Teachers’ Participation in Decision Making for Sustainable Development: A Case of Rivers State Secondary Schools

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Abstract
This study was carried out to determine teachers’ participation in decision making for sustainable development in Rivers States Secondary Schools. To get information for the study, a two part questionnaire Tagged teachers’ participation in Decision-making (TPDMQ) was constructed. This was distributed to four hundred and fifty (450) randomly selected teachers in Rivers State Secondary Schools. The completed questionnaire were analyzed and scored according to the Likert-type measurement. Their mean responses were calculated and tabulated as well as their correlation coefficient of relationship ‘r’. To test for the significance of the Null hypothesis, the t-test statistics were used at probability level of 0.05 significance. Findings among others revealed that teachers’ level of participation in decision-making processes has been very low and this affects the management of secondary schools negatively. Conclusion and recommendations were made based on findings made.

Keywords: Teachers, Decision-making, Secondary Schools, Sustainable Development

Introduction
As the goals of Nigerian secondary schools become complex and teachers are demanding greater professional autonomy in decision-making regarding teaching curriculum and their welfare. Decision-making in secondary schools are crucial organizational variable which leaders and administrations are meant to demonstrate in order to enhance efficiency and organizational effectiveness because; it can influence both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as well as job satisfaction and job commitment. It is a complex process which begins with the organizational goal setting (Ofojebe, 2007). It includes identification of the problem, selection of alternatives, and ends with solution, implementation, testing and control. According to Mussaazi (1982), an administrator should review and clarify his own understanding of nature of the organization she/he belongs to and spell out the strategy by which the best decisions can be made. As a result of this, attempts have been made over the years by many researchers, to find out which pattern or model of decision-making is best for effective administrative purposes. Swanson in Hoy and Miskel (1978) had suggested that motivation and satisfaction of subordinates are high when democratic and participatory patterns or models of decision-making are practiced in an organization. And yet, there is no denying the fact that, no one decision making model is completely adequate for all situations and for all schools. Perhaps, rather than trying to find out which decision model is the best, efforts should be directed by an administration at realizing which decision model a given
group of subordinates would prefer in a given school. According to Hoy and Miskel (1987), said “Effective decisions and implementation can be achieved by the skills and energy with which the school administration handles and encourages a meaningful participation of the teachers”.

Decisions according to Duze (2011) “are made towards solving immediate and remote problems all aimed at achieving set goals and objectives effectively and efficiently. These decisions could bother on curricular/instructional programmes, transportation/communication systems, staffing, students/staff welfare, students/staff discipline, school plant maintenance, accommodation/health facilities, admission policy, budgeting, purchasing, gaming, extra-curricular activities, and etc.” The outcome of such decisions as explained by Duze, should be good quality teaching and good quality learning in a pleasant and conducive atmosphere. Decision-making can be defined as a choice made from among alternative courses of action that are available, either towards the solution of a problem or the achievement of an objective. All school administrators must engage in decision-making as it is a key responsibility of school leaders, and the way and manner in which they carry out this responsibility has a considerable influence on many facets of the school and enhances achievement of education for sustainable development in Rivers State.

Sustainable Development in the context of this study depends on whether there are equal opportunities for every teacher to participate, contribute and benefit from the secondary school education programme. Every human being working in an organisation has equal rights to participate in decision-making to ensure growth and development of such an organisation. Therefore, the secondary school teachers are not exception. According to Abu-Hola and Tareef (2009), rapid movement of educational reform is taking place nowadays. Curricula development, teacher education, using information and communication technology (ICT), improving teaching and learning strategies and integrating different subjects are among the main objectives of this reform. One of the main challenges facing the education sector is coping with global and international changes on how to integrate different sustainability ideas and principles within different educational activities or programmes. The quality education must be capable of delivering and addressing these issues. It is crucial to note that understanding the dimensions of sustainable development is extremely important to formulate strategies. Teachers are real channels to achieving education for sustainable development; for this, they are supposed to be part of decision or policy makers in secondary schools in Rivers State and beyond.

**Statement of the Problem**

Research conducted by Mokoena (2011) revealed that in some schools, principals do not permit their subordinates’ participation in decision-making processes. Duze (2011) acknowledged in her report that school administrators have a high degree of authority within the school while teachers have not in the past been extensively involved in decision-making in relation to the goals, curriculum and their welfare as a whole. They lack opportunity to participate in decision making but today, there is demand and pressure on the school system by the teachers. Internationally, there has been an emphasis on decentralisation and devolution of power to lower levels with the intention to empower people to make decisions, particularly about issues that directly affect them (Bhengu 2005; Cheng and Cheung 2008). However, there has been no agreement among scholars about the motivation and the efficacy of decentralisation of decision-making powers to the schools. Sello (2011) observed that
devolving decision-making power to the schools has been used as means of improving management of education, and also to boost the teachers’ occupational morale.

**Purpose of the Study**
The purpose of the study is to examine to what extent secondary school teachers in Rivers State participate in decision-making processes for sustainable development. Specifically, the study tends to

1) Determine the extent secondary school teachers participate in decision-making process in the secondary schools.
2) The relationship between teachers participation in decision making and teachers’ job morale

**Research Questions**
1. To what extent do secondary school teachers in decision-making process in Rivers State?
2. What is the relationship between teachers participation in decision making and teachers’ job morale?

**Hypotheses**
The following hypotheses were tested.
1) There is no significant relationship between teachers’ participation in decision-making and their job morale.

**Significance of the Study**
The findings of this study will be helpful to the secondary school administrators on the need of teachers’ participation in decision-making processes, in our schools which leads to shared responsibilities and effective implementation.

It will also help teachers to realize that shared or participatory decision-making is not a means of expressing their personal views/opinions and perhaps giving advice to administrators but a means of gaining on the feeling of self efficacy, ownership and workplace democracy.

School administrators would then learn to allow teachers to be involved or participate in decision making in areas that are relevant to their jobs and in which they have expertise.

It will contribute to the available related literatures on teachers participation in decision making.

**Methodology**
The research design of the study is survey method. This research design is chosen because it has been accepted as a useful tool in educational research for describing existing conditions and for evaluating effectiveness of programmes. It has the potentials to solve problems which have to do with educational theories and practices. The target population for this study is all the five thousand, one hundred and thirty-six teachers (5,136) in all the two hundred and thirty-nine (239) secondary schools in Rivers State. The sample for this study is based on twenty percentage (20%). The twenty percentage of two hundred and thirty-nine secondary schools is fifty seven (57) which has a total number of teachers as two thousand, two hundred and fifty-seven teachers in five local government areas. A total of four hundred and fifty teachers were randomly selected from these secondary schools which gives us 20%. Two sets of questionnaire were used for this study. The first set of instrument is designed to seek
information from the teachers on Teachers Participation in Decision making (TPDMQ) where the second responses on Teachers commitment towards achievement of organizational goals (TCOGQ). Each of these parts consists of twenty item questions. The responses to these items were structured according to Likert-type in form of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD).

To ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument, the questionnaires were presented to experts in the Institute of Education, Rivers State University of Science and Technology to ascertain its face validity. Their comments, corrections were used in revising the question in the questionnaires prior to administration. Its reliability was determined by administering the questionnaires to about ten (10) Principals. The data was collected and analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient ‘r’ formula the reliability co-efficient of relationship is $r \approx 0.98$ (see appendix for details).

The questionnaire was personally administered by the researcher. A total of four hundred and fifty (450) questionnaires were administered. Twenty (20) were not valid while four hundred (400) were collected and analysed representing about 84%. The responses to the questionnaire were scored according to the Likert type measurement. Their mean responses were calculated. The Null hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient of relationships ‘r,’ to test for the level of significance of correlation coefficient ‘r,’ the t-test statistics are used at the probability 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question One
To what extent do secondary school teachers participate in decision-making process in the secondary schools?

Table 1: **Mean and standard deviations of responses of teachers on the level of teachers’ participation in decision-making in schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Decision Making Areas</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>General Administration</td>
<td>2.183</td>
<td>0.340</td>
<td>Very low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Students’ Welfare</td>
<td>2.447</td>
<td>0.404</td>
<td>Very low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Teachers’ Welfare</td>
<td>2.397</td>
<td>0.380</td>
<td>Very low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table showing the mean responses of teachers on their level of participation in decision-making in schools, the results show that in the areas of general administration and teachers’ welfare, the mean responses of teachers are below 2.50 mean weighting. This shows that teachers in the secondary schools do participate in decision making but their participation is very low.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between teachers’ participation in decision-making and teachers’ job morale? This research question is to find out the type of relationship that exists between teachers’ participation in decision making areas identified and on teachers’ job morale.
Table 2: Pearson product moment correlation coefficient of the relationship between teachers’ participation in decision making areas and teachers’ job morale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Areas of Correlation</th>
<th>Correlation Coefficient ‘r’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>TPDM in general administration and teacher’s job morale.</td>
<td>-0.234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>TPDM in students’ welfare and job morale.</td>
<td>0.058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>TPDM in teachers’ welfare and job morale.</td>
<td>0.212</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table shows that a very low negative correlation exists between teachers’ participation in general administration and teacher’s job morale. ‘r’ = -0.234. In the table above, there is a low correlation between teachers’ participation in decision making in areas of students’, teachers’ welfare and teachers’ job performance.

**Hypothesis:** There is no significant relationship between teachers’ participation in decision making and their job morale.

Table 3: The areas of correlation coefficients ‘r’ of hypothesis iii and the probability level at which ‘r’ is statistically significant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Areas of Correlation</th>
<th>Correlation Coefficient</th>
<th>Probability</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>TPDM in general administration and job morale.</td>
<td>-9.234</td>
<td>0.656</td>
<td>Not Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>TPDM in students welfare and job morale.</td>
<td>0.058</td>
<td>0.901</td>
<td>Not Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>TPDM in teachers’ welfare and teachers’ job morale.</td>
<td>0.212</td>
<td>0.648</td>
<td>Not Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If P ≤ 0.05, ‘r’ correlation coefficient is statistically significant. The above results show that correlation coefficient ‘r’ is statistically not significant because P>0.05. The null is accepted. There is no significant relationship between teachers’ participation in decision making and job morale.

**Summary of Major Findings**

Based on the analysis of data collected, the following findings were made:

1. Teachers in the Rivers State secondary schools do participate in decision-making areas like the academic and general students welfare except in their welfare.
2. Teachers’ level of participation in the decision-making processes of the school system is low.
3. Teachers’ participation in decision making processes increases their job morale and effectiveness which results in schools goal attainment.
Discussion of Findings
The findings from the investigations reveal that teachers’ in Rivers State secondary schools do participate in decision making areas but their level of participation is low. This is shown in Table 4.2.1 with a mean score 2.2 in general administrations of the school as well as decisions affecting their welfare in the school. Their levels of participation in these areas are not encouraging hence it is below the average mean 2.5. These findings agrees with Sam-Ordu (1992) in his study of levels of teachers perceived participation in decision making in a selected secondary schools in Lagos” in which he discovered that teachers are decisionally saturated in curricular issues but remained deprived in other participatory issues like selection and placement of students, school budgets and teachers welfare. On the level of commitment of these teachers to organizational goals, the commitment areas looked into are Teachers’ attitudes towards the achievement of the organizational goals, teachers’ role effectiveness and teachers’ job morale. On the relationship between teachers’ participation in decision making and their job morale, a very negative correlationship exists as it is shown in Table 4.4 especially in areas of general administration of the school. There is an inverse relationship which shows that teachers’ participation in decision making has a relationship with their level of satisfaction and have a very high negative effect on their job morale (correlation coefficient r’ -0.234). This shows that there is a negative relationship between teachers’ participation in general administration and their job morale. But a low positive correlation relationship exists between teachers participation in decision-making in areas of students and teachers welfare. It suggests that there is an urgent need to give teachers more opportunity to participate in decision-making relating to their welfare and their studies as this will not only increase their job morale and effectiveness, on the part of the teachers but results in commitment and school goal attainment. This is related to the views of Igwe (1992) in his work “Decision-making in Educational Administration and Arms of Staff and Students involvement and Participation” in which he asserted that teachers should be involved in educational decision-making in all levels and areas within their spheres of professional competence and for maximum productivity and efficiency within the level of decisional equilibrium.

Conclusion
Teachers in Rivers State secondary schools do participate in decision making processes but their level of participation and involvement is low and limited to certain decisional areas. If teachers are involved fully in the decision making processes of the secondary school system they will be more committed to perform their roles effectively. Teachers’ participation in decision making increases their job morale and enhances effectiveness which results to commitment to school goal attainment. It is believed that the outcome of this study will enable school administrators know the areas teachers can participate in decision making and their level of commitments. It will also help them to make wise decisions concerning the general welfare of both teachers and students.

References


