

TEACHERS PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING PROCESS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN IMO STATE, NIGERIA.

Nwaru, Patricia Ego.

Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria

pe.nwaru@unizik.edu.ng

08032208714

Abstract

This research explores teacher's participation in decision making processes within secondary schools in Imo State, emphasizing the significance of their involvement in shaping school policies and practices, as well as whether the teachers' involvement in decision making process is related to their personal characteristics. One research question and four hypotheses were raised to guide the study. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The study population comprised of all teachers in Imo State secondary schools. The stratified random sampling technique was used to select 200 teachers from five different local government area of the state. The local governments were selected randomly. Four schools were selected from each of the five local governments while ten teachers were also randomly selected from each of the schools. A researcher-made questionnaire titled Teachers Decision Making Questionnaire (TDMQ) was used to collect data for the study. Face validation of the questionnaires were certified by 3 experts from the Department of Educational Foundation, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. While two of the experts specialized in measurement and evaluation, the other expert is specialized in Management and Policy. Data collected were analysed using SPSS version 26. The frequencies, percentage scores, T-test, ANOVA, and Schaefer post hoc test were used for data analysis. The findings of the study revealed that secondary school teachers in Imo State are significantly involved in decision making processes. Some recommendations were given among which is the inclusion of continuous seminars, and workshops for school principals on management of human resources in schools for effective and quality management of the schools.

Key words: Decision-making, Teachers Involvement, Teachers Participation, School Policies.

Introduction

Decision making has been observed to be the heart of administration and leadership in schools. The principals and teachers in Imo State secondary schools are

faced with myriads of challenges both teaching and administrative activities which seem to have consistently hampered the realization of the objectives of the school, these problems require unified effort from the principals and the teachers for quality and effective administration. It has been observed that teachers are central in the management of schools and their involvement in decision making process is such a sensitive issue in schools that neglect of it by the principals could cause a lot of rifts, conflict, misgiving and hindrance to the realization of the objectives of the school goals.

The success or failure of any school is largely dependent on the groups that are major components of the said school, as well as the efficient harnessing of the intellectual abilities of these group or human resources that make up the school. Udo and Akpa (2019) asserted that where teachers are adequately involved in the decision-making process, there would be commitment and adequate support with the principal, making the realisation of school goals easily attainable.

In throwing light on the nature of decision-making employed by teachers, Glew *et al.* (2019:13) identified participative decision making as a "higher level system that amplifies individuals' effort to provide those at a lower level with a greater voice in organizational performance". The definition makes it clear that participative decision making represents a deliberate change from traditional management in which minority of upper-level management employees make all of the decisions regarding organizational policies and functioning. Thus, participative decision making is typified by a double-pronged approach where both levels of management are involved in making decisions on how to pilot the activities of the school.

In amplifying the importance of participative decision making, Ndu and Anogbo (2021) noted that where teachers are not involved in governance, the said teachers could resort to apathy, exhibiting behaviours that are not consistent with

goal-seeking tendencies that yield desirable outcomes. Thus, most teachers do not put in their best, neither do they to exhibit the desired sense of commitment and dedication required to advance the goals of the school. Also, Mullins (2021) is of the opinion that there is strong belief that staff participation in decision making leads to optional performance, which translates to organisational success. Welfson (1998) reiterated that boredom and frustration at work is often the result of an employee's lack of involvement in decision making processes with the organization's goals and a feeling that their ideas are not wanted or listened to. He further expatiated that staff turnover increases as employee's walkout of the door for more interesting jobs. Wilkinson (2020) corroborated this fact and saw involvement of employees in decision making as empowerment. He also assumed that participative decision making is likely to lead to job satisfaction and better-quality decisions and that gains are available both to employers (increased efficiency) and workers (job satisfaction), in short, an everyone-wins scenario.

Staff cooperation is believed to be an indisputable asset to the school principals while involvement in decision making process by the teachers could ease the principal's mounting problems as there is a collaborative approach at providing solutions to myriads of problems that could have remained unsolved by the principals alone. Administration is sometimes conceptualized as the job of the school principal which include holding together the organization, making progress towards set objectives, and getting things done. It is also the process of organization leadership (Udoh and Akpa, 2019). While other people defined administration as fascinating and frustrating, Wilkinson (2020) saw it as a function so broad in scope that no one person can do it alone. He further said involving teachers in decision making process is like when two men cooperate to roll a stone that neither could have rolled. Many managers express a belief that involvement of workers in decision

making will improve the quality of workers decision making in the organization (Collins *et al.*, 1989). In contrast, where teachers lack motivation and involvement in decision making, truancy, excessive excuses, abstention and complaints usually emerge leading to general ineffectiveness, inefficiency, low productivity and non-achievement of goals of organization (Awotua-Efebo, 1999).

Okoye (2022) pointed out that workers should be involved in decisions that concern them, which may include general working conditions, fringe benefits and staff development programmes as these add to the attractiveness of the organisation climate. Short *et al.* (2022) highlighted that it is the type of school climate that encourages involvement in decision making, especially when it is characterized by openness and risk taking. This environment encourages teachers to try new ideas and approaches. However, it should be noted that teachers were less willing to participate in decision making if they perceive that their principals sought their opinions but want to make the final decision rather than allowing teachers that opportunity. Luthans (2023) supported this view that if managers claim to want participation from their people but never let them become intellectually and emotionally involved and never use their suggestions, the result may be negative. Still in line with the view, Emeneke (2004) buttressed the fact that when- people are part of decision-making process, there is a greater opportunity of the expression of their minds.

The United Nations Department of Public information (2006) reported that women's participation in high-level economic decision making remains low even in the developed countries, despite educational advances for women in many parts of the world, even as women participation in decisions made in parliament was said to be 10.99%. It was further reported by the International Federation of Journalist that although a third of journalists today are women, less than 3% of senior media executives and decision makers are women. Ashton and Webb (2006) found out that

those teachers (both male and female) expressed dismay and frustration over their inability to influence the process of decision making. They felt that they were not consulted, irrespective of their ages experience and qualifications and they were made to feel that they could not make good decision. They further reiterated that teachers' self-esteem grows when they feel they are involved in decision making which is something worthwhile and they doing it in a competent manner and that they are recognized for their accomplishment. This highlights the fact that lack of teachers' involvement in decision making could not be based on gender differences.

In another vein, Ibukun (2023) 'observed that teachers in Nigeria expressed a desire for more involvement in decision making process irrespective of age, experience and qualifications. He further said that agitation by the teachers could reduce conflict in school administration and cause harmony to reign. Teachers feel ownership and commitment of the process when involved in decision making process (Rosenholtz, 2015). This implies that if teachers get more involved in decision making in schools, the likelihood of achieving the desirable outcomes. With extant study establishing the importance of participative decision making, there are grey areas to explore, especially in the areas of the extent of teacher involvement in the exercise. Thus, this study's aim is to investigate the extent to which teachers are involved in decision making process which could engender effective and quality administration.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study is to explore the teacher's participation in decision making processes within secondary schools in Imo State. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. To examine the extent of teachers' involvement in decision making process in schools.

2. To determine if teachers' involvement in decision making is related to their personal characteristics.

Research Question

1. What is the extent of teachers' involvement in decision making process?

Research Hypotheses

Four research hypotheses were formulated for the study:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the Gender of teachers and their involvement in decision making.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between the age of teachers and their involvement in decision making.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between teacher's qualification and their involvement in decision.

H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between teachers' year of experience and their involvement in decision making.

Method

The descriptive survey research design was adopted in the study. The study population comprised of all teachers in Imo state secondary schools. The stratified random sampling technique was used to select 200 teachers from five different local government area of the state. The local governments were selected randomly, are four schools were selected from each of the five local governments while ten teachers were given the questionnaire in each of the schools.

The research instrument for the study was a research-made questionnaire titled 'Teachers Decision Making Questionnaire (TDMQ). The questionnaire was in two parts, Section A and B. Section A sought information on respondents' personal data such as; name of school, Gender, age, educational qualification and experience while section B contained items in Four-point Likert-Scale of Strongly Disagree (1),

Disagree (2), Agree (3), and Strongly Agree (4). Face and content validation of the questionnaires were certified by 3 experts from the Department of Educational Foundation, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. While 2 of the experts specialized in measurement and evaluation, the other expert is specialized in management and policy. The reliability of the instrument was established using test-retest.

Results

Research Question: What is the extent of teachers' involvement in decision making process?

Table 1: Prevalence of the Extent of Teachers' Involvement in Decision Making Process

S/N	Items	Agree		Disagree	
		F	%	F	%
1	I am involved in making rules and regulations in my school.	161	80.5	39	19.5
2	I contribute to school development in no small measure.	180	90.0	20	10.0
3	I take active part in staff development.	182	91.0	18	9.0
4	I am involved in disciplining the students.	187	93.5	13	6.5
5	My suggestion counts in vital issues in the school.	174	87.0	26	13.0
6	I am involved in planning the school examinations.	144	72.0	56	28.0
7	I am involved in the coordination of the school examinations.	171	85.5	29	14.5
8	I also take part in staff welfare schemes.	172	86.0	28	14.0
9	I am involved in identifying problem areas in the school.	176	88.0	24	12.0
10	My suggestion counts on how to move the school forward.	180	90.0	20	10.0
11	I take active part in the supervision of the students.	187	93.5	13	6.5
12	I am actively involved in bringing sanity to the school system	188	94.0	12	6.0

From Table 1, it is evident that teachers in Imo State secondary schools are actively involved in decision making process. As could be observed from the table, the items were rated very high with maximum of 93.5% and the' minimum was 72.0%. Items 4, 5, 8, and 11 were rated so high by the teachers and this is a symbol that the teachers were actively involved and carried along in the school matters by the principal to enhance qualitative education which is the major aim and policy of education in Nigeria. This further suggests that there is maximum co-operation between the principals and their teachers; this also shows that quality and effective management will be enhanced in these schools which will also show in the tone of the school.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the gender of the teachers and their involvement in decision making process.

Table 2. Test Summary of the Gender of the Teachers Involvement in Decision Making Process

Group	Mean	SD	T-cal	T-table
Male	14.33	5.07	2.250	1.960
Female	39.34	5.89		
P < 0.05				

Table 2 shows that there is significant different between Gender of the teachers and their involvement in decision making processes ($1.960 < 2.250$, $P < 0.05$), the null hypothesis was rejected. The finding affirmed that Gender of teachers was an important factor in decision making process, involvement of teachers in decision making differs in Gender. The table shows that male teachers were more involved in decision making process. The mean score of male teachers-was 14.33 while that of female teachers was 39.34.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between the age of teachers and their Involvement in decision making processes.

Table 3: ANOVA Summary of Teachers' Age and Involvement in Decision making processes.

Source	SS	df	MS	F-cal	F-table
Between groups	161.43	2	80.73	2.499	3.000
Within groups	6363.77	197	32.303		
Total	6525.20	199			

The result in Table 3 reveals that F-cal (2.499) is less than F-table (3.000) at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between the ages of the teachers and their involvement in decision making processes. The result shows that age of the teachers has nothing to do with their involvement in decision making. Older teachers could not be said to be more involved than younger teachers in decision making process. It is equity for all.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between the teachers' educational qualification and their involvement in decision making process.

Table 4. ANOVA Summary of Teachers' Qualification and Involvement in Decision Making Processes.

Source	SS	DF	MS	F-cal	F-table
Between groups	195.396	3	65.132	2.017	2.60
Within groups	6329.799	196	32.295		
Total	6525.195	199			

The null hypothesis in Table 4 is accepted since F-cal (2.017) is less than F-table (2.60) at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, teachers' educational qualification is not significantly related to their involvement in decision making processes. The table shows that teachers' involvement in decision making was not dependent on their qualification. It also affirmed that involvement in decision making is free to all teachers irrespective of their basic qualifications.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant relationship between teachers' years of experience and their involvement in decision making processes.

Table 5: ANOVA Summary of Teachers years of experience and their Involvement in Decision Making Processes.

Source	SS	DF	MS	F-cal	F-table
Between groups	267.800	3		89.267	2.796
Within groups	6257.395	196	31.925		
Total	6525.195	199			

One way ANOVA results in Table 5 clearly showed that F-cal (2.796) is greater than F-Table (2.60) at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that "there is no significant relationship between teachers' years of experience and their involvement in decision making processes" is rejected.

Table 6. Schaefer Post-hoc Analysis of Teachers Experience and their Involvement in Decision Making Process.

Experience (Years)	Mean
30 - 35	40.80
20 - 30	41.00
10 - 20	41.12
Below 10	38.75
Mean difference is significant at 0.05 levels.	

The Schaefer post hoc analysis is shown in Table 6. The result of post hoc analysis shows that those who had spent between 30 and 35 years in teaching are significantly different from teachers whose teaching experience is below 10 years at 0.05 level of significance in their involvement in decision making processes. Table 6 showed that teachers who have spent 30 to 35 years in teaching are more involved in decision making process than teachers who have below 10 years of experience. Experience cannot be bought with money hence the older teachers in experience

have seen more days than those whose experience are below 10 years. There is no gain saying then if one says that the experience of teachers between 30 to 35 years could better help the administration of the school to enhance quality and effectiveness in decision making.

Discussion

The study revealed that teachers' involvement in decision making processes was very high in the secondary schools in Imo State as could be seen in Table 1. The items were rated very high with maximum of 93.5% and the minimum was 72%. This is in line with the submission of Okoye (2022) who opined that worker should be involved in decisions that concern them like the general working conditions, fringe benefits and even staff development programs as this adds to the attractiveness of the organization climate. Staff involvement in welfare schemes was rated high as 85.5%. Udo and Akpa (2019) also corroborated this fact that where teachers are adequately involved in decision making process, there would be commitment and adequate support with the principal and the realization of the school goal will be easy, apathy and opposition within the school will be minimized. Table 1 shows that teachers suggestions in the schools was rated high as 87% even in bringing sanity to the school was rated 94%. Short *et al.* (2022) opined that the kind of school climate that encourages involvement in decision making is characterized by openness. It is possible to infer that there is openness in the administration of these schools with the way the items in Table 1 are rated. Teachers are actively involved in making rules and regulations and contributed to school development in no small measure and teachers take active part in the supervision of students. This practice is summed up by Wilkinson (2020) which saw involvement of teachers in decision making as empowerment which could lead to job satisfaction and better-quality decisions and that gains are available to employers and workers.

The findings revealed in the study that there was disparity in the involvement of male and female teachers in decision making processes. Male teachers are more involved in decision making in schools than their female counterparts. This was supported by United Nations Department of public information (2006) as reported in international women's day that women participation in high level economic decision making remains low even in the developed countries despite educational advances for women in many parts of the world. Also reported was the low participation of women in parliament which was said to be 10.9%. It was further reported by the international federation of journalists that although a third of journalist today are women, less than 3% of senior media executives and decision makers are women. This is just to show that marginalization of women in decision making is not only peculiar to teaching profession.

The results of the study revealed that age of teachers was not significant in their involvement in decision making. This is to say that older teachers were not involved more-in decision making than the younger teachers. This is in contrast to the findings of Ashton and Webb (1986) that teachers both male and female expressed dismay and over their inability to influence the process of decision making. They felt they were never consulted irrespective of their ages, experience and qualifications and they were made to feel that they could not make good decisions. The findings in the study well complement the later part of his finding that teachers' self-esteem grows when they feel they are involved 'in decision making and they are recognized for their accomplishment. Age of teachers was found to be no barrier to decision making processes in Imo State Secondary Schools as knowledge was tapped from both old and younger teachers to achieve educational goals.

The findings of the study also revealed that educational qualification and teacher's years of experience were not found to be hindrances to their involvement in decision making processes in Imo State secondary schools. This was rightly observed by Ibukun (2023) that teachers in Nigeria expressed a desire for more involvement in decision making irrespective of qualification and years of experience. When educational qualification and experience of teachers are not seen as hindrances to decision making in schools, all the teachers were well involved in decision making irrespective of their qualification and experience to move the schools forward to achieve educational goals. Ibukun (2023) further said agitation by the teachers could reduce conflict in school administration and cause harmony to prevail in schools.

On the contrary, the post hoc analysis showed that those teachers who had spent between 30 and 35 years on the job are significantly different from teachers whose experiences are below 10 years in their involvement in decision making. This means that teachers who have been on the job for a long period have greater opportunity to be involved in decision making than other teachers with fewer years of experience. The finding from post hoc analysis is in discord with the findings of Ashton and Webb (1986) that teachers expressed dismay and frustration over their inability to influence the process of decision making. They felt they were not consulted, irrespective of experience, age and qualification and that they were made to feel that they could not make good decisions.

Conclusion

It was concluded from the findings of this study that Imo State secondary school teachers enjoyed active participation in decision making processes. Gender, age and educational qualifications of teachers did not hinder teachers' participation in decision making processes. Involvement of teachers in decision making shows

that they are well empowered and they are seen as resources with knowledge and experience that are tapped.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made to enhance development on the job:

1. Continuous involvement of teachers in decision making by the principals will further enhance teachers' development on the job.
2. The principals should not totally neglect the less experienced teachers in decision making as they also need to be developed on the job.
3. Principals should also attend more workshops and seminars to know how to manage the younger teachers so as to build them up since they will eventually take up the mantle from them later.

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