

A Gender Based Analysis of Secondary School Teachers' Participation in Decision Making: A Case of Public Sector Schools of Lahore

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Abstract

Teachers are the controlling agents of the teaching learning process in most of the educational institutions at almost all levels so decision making is inevitable. The present study investigates the participation of secondary school teachers in decision making based on gender differences through conducting survey method. All the teachers working at the public schools of Lahore were taken as the population of the study. 500 secondary school teachers were selected randomly to collect data. Four hundred and eleven (411) questionnaires were got back. Teacher Involvement and Participation questionnaire (TIPS-2) of John J. Russell (1992) was adopted to collect data. Data were analyzed by using SPSS version 20. Independent sample t-test was applied to test the hypotheses. Means and factor scores were calculated yielding both individual and group level data for analysis. It was revealed that secondary school teachers frequently participate in decision making. Female teachers' participation is higher in first two dimensions of decision making while in remaining 6 dimensions' male bypassed the female. It was further revealed that decisions related to curriculum /instruction involved most teacher participation while staffing involved least teacher participation.

Key Words: *Decision making, Gender analysis, Secondary school teachers*

Introduction

Decision-making is at heart of all the activities in educational institutions to conduct work, distribute resources, making short and long-term policies (Wilson, 1996). It is a cognitive, sequential and reasoning process which involves policies (identification of the goals and objectives), and means of execution (integration and analysis), and resources (people, money materials, and authority). Robbins (2009) opined that decision making is an important aspect of school organization because the future of the school depends upon the nature and quality of the decision taken. The productivity and efficiency

of the school is negatively affected if the head teachers take the decisions themselves and do not allow the teachers to do so. Therefore, Ndiku, Simiyu, Mukasa and Achoka (2009) recommended that schools managers should involve the teachers more often in decision making. This way the quality of decisions will be improved and morale of the teachers will be higher. This will lead to better performance of teachers and improvement of the school productivity.

It is also necessary to encourage the use of shared leadership styles to achieve best results of the resources. As teachers are the ones who are at the critical since they deal directly with the learners therefore they are important stakeholder (Ncwane,2011). According to Nutt (2008), Effective decisions are taken by administrators with the help of teachers. Effective decision making involves some important steps like to define the specific problem, generate different and related solution, find relevant and current knowledge about the problem, evaluate and interpret different alternatives by different ways, choose the most acceptable alternatives, implement the acceptable alternative and check the progress of the implementation in a specific area of development. Teachers participation in decision making increases communication with administrators and district officers, more powerful use of meeting time and more effective use of skills. (Newman, 2010). There are three different levels at which the teacher participation in decision making process can be considered (Somech, 2002). The first level is the individual which relates to individual teacher's performance with the classroom such as the choice of teaching material, teaching schedule and student performance. At the second level, decisions made are those that relate to the subject panel, co-curriculum activity groups and discipline. Participation in the decisions at the third level relates to the whole school. These decisions may range from setting the school goals, school budget, admission policy, development and training. All these levels of participation in the decision making processes are very important for the participation in financial management because all these levels have financial implications. Teachers should participate in the school decision-making process at all levels. It is however a principal's prerogative to determine the level of participation that is required for a particular problem. Ingersoll, Sirinides & Dougherty (2018) found that teachers have a significant role in decisions related to classroom academic instruction, teaching techniques, and student grading. They maintained that the teachers have a lesser role in decisions that are school wide and those outside the classroom, either academic or nonacademic, such as determining the content of professional development programs, establishing student behavior policies, and engaging in school improvement planning. They further suggested that decisions are tied to higher student achievement therefore, good school leadership actively involves teachers in decision making. In this context, the present study was planned to explore the teachers' participation in decision making in secondary schools of Lahore and gender differences in participation have also been taken into consideration.

Research Hypothesis

H₁ Secondary school teachers have frequent participation in decision making.

H₂ Male Secondary school teachers participate more in decision making than female secondary school teachers.

Methodology

The study was intended to explore the gender differences in decision making practices of secondary school teachers in public schools of Lahore. Survey technique was applied to collect the information. The population of the study comprised all secondary school teachers employed in public schools of Lahore. Randomly 500 secondary school teachers were selected to collect data. Four hundred and eleven (411) filled questionnaires were returned to the researcher. The study was delimited to the

secondary school teachers employed in public sector only. It has been observed that in private sector only owner /administrator has the decision power. Teachers were not selected as they were not involved in academic decision making practices. Further government policies are not applicable in private sector. Teacher Involvement and Participation questionnaire (TIPS-2) of John J. Russell (1992) was adopted to collect data following Tratch Kenneth who used it in 1995. It has 43 statements on 5-point Likert scale under 8 aspects of teachers' involvement and participation in decision making. The item breakup in table 1 below:

Table: 1
Item Breakup of Teacher Involvement and Participation Questionnaire

Sr No	Dimensions	Statements
1.	Goals/Mission	8
2.	Standards	5
3.	Curriculum/ Instruction	8
4.	Budget	6
5.	Staffing	3
6.	Operations	4
7.	Facilitating procedure and structure	5
8.	Staff development	4

Although tool was reliable and valid but for the sake of authenticity, Local experts were consulted. They confirmed the appropriateness of tool on contextual bases. TIP Questionnaire was distributed among 500 secondary school teachers. Among them 411 provided their responses and sent it back.

Data Analysis/Results

Data were analyzed by using SPSS version 20. Independent sample t-test was applied to test the hypotheses. Means and factor scores were calculated yielding both individual and group level data for analysis.

Table :2
Secondary school teachers' participation in setting goals/missions

		f	M	S.D
1	Develop same vision for their school	411	3.14	1.33
2	Participation in the goal setting process	411	3.18	1.25
3	Help in establishing school priorities	411	3.39	1.18
4	As a group acceptance of the school's goals	411	3.17	1.17
5	Able to support other teachers for supporting their vision of the school	411	3.04	1.16
6	Able to get administrators to support their vision of the school.	411	3.25	1.13
7	Consistency of school's goals and my vision of this school	411	3.21	1.23
8	Contribution in the development of a plan to meet the school's goals	411	3.54	1.10

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Mean value of all the 8 statements shows that teachers sometimes participate in decisions related to setting goals while for only one statement they reported frequent participation which was development of a plan to meet the school goals. It can be concluded that secondary school teachers participated in decision making although it was to less extent.

Table :3
Secondary school teachers' participation in setting standards

Sr.	Statements	f	M	S.D
9	help in setting standards for student promotion	411	3.52	1.12
10	Contribution in standards set for discipline	411	3.57	1.09
11	set standards for their students	411	3.76	1.03
12	set their own work standards while working together	411	3.52	1.14
13	undertakes responsibility for student performance	411	3.57	1.04

Table 3 shows that secondary school teachers frequently participated in decisions related to setting standards. It can be concluded that secondary school teachers participated in decisions regarding setting standards commonly.

Table:4
Secondary school teachers' participation in developing curriculum/instruction

Sr.	Statements	f	M	SD
14	Participation in taking school-wide curriculum decisions	411	3.57	0.92
15	authority to make amendments in the school's curriculum	411	3.63	1.01
16	Changing pedagogy for students	411	3.67	1.07
17	initiate changes in the curriculum	411	3.62	1.08
18	selection of textbooks	411	3.52	0.99
19	coordinate curricula	411	3.44	1.22
20	curricula development.	411	3.66	1.04
21	monitor the effectiveness of curricula	411	3.61	1.10

Mean values shows that secondary school teachers frequently participated in developing curriculum /instruction. It ca be concluded that to participate in decisions related to curriculum or instruction development was common.

Table: 5
Secondary school teachers' participation in making budget

Sr.	Statements	f	M	S.D
22	development of the school budget	411	3.58	1.03
23	Use of their allotted funds	411	3.64	1.28
24	budgetary support to achieve the educational objectives	411	3.41	1.17
25	establish priorities when school budget cut	411	3.66	1.13
26	manage their own budgets	411	3.23	1.15
27	Free in spending portion of the school budget for their classes	411	3.27	1.13

Mix Mean values shows that secondary school teachers frequently and for some other purposes sometimes participated in making budget for the school. It can be concluded that to participate in decisions related to budget was common.

Table: 6

Secondary school teachers' participation in staffing

Sr.	Statements	f	M	S.D
28	in the recruiting and selecting of teachers	411	2.49	1.38
29	decide teaching assignments of staff members	411	2.42	1.37
30	in the recruiting and selecting of heads	411	2.40	1.43

Mean values show that secondary school teachers seldom participated in decisions regarding staffing.

Table: 7

Secondary school teachers' participation in operations

Sr.	Statements	f	M	S.D
31	in the school schedule development	411	3.62	1.07 2
32	in determining the utilization of the school building	411	3.63	1.07 9
33	in developing plans for improvement of building facilities	411	3.89	1.04 7
34	in establishing building maintenance priorities	411	3.51	1.10 2

Mean values shows that secondary school teachers frequently participated in decisions regarding Operations.

Table: 8

Responses of Sample teachers about facilitating procedures and structure

Sr.	Statements	f	M	S.D
35	Having access to the information, need to make school-wide decisions	411	3.67	1.057
36	Representation in a decisions making council /group	411	3.50	.973
37	Adequate time availability for teachers' participation is provided for teachers to share in decision making activities.	411	3.57	1.079
38	We would not make a decision until almost everyone is in agreement.	411	3.75	1.096
39	Decisions are not made until everyone can accept the proposal to some extent.	411	3.54	1.148

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Mean values show that secondary school teachers frequently participated in decisions for facilitating procedures and structure.

Table: 9

Responses of Sample teachers about staff development

Sr.	Statements	f	M	S.D
40	have access to current research	411	3.53	1.004
41	help in determining their upcoming professional development	411	3.52	1.187
42	have opportunities of sharing their expert knowledge	411	3.64	1.075
43	participate in staff development activities	411	3.58	1.153

Mean values show that secondary school teachers frequently participated in decisions for staff development.

Table: 10

Responses of Sample teachers about Factors (N=411)

Statements	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Goals/mission	10	37	25.9	6.43
Standards	8	24	17.9	3.91
Curriculum/instruction	13	39	28.7	5.29
Budget	8	29	20.7	4.85
Staffing	3	15	4.39	6.40
Operations	6	20	14.6	3.06
Facilitating procedures and structures	5	25	18.04	3.49
Staff development	7	20	14.2	3.14

Secondary school teachers participated most in decisions regarding curriculum /instruction and least in staffing

Table:11

Gender based Comparison of Secondary School Teachers' participation in Decision making

Dimensions	Gender	N	Mean	Sig.	t
1 Goals/Mission	Male	203	148.66	0.000	1.77
	Female	208	152.77		
2 Standards	Male	203	147.65	0.000	1.76
	Female	208	151.33		
3 Curriculum/ Instruction	Male	203	149.23	0.000	1.78
	Female	208	147.01		
4 Budget	Male	203	147.79	0.000	1.57
	Female	208	145.07		
5 Staffing	Male	203	142.53	0.000	1.74
	Female	208	141.98		

6	Operations	Male	203	150.02	0.000	1.74
		Female	208	148.67		
7	Facilitating procedure and structure	Male	203	149.34	0.000	1.23
		Female	208	148.20		
8	Staff development	Male	203	150.03	0.000	1.76
		Female	208	147.17		

It has been found that t-value ranges from 1.23 to 1.77 for different dimensions of decision making which shows a significant difference in participation of both gender. For first two dimensions; goals/mission and setting standards, female secondary teachers were found to participate more than males. For the remaining 6 dimensions of decision making more male participation in decision making was reported than females. Therefore, it can be concluded that for goals / mission as devising strategies to complete mission and for setting standards of the schools' female secondary school teachers got more opportunities to participate in decision making than males. On the other side males involved in decision making related to curriculum, budget, staffing, operations, facilitating procedure and structures and staff development in schools.

Discussion

Teachers have to make several decisions on day to day basis. In this section the implications of the research are discussed in the light of the hypotheses.

H₁ Secondary school teachers have frequent participation in decision making. The data of this study indicate a number of points. First, the teachers take part in decision making related to goal setting however this participation is of varying degree: very low in some aspects as to get other teachers to support their vision of the school, while comparatively higher in the development of plan to meet the school goals as shown in table 2. This is because not everyone can persuade others to support or agree with their vision but they can provide their point of view while deciding about their school. The data shows that the secondary school teachers participated in making decisions regarding setting of standard but the most participation is seen in the process of setting standards for the students. This may be due to the fact that the teachers have control and autonomy over their class and students. And the results of implementation of those standards is observable after a very short period of time but this may not be the case while deciding other aspects of schools. From the results it is also evident that the teachers participated the most in the decisions related to facilitating procedures and structures along with staff development and curriculum and instructions but least in the process of staffing. One reason for this could be the fact that most of the staffing is done by higher authorities and teachers are normally not required to participate in the procedure of selecting or recruiting other teachers or staff.

H₂ Male Secondary school teachers participate more in decision making than female secondary school teachers. Pakistan is a typical patriarchal society and like any other such societies males are considered as the guardians of women and thus the power of decision making lies in their hands (Shah, 1986). The same is apparent from the results of the study according to which out of the 8, 6 dimensions of decision making more male participation in decision making was reported than females. It can be said that the female school teachers had more opportunities to participate in decision making for goals / mission as devising strategies to complete mission and for setting standards of the schools. On the contrary, the male teachers were more involved in decision making related to curriculum, budget, staffing, operations, facilitating procedure and structures and staff development in schools as shown in table 11.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that both male and female teachers participated in the decision making process related to their schools yet, female secondary school teachers had more opportunities to participate in the decision making process related to goals / mission as devising strategies to complete mission and for setting standards of the schools as compared to their male counterparts. On the other hand, male teachers were involved in decisions related to curriculum, budget, staffing, operations, facilitating procedure and structures and staff development in schools.

Therefore, it might be concluded that secondary schools in Pakistan endows more power to male teachers as compared to females as could be expected in a typical patriarchal society. Most of the primary and secondary schools as well as colleges in the country are segregated (Shah, 1986) so this study urges the policy makers to train more female teachers so that they can play their due role in the development of education.

Our study ultimately highlights the fact that teachers do participate in decision making to varying degrees and this capability should be the basic point of teacher development programs as pointed out by Schnellert, Butler, & Higginson, (2008) because it is a vital part of the educational process.

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