cameron (1992) the schools determine how funds will be employed so as to increase the school and staff with the autonomy to make school decisions through some combination of site budgetary control and relief from constraining rules and regulations; and sharing the authority to make decisions with teachers to improve education.

An effective planning process is an essential feature of every successful organization. Planning is the basic school activities that teachers should involve in and be concerned with during implementation. Planning means building a mental bridge from where one is to where one wants to be when one has achieved the objective (Adaire, 2010). Teacher's participation in planning can increase their understanding and commitment. Participative planning activity should therefore include as many teachers as possible who will be affected by the resulting plans and/ or will be asked to help implement the plans (Schermerhorn, 1996). The best method of increasing the involvement of teachers in school decision–making is by involving them in the formulation of school's plan. Heads of schools should therefore facilitate the conditions that teachers take part in the formulation of school plan.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This section provides the methodological aspects on how the study was designed and conducted. It expresses the techniques and procedures that were used in the fieldwork.

3.1 Research Design

Research design is the conceptual structure within which research was conducted; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. This study employed a descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey research design is that branch of social scientific investigation which studies large and small populations by selecting and studying samples chosen from the population. It is used to allow researchers to gather information, summarize, present and interpret for the purpose of clarification. The researchers used descriptive survey research design to assess if public secondary school teachers were involved in decision making process in Moshi municipality (Kothari, 2009).

3.2 Population and Sampling Procedures

According to Saunders (2000), population is the number of people from which a sample is taken. It is a group of individuals, objects or items from which samples are taken for measurement (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). The researcher constructed a particular sample size which is appropriate for needed data. The population of this study was 879 teachers from 14 public secondary schools in Moshi Municipality. The researcher used this population to obtain sample size that was covered during data collection.

Sampling is the procedure whereby a researcher selects people, places or things to study (Kothari, 2009). It is a process of selecting a number of individuals or objects from a population such that the selected group contains elements representative of characteristics found in the entire population (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). Kothari (2009) defines sampling technique as the procedure the researcher would adopt in selecting items for the sample. To determine the sample, the researcher used simple random sampling procedure because it ensures that each unit has equal probability of inclusion in the sample. Therefore, the researcher had 14 public secondary schools as a sample size. The sample size of 260 teachers was selected from 879 teachers to fill the questionnaire.

The researchers sought help from research experts from the University of Arusha to see if the instrument has items that measured the variables appropriately. Experts went through the questionnaire and commented where necessary adjustment was needed before data collection was done. To ensure reliability of data, a pilot study was conducted in one school which was not part of the study sample. Analysis was done through Statistical Package for Social Sciences to determine Cronbach's Alpha of not less than 0.7 in each category of the questionnaire before the actual data collection was done.

3.3 Validity and Reliability

Validity is the ability of the instrument to measures what the researcher intends to measure. This is a way of justifying the appropriateness of instrument utilized by the researcher in the study. Validity is concerned with whether or not findings are really about what they appear to be about (Saunders and Thornhill, 2000).The researchers sought help from research experts from the University of Arusha to see if the instrument has items that measured the variables appropriately. Experts went through the questionnaire and commented where necessary adjustment was needed before data collection was done.

Reliability is a measure which addresses accuracy of research methods and techniques to produce data. It refers to the extent to which data collection techniques or analysis procedures yield consistent findings (Saunders and Thornhill, 2000). To ensure reliability of data, a pilot study was conducted in one school which was not part of the study sample. Analysis was done through Statistical Package for Social Sciences to determine Cronbach's Alpha of not less than 0.7 in each category of the questionnaire before the actual data collection was done as shown in table 1.

Table 1 Reliability Test

SN	VARIABLE IN QUSETION	CRONBACH'S ALPHA	COMMENT
1.	School planning	0.813	Reliable
2.	School Budgeting	0.897	Reliable
3.	Curriculum Planning	0.756	Reliable

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part presents responses to various research questions that guided this study. It also gives analysis and interpretation of results with the support of related literature and studies. Respondents were asked to indicate their ratings on the level of teacher's participation in school planning, budgeting and curriculum and teaching. A four point Likert scales type was used to measure and categorize the response from the respondents. The scales were measured as 3.50—4.00 = Very High, 2.50—3.49 = High, 1.50—2.49= Low, and 1.00-1.49= Very Low.

1. What is the level of teacher's participation in school planning in public Secondary School in Moshi Municipality?

This research question sought to determine the level of teacher's participation in school planning process. Table 2 indicates that, respondents' mean score in all 10 items was either low or very low. Particularly, with the mean score of between 1.50 and 2.49, it implies that level of teachers' participation in school planning process were found to be low in the following aspects of school planning: planning extra-curricular activities, communication between community and school, discussing challenges facing the school, planning school performance and arranging meetings with parents. They further regarded their participation to be low in project planning, preparation of school development projects and consultation before school plans have been initiated in the use of school facilities. With mean score of between 1.00-1.49, it implies that the

level of teachers' participation in school planning was very low in aspect of preparation of school plans. Generally, findings show that the level of teachers' involvement in school planning was low.

Table 2: Teachers; Participation in School Planning

SN	Item	Mean	Std Dev	Interpretation
1.	I am involved in planning extra-curricular activities.	1.9823	.76574	Low
2.	I am involved in communication between school and community.	1.8333	.65754	Low
3.	I am involved in discussing the challenges facing the school.	1.8208	.64456	Low
4.	I am involved in planning performance of school	1.7257	.77343	Low
5.	I am involved in arranging meetings with parents	1.6946	.70025	Low
6.	My ideas have been used in project planning	1.6303	.65430	Low
7.	I am involved in the preparation of school development projects	1.6276	.59359	Low
8.	I am consulted before school plans have been initiated	1.6025	.65221	Low
9.	I am involved in decisions concerning the use of school facilities	1.5167	.65944	Low
10.	I am involved in the preparation of school plans	1.4792	.64651	Very Low

This finding is in agreement with that of Gemechu (2014) who found that the extent of teacher's involvement in school planning process in government secondary schools of Jimma Town, Ethiopia was low. Also this finding is in agreement with that of Felician (2013) who found that teacher's participation in school planning at Kilombero District in Tanzania was low and as a result, they were victims of underperformance in their work. This finding is in disagreement with that of Olorunsola and Olayemi (2011) who found that secondary school teachers in Ekiti State, Nigeria are significantly involved in school planning process

2. **What is the level of teacher's participation in budgeting in Public Secondary School in Moshi Municipality?**

This research question sought to establish the level of teacher's participation in budgeting process. Participation in budgeting was another aspect under which teachers' participation was measured. As reflected in Table 3, the level of teachers' participation in budgeting in all six items ranged between 1.00 and 1.49 which means very low: This includes participation in allocation of resources, finding sources of income, discussing the income and allocation of budget, participating in school budgeting, financial planning and budgeting process. This findings show that the rate of teachers' participation in budgeting was very low.

This finding is in agreement with that of Gemechu (2014) who found that the extent of teacher's involvement in budgeting and income generation and school building effort in government secondary schools of Jimma Town, Ethiopia were found to be low. Also this finding is in

agreement with that of Felician (2013) who found that teacher's participation in budgeting at Kilombero District was low.

Table 3: Teacher's Participation in Budgeting

SN	Item	Mean	Std Dev	Interpretation
1	I am involved in determining allocation of resources.	1.2625	.51122	Very Low
2	I am involved in finding sources of income.	1.2385	.46475	Very Low
3	I am involved in discussing the income and allocation of budget	1.2333	.47942	Very Low
4	School budget is activity in which all teachers participate.	1.2208	.50643	Very Low
5	I am involved in school's financial planning.	1.2125	.44891	Very Low
6	I am involved in budgeting processes.	1.1875	.46896	Very Low

3. What is the level of teacher's participation in curriculum and teaching process in Public Secondary School in Moshi Municipality?

This research question sought to determine the level of teacher's participation in curriculum and teaching process in public secondary school. Table 4 shows that teachers' involvement in matters related to curriculum and teaching was rated either low or very low as their mean score ranged between 1.00 and 2.49. Particularly, teachers considered their participation in curriculum and teaching process in the following areas to be low: Setting of the learning objectives, deciding on the content and form of lesson plan and curriculum planning. They also considered that proper channels for them to air out their views on curriculum planning is low and that their voice is not heard in curriculum planning. Furthermore, teachers considered their involvement in the process of curriculum change to be very low.

Table 4: Teacher's participation in Curriculum and Teaching

SN	Item	Mean	Std Dev	Interpretation
1.	I participate in setting the learning objectives	1.8305	.76414	Low
2.	I am involved in deciding on the content and form of lesson plan.	1.8017	.76380	Low
3.	The rate of my participation in curriculum planning is satisfactory.	1.6681	.66490	Low
4.	There are proper channels for teachers to air out views on curriculum planning.	1.5798	.67500	Low
5.	My voice is heard in curriculum planning	1.5443	.60641	Low
6.	I am involved in the process of curriculum change.	1.3739	.60140	Very low

This finding is in disagreement with that of Gemechu (2014) who found that teachers' involvement in school curriculum and instruction and student affairs and disciplinary problem were found to be relatively high whereas their involvement in school policy, rules and regulation range in government secondary schools of Jimma Town, Ethiopia was on the medium. Also this

finding is in agreement with the finding of Felician (2013) who found that teacher's participation in curriculum and teaching at Kilombero District was low.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on analysis and discussion of findings, the researchers came up with three conclusions below:

1. The level of teachers' participation in planning extra-curricular activities and school development projects was low.

2. The level of teachers' participation in allocation of resources, determining sources of income and allocation of budget was limited.

3. Teachers' participation in curriculum and teaching decisions was also limited. Particularly, proper channels for them to air out their views on curriculum planning and change were very low.

Based on three conclusions above, it is recommended that school administrators need to change their attitudes and consider teachers as key partners in the process of decision making. Particularly, they need to establish a collaborative atmosphere in which teachers can freely share their ideas regarding different aspects of school planning and development.

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