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**TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN THE SCHOOL'S DECISION MAKING  
PROCESS AND ITS EFFECTS ON ORGANIZATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT IN SCHOOLS: A CASE OF SELECTED HIGH  
SCHOOLS IN KABWE, MKUSHI AND SERENJE DISTRICTS OF THE  
CENTRAL PROVINCE**

**BY**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF EDUCATION – EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION**

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to all teachers.

**DECLARATION**


I, Mwenya Nicholas Mwamba, declare that this dissertation represents my own work and that it has not been previously submitted for a degree at the University of Zambia or at any other University and that it does not incorporate any published work or material from other publications.

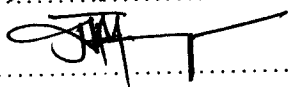
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**APPROVAL**

This dissertation of Mwenya Nicholas Mwamba has been accepted as fulfilling part of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education (Educational Administration) of the University of Zambia.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study tried to find out the teacher's decisional condition in high schools and its effects on organizational development using some high schools in the Central Province of Zambia as case studies. The sample consisted of eight high schools of which four were rural and four were urban. The schools were all co-education high schools.

The sample had a total of eight Head teachers, thirty six Heads of Department and eighty teachers. The Head teachers responded to a structured interview, the Heads of Department discussed in a Focus Group Discussion and the teachers responded to a questionnaire.

The qualitative research paradigm was used for data collection. The instruments were both open and closed guides. The following variables relevant to the Teacher participation in the decision making process and its effects on organization development in schools were studied: school tasks, increased teacher involvement, teacher decisional condition, effects of the decisional condition on institutional development, decision making and preferred administrative practices. Data analysis was done through categorizing themes that emerged. This was done through descriptions and statistical interpretation. Triangulation of both qualitative and quantitative techniques was employed.

The overall analysis showed that there was teacher participation in the schools' decision making process and that this was more in rural high schools than in urban high schools. Several tasks were undertaken in schools but teacher participation in decision making scored highly. This showed that schools were democratic and practiced the principle of decentralization as education boards. Teachers took part in departmental meetings where many activities were done. This was a delivery point in schools since through departmental meetings teachers planned together. Through these meetings teachers participated fully. Both the Head teachers and Heads of Department agreed that the teachers' decisional condition was participative.

The study also revealed that improved schools, motivated staff and positive professional practices were as a result of the participative decisional condition of teachers. This was seen to have positively affected the development of learning institutions. It was also established through interviews and Focus Group Discussions that school performance was not affected by the decisional condition but that other factors were cited to affect it such as in relation to preferences it was established that Head teachers, Heads of Department and teachers preferred the participative decision making process in schools. This was to uphold the principle of democracy through decentralization.

On the contrary, decentralization was not effectively implemented. The study reveals that the central government (the Ministry of Education – Headquarters) still had strings attached to lower levels. The central Government provided templates for lower levels to follow

This was evidenced in the current budgeting process where thresholds were provided as were templates to follow. The lower levels therefore acted on what was already tailored. The Ministry of Education Headquarters still engineered what lower levels had to do. This was not total decentralization. Some Head teachers observed that decentralization was a vital tool which needed adequate financial, human and material resources. On the one hand, the Head teachers linked the inability to manage schools to poor managerial skills and on the other hand they concluded that these skills were not there at all.

The study also established that teachers were vital elements in the school's decision making process because they were at the delivery point of education. The Ministry of Education states, "decisions will be made closer to the point of delivery. This will allow for greater responsiveness to local needs" (MOE, 1996:127).

In order to improve and effectively implement the principle of decentralization the Ministry of Education should reintroduce Education Management Training for all its teaching and non-teaching staff. Decentralization ought to constitute an important instrument in its systematic improvement effort. In this respect the Ministry shall continue to strive to put in place an effective and efficient education delivery system that shall be founded on a decentralized mode of service delivery, target the untapped resources and skills at the lower levels in a manner that is inclusive and consultative.

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## ***Abbreviations and Acronyms***

<b><i>APAS</i></b>	Annual Performance Appraisal System.
<b><i>AWPB</i></b>	Annual Work- Plan and Budget.
<b><i>CEB</i></b>	College of Education Board.
<b><i>EMIS</i></b>	Education Management Information System
<b><i>DEB</i></b>	District Education Board.
<b><i>DEBS</i></b>	District Education Board Secretary
<b><i>HOD</i></b>	Head of Department.
<b><i>HSEB</i></b>	High School Education Board.
<b><i>HSMT</i></b>	High School Management Team.
<b><i>MCE</i></b>	Mongu College of Education
<b><i>MoE</i></b>	Ministry of Education.
<b><i>OD</i></b>	Organizational Development.
<b><i>OECD</i></b>	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.
<b><i>PDM</i></b>	Participative Decision-Making.
<b><i>PTA</i></b>	Parent Teachers Association
<b><i>SBM</i></b>	School Based Management.

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# ***CHAPTER ONE***

## ***INTRODUCTION***

### ***1.1 Study Overview***

This dissertation is divided into six chapters. The first chapter is the introduction and aims at establishing the problem that leads to the study. This chapter also identifies the study area, explains the significance of the study and bears information obtained from the initial review of literature. In the second chapter review of relevant literature is done. This bears the findings on the study obtained from the reading programme that was intended to identify and/or refine the research problem. The third chapter is the methodology whose purpose is to show how the research was conducted in terms of its design, population size, sample, research instruments, data collection as well as data analysis. In the fourth chapter research findings are presented in qualitative and quantitative ways. Themes, tables and graphs will be used in the presentation of the findings. The fifth chapter is the discussion of the research findings. In this chapter, the findings presented in chapter four are interpreted and discussed. Finally, the sixth chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations based on the findings of the study. The recommendations are to relevant authorities, interested persons and prospective researchers.

### ***1.2 Background to the Study.***

In 1991 the Ministry of Education embarked on the democratization of education requiring the teachers to take part in decision-making. The impetus for this decision came from the view of the Ministry of Education, (1996) that democratic principles guide the formulation and implementation of educational policies. In order to serve individual, social and economic well being and enhancing quality of life for all the principles of decentralization among others have been adopted.

Decentralization efforts in Zambia can be traced to as far back as 1964. At independence, Zambia inherited a highly centralized system of education. All powers to make decisions were vested in the Ministry of Education Headquarters. Sometimes in liaison with Provincial offices, matters regarding planning and management were decided upon. The District, College and School authorities did not possess powers to manage their institutions. The lines of communication therefore were very long and winding, thus creating delays in decision-making (Ministry of Education, 2005). This type of arrangement led to inefficiency in the system.

There is a worldwide trend to move decisions in education closer to schools, away from central Government. In the United States, decentralization means giving school teachers and administrators more decision-making authority. In developing countries, educational decision-making is usually concentrated in central governments (Winkler, 1993). In Zambia, in particular, the democratic and liberal philosophy has made it possible to adopt the policy of decentralizing control and management of the education system. This entails that decisions will be made closer to the points of delivery, where the action is taking place. This will allow for greater responsiveness to local needs.

In order to respond to this, the Government through the Ministry of Education established Education Boards as a component of the Decentralization Programme. This is an overall reform to fulfill national aspirations of democratization and liberalization as demanded by the people of Zambia in 1991.

According to the document *The National Decentralization Policy: Towards Empowering the People*, “decentralization provides for the strengthening of local institutions to facilitate more effective citizen participation in governance and accountable delivery of public services as a basis of decentralization. Under this policy, the district level is the focal point for the planning and delivery of public services” (MOE 2005). Education decentralization aims at decentralizing education delivery from national and provincial headquarters to points of delivery, the districts, Colleges of Education and schools. Some of the major goals include;

- Promotion of community participation in all matters related to national development.
- Enhancement of coordination of development efforts.
- Alleviation of poverty through the introduction of a localized syllabus with relevant practical life skills (MoE,2005).

The above goals can only be realized through a gradual process that involves the promotion of popular participation at all decision-making levels. Furthermore, the goals can be attained by devolution of administrative and political authority to the delivery point.

Decentralization therefore involves the devolution of power from the centre to the local level, the districts and schools. This promotes broad-based participation in the management of education. Research findings show that the teachers’ decisional condition has a significant effect on their level of professional development.

For example, the top-bottom or centralized type of decisional condition has failed because teachers at the bottom were not part of the process. Decisions were just imposed on them. According to Duke. (2005:24),

*Though there has been much inquiry into teacher participation in school decision-making, many questions remain unanswered. There is still no definitive model to guide further investigations of the effects of teacher participation.*

In this study, teacher participation in decision-making focuses on high schools. High schools have been decentralized as Education boards. The rationale behind this type of decentralization is associated with four distinct objectives: democratization, improved efficiency, enhanced quality of schooling and regional pressures. Specifically, decentralization is designed to increase the voice of the local citizens and to empower them to fully participate in decision-making at the local level. In this study, the local level is a high school where teachers are stakeholders. One of the potential benefits of teacher participation in decision-making is increased accountability to the citizen or beneficiary, which results in improved efficiency in the use of school resources. One effect is the better match between services provided and the preferences of citizens. The other effect is increased output relative to resources or expenditures. In Zambia, education was decentralized in pursuit of greater quality and is done as part of broad reform program promoted by educators themselves.

According to Sirotnik and Clark(1988) participative decision-making was developed to improve education delivery. The rationale for implementing participative decision-making in school improvement includes:

- The school as the primary unit of change.
- Those who work directly with students have the most informed and credible opinion as to what educational arrangements will be beneficial to the students.
- Significant and lasting improvements take considerable time, and schools are in the best position to sustain improvement efforts over time.

- The Head teacher is a key figure in school improvement.
- Significant change is brought about by staff and community participation in project planning and implementation.

When teacher participation in the schools' decision-making is in place the entire Ministry of Education is affected. This is so because participative decision-making strategies directly challenge and seek to change the complex and well-entrenched patterns of institutional and individual behavior that have remained untouched by top-down reforms. In other words, the roles of teachers undergo significant changes. In this dissertation therefore the author discusses teacher participation in the schools' decision-making process and the effects it has on organizational development in selected high schools in the Central Province.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Decentralization is potentially beneficial to the Ministry of Education in general and the organization of schools in particular. But as of now, it is not clear whether decentralization in schools has been effectively implemented and brought about participative decision-making for effective school organizational development.

### **1.4 Purpose of the Study.**

This study aims at examining the teachers' decisional condition in high schools and its effects on organizational development. The study, therefore, aims at filling the knowledge gap by finding out how decision-making in high schools can be participative for successful organizational development.

### **1.5 Objectives of the Study.**

The study aims at addressing the following objectives:

1.5.1. To examine the decisional condition of teachers in high schools.

1.5.2. To find out the effects of the teachers' decisional condition on organizational development in a decentralized system.

1.5.3. To find out whether participative decision-making as an administrative practice is preferred by administrators in high schools.

1.5.4. To find out the administrators' position on the principle of democratization in high schools.

## **1.6 Research Questions.**

To help investigate the research problem, the following research questions were addressed:

1.6.1. What is the teachers' decisional condition in high schools?

1.6.2. What are the effects of the teachers' decisional condition on organizational development in a decentralized system?

1.6.3. Is participative decision-making as an administrative practice preferred by administrators in high schools?

1.6.4. What is the administrators' position on the principle of democratization in high schools?

## **1.7 Significance of the Study**

The study will, on the one hand, contribute to the body of knowledge on the teachers' decisional condition and its effects on organizational development. On the other hand, the study will provide insights in the effects of decentralization on the decision-making process utilized in high schools. Furthermore, this knowledge may lead to the improvement of many of our High schools in their organizational structure.

### **1.8 Delimitation of the Study.**

The study was limited to three districts of Central province, namely, Kabwe, Mkushi and Serenje. Out of the twenty one government high schools in Central Province only eight were purposively sampled from these districts under the following categories: four urban, day co-education high schools; two rural, day co-education high schools and two rural boarding co-education high schools. The respondents were limited to head teachers, heads of department and class teachers. These were expected to give needed information on participative decision-making and its effects on organizational development. The sample would have been widened but time was limited.

### **1.9 Limitations of the Study.**

Since the study was conducted in only three districts of the Central Province and in only eight high schools, the results may not necessarily be generalized to other parts of the country.

### **1.10 Operational Definitions of Terms.**

<b>Accountability:</b>	Answerability (to be answerable to someone)
<b>Authority:</b>	Powers delegated by the Minister.
<b>Budgeting:</b>	Process of producing a financial plan.
<b>Centralization:</b>	Concentration of responsibilities at headquarters.
<b>Change:</b>	Any action altering a system.
<b>Committee:</b>	A group of management staff assigned to carry out specific duties in a school.
<b>Decentralization:</b>	Transfer of responsibilities to the point of delivery Such as a school.
<b>Decisional condition:</b>	Teacher participation or non participation in decision making
<b>Decision-making:</b>	Identifying and choosing alternatives based on the

values and preferences of a decision maker (teacher).

***De-concentration:***

Giving additional responsibilities to schools.

***Delegation:***

Transfer of functions and resources to a subordinate authority with the capacity to act in the behalf of the Superior authority without a formal transfer of authority in the same structure.

***Devolution:***

Transferring powers to lower levels of Government.

***Education boards:***

A platform on which communities can participate in the affairs and governance of education in order to uphold democratic principles.

***Effect:***

Positive or negative result.

***Efficiency:***

Ability to achieve set goals effectively. How well schools prepare learners.

***Empowerment:***

*Enabling people make decisions on issues affecting their welfare.*

***High school:***

A school running from Grades 10-12.

***Management:***

Doing things through others.

***Organizational Development:*** School improvement aimed at change in learning

conditions to accomplish set educational goals.

***Performance:***

manner in which an organization carries out functions.

***Planning:***

Process of formulating a course of action.

***Policy:***

Guiding statement about practice.

***Preference:***

Setting priorities as a basis for decision.

***Privatization:***

Selling of government owned educational institutions into

Private ownership.

**Quality:** All the characteristics of a service which make it possible to satisfy a need.

**Stakeholder:** Interested person.

**Structure:** Mode of reporting and communicating.

**Teacher participation:** Increased teacher involvement in the schools' decision-making process.

**Values:** Important and useful beliefs describing a group of people or an organization.

## ***CHAPTER TWO***

### ***LITERATURE REVIEW***

#### **2.1 *Introduction***

This chapter reviews literature from secondary and primary sources. The chapter is divided into the following themes: overview of decentralization, reform in education decision making, definitions and forms of decentralization, concepts related to participative decision making, history of teacher participation in decision making, arguments for teacher participation, conceptualization of teacher participation in decision making and effects of teacher participation. This chapter shares the results of other studies being reported. It also relates the study to the larger, on going dialogue in the literature about the topic, filling in gaps and extending prior studies for establishing the importance of the study as well as a bench mark for comparing the results of the study with other findings. In this case the author relates the reviewed literature to decentralized decision making in high schools. In Zambia today all high schools are decentralized as Education Boards to make decisions at the delivery point.

#### **2.2 *Overview of Decentralization***

There is a worldwide trend to move education decision making from a centralized government to schools. In the United States of America local governments already have much decision making power. Thus decentralization in the United States of America means giving school teachers and administrators more decision making authority (Winkler, 1993). Since the 1990s, many countries have been decentralizing education. This proceeded fastest in Latin America and Eastern Europe, but several countries in Asia and Africa also began initiating decentralized policies. According to Fiszbein, (ed) (2001) education is also highly decentralized in countries such as Canada, Norway and the United Kingdom, with the

influence of democratic processes, western approaches to management and perhaps even African approaches organizations may well be looking to decentralization. In South Africa due to democratic influences, education is decentralized.

Decentralization has become a Zambian household word over the years. During the administrative reforms of 1968/69 a way was paved towards decentralization. According to Lungu, (1981) there was the delegation of authority to make administrative decisions on behalf of the central administration to public servants working in the field and responsible in varying degrees for government policy within their territory. According to Ministry of Education, (1996) decentralization in the Ministry of Education was brought about in keeping with the democratic and liberal philosophy that Zambia had embraced. This has been effected through the creation of Education Boards at school, college and district levels. According to the Ministry of Education, (2005:5) the goals of decentralizing education delivery are to:

- Promote community participation in all matters related to development.
- Enhance coordination of development efforts.
- Alleviate poverty through the introduction of a localized syllabus with relevant practical skills.

Decentralization is a gradual process and achieving the goals outlined requires that several actions be taken. One such action is the promotion of popular participation at all decision making levels. In this case the high school level should employ participative decision making (PDM) strategies. In so doing there would be improved education access, equity, quality and relevance. There would also be improved performance of the education system in service delivery. According to MoE, (2005) the education decentralization programme is being

implemented in the Ministry of Education as an on going process. The main components of the education decentralization programme include the following:

- Decentralization of the payroll.
- Development of the Education Management Information System (EMIS).
- Development and implementation of the localized curriculum through the Basic School Curriculum Framework.
- Establishment of Education Boards in Districts, Colleges of Education, high schools and Schools for Continuing Education.
- Restructuring the Ministry of Education to provide organizational and Management structures that would make implementation of the decentralized system a reality.

### **2.3 *Reform in Educational Decision Making***

Decentralization is potentially beneficial to the Ministry of Education in general and the organization of schools in particular. According to Winkler, (1993) decentralization is a reform of decision making and governance; an attempt to improve education by changing the structure of the education system. The table below summarizes more and less useful ways of thinking about such changes.

2.3.1 LESS AND MORE USEFUL WAYS OF VIEWING GOVERNANCE IN EDUCATION

LESS USEFUL	MORE USEFUL
1. Beyond either/or	
Either decentralization or centralization	Where is responsibility for a particular administrative function best located to achieve particular objectives and given the goals, capacities and needs of a system at a particular time?
2. Beyond formulars	
One best option, context free solutions: Nothing can be generalized	Principles; and options; information about options
3. Beyond the abstracted technical	
Removing issues of politics, organization, and implementation from technical analysis.	Incorporating all insights; Explicit values; and Establishing legitimate processes for considering the interests of all groups and for making contestable choices.
4. Beyond the purely Theoretical	
(De)centralization works in theory, so it should work in practice; (De)centralization works in other sectors, so it should work in education	Too little is known about education to assume the insights from theory and/or other sectors will apply to education; look for actual effects.
5. Beyond Good Government - Bad Government	
Bad Government (hierarchy regulations, bureaucracy, centralization; and "Good" government.	Ways that the organization of government structures relations among actors (isolating teachers, promoting bureaucracy, rigidity)and ways organization can be changed.

Source: Winkler, (1993).

The more useful question is whether a particular administrative function is excessively (de) centralized in light of particular goals and given other possible arrangements. This suggests that systems can either be centralized or decentralized. In fact most systems contain forces pushing for greater centralization balanced by others pushing for decentralization. Most education systems consist of three or more levels of authority rather than two as suggested by either /or statements. It is more meaningful to specify the locations from and to which authority is being moved than simply to indicate direction. According to Winkler, (1993)

effective reform may balance policies with a decentralized effect on some aspects of the system with policies that decentralize other parts of the system.

It is worthwhile to change the system considering a diversity of conditions, resources, capacities and values of different education systems. Beyond formulas, the table above focuses on reforming the education system basing on already established systems. The purpose is not to develop a uniform design but one that fits the unique needs of particular clients. One useful approach is to generate a series of possible solutions, specifying pros and cons of each. It is also unbearable to rely only on technical analysis. It is better, therefore, to consider all aspects of organizational change, politics, organizational dynamics and implementation issues.

Decentralization plans need to be workable with sufficient clarity, resources, management capacity and motivation. As Winkler proposes, the positive effects of decentralization on classroom instructors may not relate to efficiency effects as is commonly assumed. Situations are important rather than what they should theoretically be. Thus, a failure of centralized governance does not necessarily mean that more decentralized structures will work better.

Winkler (1993) further postulates that it is more useful to understand government in organizational rather than normative terms. Decentralization is often promoted out of frustration with government and its problems. However by reviewing government as a complex but ultimately understandable organization, one is better able to make it serve intended purposes. Thus seeing government inefficiency as inherent to government is less useful than understanding and changing the incentives that lead to waste. A useful perspective therefore sees government as more effective at some things and less so at others. Thus for example central government is better at funding local innovations than starting them. Similarly different

levels of government are better able to carry out some tasks than others. Central governments are better able to afford Curriculum design specialists than individual schools. District Education Offices are generally better able to identify locations for new schools than Provincial Education Offices.

In view of the above, considerations in reforming governance in education rests in considering administrative functions separately in light of what is involved with each. With some functions such as curriculum design, a high degree of uniformity and/or expertise is involved. Such decisions are best placed in central locations. Other highly personal or context-dependent matters such as improving school-community relations are best delegated to local actors who know the particulars of specific situations.

As a social rule, it makes sense to locate decisions close to the source of the information about variations. For example, a system seeking to improve quality may require teachers to spend a prescribed period of time on each subject. The intent is to ensure coverage of the entire curriculum, but the effect may be determined to teachers' best professional efforts. A better approach might be to tighten control over the desired outcomes, (such as pupil test scores), but loosen control over the means of achieving the outcome. Leaving the means unspecified gives teachers the challenge of finding ways to achieve the objectives. This too is a form of decentralization.

## 2.4 *Definitions and Forms of Decentralization*

Decentralization which is implemented by the creation of Education Boards aims at providing a platform on which communities can participate in matters of education and allow for rapid reaction and action to problems and opportunities that occur at the points in education delivery. The sense of ownership will be enhanced thus resulting in the delivery of quality education, (Mol,2005).

According to Fiszbein, (ed) (2001) decentralization is designed as the transfer of decision making authority closer to the beneficiary. This can take the form of transferring powers to lower levels of an organization. According to OECD, (1992: ii) decentralization means:

*... more than granting people the right to manage the resources allocated to them. It includes giving them a role of defining their needs.*

The temptation for the central government is to off load problems onto locals so that they can take some of the blame when expectations are not met. The reaction to this is the greater need for cohesion, conformity, monitoring and accounting mostly based on quantitative techniques. There are duo challenges of decision-making responsibility and the need to meet national standards that tend to reinforce central power. In decentralization, decision making processes are closer to the users of services. Effective schools therefore appear to require a high degree of school-level responsibility and authority with accountability to parents and the local community. School decentralization programmes that shift responsibility from central bureaucracies to local districts and schools are one strategy to promote effective schools (Levin and Lockheed, 1991).

According to Fiszbein, (2001) there are five forms of decentralization. These are: deconcentration, devolution, delegation, privatization and participation.

**Deconcentration** means giving additional responsibilities to schools. This is often called school autonomy or School-Based Management (SBM).

**Devolution**, another form of decentralization, entails transferring powers to lower levels of government. An example is the decentralization of Basic education to District Education Boards (MOE, 2005).

**Delegation** is the transfer of functions and resources to a subordinate authority with the capacity to act in the behalf of the super ordinate without a formal transfer of authority in the same structure.

**Participation** involves shifting authority from the centre to the local school level. The aim is to empower school staff to solve the educational problems of their schools. The staff should be involved in the making of decisions. This is attached to a broader school system, participative decision-making. Individuals who possess expertise regarding decisions are responsible for implementing the decisions (David, 1989). David further outlines two well established propositions for school decision making. The first is that the school is the primary decision Making unit; and its collorary, decisions should be made to the lowest possible level. The second is the view that, “change requires ownership that comes from the opportunity to participate in defining change flexibility to adapt it to individual circumstances; the corallary is that change does not result from imposed procedures” (David, 1989:46).

**Privatization** according to Republic of Zambia (2002: iv) is “the divestiture of state interest in public enterprises and the subsequent sell of such to the private sector”. For example Ndola Trust School, Nkwazi Trust School and Mpelembe high school were sold off to private share holders. The case of public administration, local authorities and related public offices cannot be privatized.

## 2.5. *Concepts Related to Participative Decision-Making (PDM)*

In the development of forms of decentralization, focus has been primarily on scholarly work that uses the term “participative decision making” to describe the involvement of teachers in school management. However, participative decision making is conceived as just one aspect of shared leadership, and the idea of involving teachers in school-level decision making is known by many names. Because of the similarities among various conceptions of teacher participation, this review includes, as appropriate, related work in the areas of teacher leadership, teacher empowerment and shared governance. Several schools of thought have studied teacher empowerment (Kahrs, 1996; Marks and Louis, 1997; Reitzug, 1994; Rice and Schnender, 1994), a concept that is related to teacher participation in decision making. Participative decision making on one hand is a structure whereas empowerment is an internal perception by teachers of having increased authority in their positions. According to Rinehart and Short, (1998:635) “primarily, empowerment has been defined as a process whereby school participants develop the competence to take charge of their own growth and resolve their own problems”.

Teacher leadership is another closely related concept which includes teacher participation in decision making as part of a broader leadership role both in and outside the classroom. The works of Crowther et al (2002), among many others, described in detail an image of teacher leadership as full participation by teachers in developing a shared vision, planning and implementing instructional improvements, working with the community and participating in professional development in collegial ways, in addition to participating in decision-making. Blasé and Blasé (1999;2000) narrowly used shared governance in their work in schools to refer to principals’ sharing their governance roles with teachers. It is closely related to

participative decision-making in which teachers participate in various ways and to varying extents in making decisions, in schools that were traditionally made by the principal. However shared governance includes other governance or leadership roles that are distinct from decision making, these include peer supervision or evaluation, action research and school data analysis and leadership in such areas as staff development and personnel hiring. A related term participative management refers to the management strategy of principals that lead to teacher participation.

An example of participative decision making is School Based Management (SBM) also known as *site-based decision making*. In general SBM refers specifically to the decentralization of formal decision- making authority from the district to the building level often including the community members, and school staff along with the principals and teachers in the decision-making process (Riesgraf, 2002). Participative decision-making is a more general term that refers to sharing of decision authority among stakeholders in a given context. There is a relationship between SBM and teacher participation in the schools' decision-making. As evidenced by Rice and Schneider, (1994) there is a positive relationship between school based management initiatives and teacher participative perceptions of their level of involvement in decision- making.

In the development of a framework of teacher participation in decision-making, Somech, (2002) drew from the work of many previous theorists who had also grappled with how to define the construct. Participative Management and decision -making have been in existence since early in the twentieth century, when business and management theories began to experiment with giving workers some control over their working environment.

## 2.6. *History of Teacher Participation in Decision-Making*

Teacher participation in school decision-making has its roots in organizational and management literature of the early Twentieth Century. Though the significance has changed, the notion of workers' participating in the management of their organizations has existed since then. In 1938 Chester Barnard and his contemporaries believed that, by allowing workers to think they had more control and authority in the work place, they could eventually improve production and efficiency. Barnard, (1938:94) suggested that workers could be induced to cooperate with management if offered incentives to do so. One such incentive was "... the opportunity of enlarged participation." Taylor, (1911) states that though worker participation gained credence it still remained a component of the decentralized, top-down structure of scientific management.

Later theorists began to criticize the traditional structure, arguing that it had negative effects on worker morale, motivation and productivity (Lawler, 1986). In 1948 a study was carried out by involving employees in varying levels of participation in designing job changes. The study found significant evidence that participation in considering changes to their jobs led to higher productivity, lower turn over, less aggression towards management, and faster learning of new job procedures (Coch & French, 1948). Additionally Mc Gregor wrote that,

*The essential task of management is to arrange organizational conditions and methods of operation so that people can achieve their own goals best by directing their own efforts towards organizational objectives* (Mc Gregor, 1957:183).

Over the next twenty years companies experimented with employee models and research showed that the approach did result in increased productivity and financial gains (Lawler, 1986). In 1986 Lawler presented his high involvement model, which laid out in details the

rationale and process for worker participation. Since then, participative management and employee participation have become common in American industry and other organizations (Bacharach et al, 1990).

## 2.7 *Arguments for Teacher Participation*

According to Dachler and Wilpert, (1978); Greenberg, (1975); Margulies and Black, (1978) there are four theoretical orientations that surround arguments for teacher participation in organizational decision-making. The four arguments or theoretical premises include:

- (a) the democratic theory
- (b) the socialist theory
- (c) the human growth and development theory
- (d) the productivity and efficiency theory

The democratic argument is necessary to professionalize and democratize teaching. Another argument for worker participation is based on the belief that in order to prevent the treatment of labour as a commodity and the resulting alienation, workers must participate in and ultimately control the production process (Dachler & Wilpert, 1978) This socialist argument is grounded in the works of Karl Marx (1867), who harshly criticized the capitalist economic system.

The other argument for participation is the human growth and development theory. This theory advocates assigning greater importance to intrinsic motivational properties of work itself by allowing greater employee influence, autonomy and responsibility. This provides an opportunity for growth and learning within the workplace. Finally, and most commonly,

worker participation is promoted as a way to increase the productivity and efficiency of an organization. Greenburg (1975) refers to this school of thought as, “The Management School.” In the educational setting where this rationale is wide spread, teacher participation is believed to improve the quality of educational decisions, and therefore improve instructions (Conley, 1991).

Despite the various theoretical arguments cited for teacher participation in decision-making, there is still a lack of clarity about what teacher participation is and how it is specifically conceptualized.

## **2.8. *Conceptualization of Teacher Participation in Decision-Making***

Somech, (2002) explains that her framework of five dimensions of teacher participation in decision-making is based on the extensive conceptual and theoretical work of numerous previous researchers. Alutto and Belasco, (1973) proposed three levels of participation namely, decisional deprivation, decisional equilibrium, and decisional saturation determined by comparing teachers self reported levels of actual participation in 12 “decisional situations” with their level of desired participation in the same 12 situations. The result was that there was a difference in the demographic characteristics of teachers at each of the three levels of participation. For example teachers at the elementary level experienced decisional saturation while those at secondary level experienced decisional deprivation. Male teachers experienced more decisional deprivation than female teachers. Alutto and Belasco also found that the level of participation was not related to organizational commitment.

Other conceptualizations in the study of teacher participation in decision-making include:

- The degree of involvement rather than the measure of involvement or non-involvement.
- Control in the organization-distribution of control among levels and aggregate control present.

- Interrelationship between the goals of the implementers, the properties of the system, and the system outcome.
- Type of involvement-influence or authority.

On one hand the conceptualization of participative decision making is multifaceted and according to Somech, (2002) none of the above concepts can work independent of the other. There is no construct yet of teacher participation and how it works. In the absence of a unified framework, studies that have been done do not necessarily address and measure the same variables or dimensions of participation. Also assumed in many cases are positive effects of teacher participation, but findings from research about the effects of participative decision making in schools is actually varied.

## 2.9. *Effects of Teacher Participation*

Research in the area of organizational management seems to support the existence of positive effects on both workers and organizational effectiveness involving employees in decisions affecting their work. For example Coch and French, (1948) found dramatic improvements in absenteeism, turnover, efficiency, productivity and the number of grievances. In addition the existence of participative decision making appear to support the existence of outcomes of participative decision making such as job satisfaction and improved performance (Alutto and Belasco, 1972, 1973; Black and Gregersen, 1997, Cotton et al; 1988; Mohrman et al, 1978) There are also numerous studies that have documented the advantages of the high involvement approach. It is also difficult to generalize the findings of research in the private sector to public schools and vice versa. Brown, (1993) concludes that employee involvement programmes can be effective for improving well-functioning public schools, but that they are not sufficient for overturning poorly performing schools. Though the positive effects of teacher participation are frequently cited as a rationale for employing this strategy for school improvement, there

is limited empirical evidence of its actual benefits.

In many cases, studies of teacher participation and leadership have been criticized because they utilized small sample sizes with interview and observational data (Leithwood and Jantzi, 1999). Furthermore, research on participation has generally centered on non-instructional individual and organizational outcomes. Very few studies have attempted to relate teacher participation in school decision-making to student performance, choosing instead to look at its effects on teachers and, in rare cases, principals (Duke et al, 1981). In the same works teacher involvement at school level would be more important than involvement at the individual classroom level suggesting perhaps that teacher participation in decision- making at the school level, is a critical component of teacher empowerment.

While many scholars have found positive effects of PDM, some have found serious challenges. For example in a large scale study of high schools Weiss, Cambone and Wyeth, (1992) found conflicts among, between and within teachers involved in school decision-making. The conflict emerged regarding who would participate and who would not. There was also confusion among teachers about the locus of final decision authority. It has been around for many years and is likely to remain both a component of school improvement and a topic of continuing investigation.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to explain how the study was carried out and to highlight any problems that were experienced in order for other researchers to avoid them. It refers to one of the most significant parts of the research. The chapter presents information on the study area, the research design, the population, the sample size and procedures, research instruments, data quality, data collection procedures, ethical considerations, data collection techniques, data analysis, data interpretation and challenges encountered during field work. With these in place the research was conducted in such a way that answers to research questions were found (White, 2005).

#### **3.1 Study Area**

The study was conducted in the Central Province of Zambia targeting 21 Government High schools. Out of the twenty one schools four were sampled from Kabwe district, an urban area; two schools from Mkushi; and two schools from Serenje, making a total of eight. Mkushi and Serenje were in a rural setting. Furthermore all the schools sampled were co-education in nature.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

A research design is defined as, “the planning of any scientific research from the first to the last step. It is a specification of the most adequate operations to be performed in order to test a specific hypothesis under given conditions” (Bless and Achola 1988:54). This study adopted a case study design. It gives an opportunity for one aspect of the problem to be studied in some depth within a limited time frame.

Case studies describe and analyze a situation, an event or process thereby evaluating an education event or programme. They can also be used to identify policy issues affecting an education programme. They focus on processes rather than outcomes. Finally, case studies contribute to large scale research projects and serve as a preliminary to quantitative research. This is purely a qualitative and descriptive approach though traces of quantitative approaches were spiced in.

### **3.3. *Target Population***

In the context of research the term “target population” has been defined as all members of any well defined class of people, events, or objects who have been designated as being the focus of an investigation. It is also known as universe or a special universe. It is called special universe in order to distinguish it from the general universe or population to which the study’s findings can be generalized. A population should not be too small or too big. Use of a small population would be too limited in terms of generalizations while the later would make the study too involving if not impossible to carry out (Bless and Achola, 1988). In this study the target population included all the twenty one government high schools in the Central Province and the target sample included eight high schools namely, Chalata, Highridge, Ibolelo, Kabwe, Kalonga, Mkushi, Mukobeko and Serenje.

### **3.4 *Study Sample***

Sampling refers to the way of selecting the subjects that make up a population. There are various ways of doing this but in this study a non-random sampling procedure was employed.

According to White, (2005) the key element in sampling is representativeness. Purposive sampling procedure was appropriate in that the researcher hand picked the cases to be included in the sample. This was determined by the researchers' specific needs. The power and logic of purposive sampling is that a few cases studied in depth yield many insights about the topic. In this study eight high schools were picked or selected: four from the urban setting and four from the rural setting and all were co-education government high schools.

Ten class teachers, six Heads of Department and one Head teacher were selected from each school. It was believed that these may be information rich key informants and were likely to be knowledgeable and informative.

### 3.5 *Research Instruments*

The following research instruments were used;

S/NO	RESEARCH INSTRUMENT	REPPONDENTS
A	Questionnaire	Teachers
B	Non-Structured Interview	Head teachers
C	Focused Group Discussion	Head of Department

### 3.6. *Data Collection*

Data were collected using the instruments in the table above. The researcher was on site administering questionnaires, conducting interviews and Focused Group Discussions.

Quantifiable data were analyzed by converting them into numbers while a large chunk of data was qualitatively analyzed through themes and descriptions.

Data are analyzed for several reasons. One of them being that information may usually be bulky and jumbled. It is therefore necessary to make sense out of it. Data therefore needed to be analyzed for it to be meaningful and useful when answering the research questions.

There are two broad ways or approaches to this analysis. In this study data were qualitatively analyzed but at the same time part of them were quantitatively analyzed. The way or approach one uses depends upon the type of data available. Use of both approaches is highly enriching and advantageous.

### **3.8. *Problems Encountered During Field Work***

While in the field collecting data the researcher encountered some problems. To start with the schools had just opened for the third term and were busy analyzing end of term two results, giving out reports and preparing for elections and final examinations.

The researcher did not receive back all the questionnaires. Out of the eighty questionnaires distributed only sixty seven were got back. Secondly one Head teacher was not understanding. Because of the nature of the work of the researcher (Education Standards Officer) this Head teacher thought all responses made would be reported. Therefore, in this school the author believes no correct information was collected through questionnaires, Focused Group Discussions and interviews. The information may not be reliable. This Head teacher was reminded of the ethical considerations surrounding research.

### 3.9. *Ethical Considerations*

The researcher is responsible for the ethical standards to which the study adheres.

It was therefore clearly stated that all the information got from the schools was confidential and purely for academic purposes only. No names of respondents and schools were recorded in this paper. The researcher also hid his status in the Ministry of Education and went into schools not as a Standards Officer but as a scholar on research.

Finally, the respondents in questionnaires exercised their right to be part of the research or not. There was informed consent, meaning that all participants agreed to participate.

**PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS OF THE STUDY*****INTRODUCTION***

This Chapter presents the results from the individual high schools. Head teachers, Heads of Department and Teachers' responses on the teacher participation in the schools decision-making process and its effect on organizational development are presented. The responses are centered on the variables which are relevant to school improvement, namely, school tasks, increased teacher involvement, teacher decisional condition, effects of the decisional condition on Institutional development, decision making and preferred administrative practices.

08 Head teachers, 36 Heads of Department and 80 teachers were targeted. 08 Head teachers were interviewed, 24 Heads of Department were available for Focused Group Discussions and 67 teachers responded to the questionnaires. Decision-making is important because decisions made collectively are likely to achieve the intended goals. Teachers will have a vision of what they intend to achieve at the end of the day.

Through interviews, Focused Group Discussions and questionnaires the findings in the following pages were established:

**TABLE 4.1. TASKS UNDERTAKEN IN SCHOOLS**

<b>S/NO</b>	<b>TASKS UNDERTAKEN</b>	<b>FREQUENCY OF TEACHERS RESPONSES (TOTAL)</b>	<b>%</b>
1	Coordinated resource sharing	24	15.8%
2	Decentralized school organization	34	22.3%
3	Teacher participation in decision making	56	36.8%
4	Follow up on suggestions	38	25.1%
	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>100%</b>

The study revealed that under tasks undertaken in schools 15.8% of the respondents indicated co-ordinate resource sharing as a task undertaken in their schools. 22.3% of the respondents indicated decentralized school organization as being done in their schools. 36.8% indicated Teacher participation in decision making and 25.1% indicated follow-up on strategies as tasks undertaken in their schools.

**TABLE 4.2. INCREASED TEACHER INVOLVEMENT**

S/NO	TASKS DIRECTED TOWARDS INCREASED TEACHER INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING	FREQUENCY OF TEACHERS RESPONSES (TOTAL)	%
1	In-service/Formative evaluation	23	7.3%
2	Budget process (Annual Work plan and Budgeting)	47	14.8%
3	School Committees	54	17.0%
4	Staff Meetings	61	19.2%
5	Departmental Meetings	64	20.1%
6	Activities sports, School Preventive Maintenance	58	18.2%
7	Decision-Making Council	11	3.4%
	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>100%</b>

20.1% of the respondents indicated that departmental meetings were being conducted in schools. 19.2% showed that staff meetings were also conducted. 18.2% showed that activities such as sports and school preventive maintenance were conducted regularly in schools while 17.0% consented to having school committees in existence. 14.8% revealed that Budget process (Annual Work plan and Budgeting) was done.

only 7.3% of the respondents indicated that the tasks were directed towards increased teacher involvement in decision making. 3.4 % indicated the existence of Decision-making councils.

**TABLE 4.3. TEACHER DECISIONAL CONDITION**

DECISIONAL CONDITION	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS(TEACHERS)		TOTAL	%
	M	F		
Participative	39	23	62	92.5%
Non-Participative	05	00	05	7.5%
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100%</b>

The results show that 92.5% of the respondents indicated that the Teachers’ decisional condition was participative. 7.5% indicated that the teachers’ decisional condition was non-participative.

**TABLE 4.4. EFFECTS OF THE DECISIONAL CONDITION ON INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

S/NO	EFFECTS OF THE DECISIONAL CONDITION ON INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	FREQUENCY OF TEACHERS RESPONSES (TOTAL)	%
1	High Productivity	38	17.4%
2	Improved Schools	43	19.7%
3	Motivated staff	40	18.4%
4	Job Security	11	5.0%
5	Low student Performance	4	1.8%
6	Demotivated staff	6	2.8%
7	Loyal to Head teachers	22	10.0%
8	Conflict among teachers	7	3.3%
9	Positive Professional Practice	40	18.4%
10	High absentiscem among staff	1	0.4%
11	Negative Professional practice	6	2.8%
	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>100%</b>

17.4% of the responses reflect the effect of high productivity in schools. Improved schools as an effect was indicated by 19.7% while motivated staff scored 18.4%. The study also revealed that 5.0% indicated job security as an effect of the decisional condition. Others include 1.8% indicating low student performance, 2.8% demotivated staff and 10.0% loyalty to Head teachers. 3.3% revealed conflict among teachers, an effect of the decisional condition on institutional development. 18.4% responses revealed positive professional practices and 0.4% indicated High absenteeism among staff. 2.8% indicated negative professional practices as an effect of the decisional condition on institutional development.

**TABLE 4.5 PARTICIPATIVE DECISION MAKING PRACTICE**

DECISION MAKING PRACTICE	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS		TOTAL	%
	MALE	FEMALE		
Preferred	30	20	50	74.6%
Not Preferred	14	03	17	25.4%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100%</b>

The study established that 74.6% of the respondents preferred participative decision making as an administrative practice. 25.4% of the Teachers did not prefer participative decision making practice.

#### 4.6. DECISIONAL CONDITION OF TEACHERS IN RELATON TO LOCATION

**TABLE 4.6.1 URBAN SETTING**

DECISIONAL CONDITION	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS		Total	%
	MALE	FEMALE		
Participative	14	14	28	41.8%
Non- Participative	1	00	01	1.5%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>43.3%</b>

In Urban settings 41.8% of the respondents indicated a decisional condition which was participative. 1.5% indicated a non-participative decisional condition.

**TABLE 4.6.2 RURAL SETTING**

DECISIONAL CONDITION	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS		Total	%
	MALE	FEMALE		
Participative	26	09	35	52.2%
Non- Participative	03	00	03	4.5.%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>56.7%</b>

It was established that 52.2% of teachers in rural settings indicated a participative decisional condition and 4.5% indicated a non-participative decisional condition.

**TABLE 4.7 TASKS TO INCREASE INVOLVEMENT BY HEADS OF DEPARTMENT**

S/NO	TASKS	FREQUENCY OF TASKS IN SCHOOLS		
		NOT DONE	SOMETIMES	REGULARLY
1	Departmental meetings			√
2	Departmental Work plan			√
3	School Based Continuous Professional Development		√	
4	Time tabling			√
5	Test preparation, marking and analysis			√

The study through the Focused Group Discussions with Heads of Department revealed that Departmental meetings, Departmental Work plans, time tabling and test preparation, marking and analysis were done regularly. School based Continuous Professional Development was done sometimes. These were tasks identified to increase teacher involvement in school departments.

#### **4.8 PRACTICE OF PARTICIPATIVE DECISION MAKING BY HEADS OF DEPARTMENT**

The general view of Heads of Department was that they practiced Participative decision making in the departments in the following activities; timetabling, preparation of schemes of work and preparation of mock examinations. The Heads of Departments also revealed that participative decision making was done in continuous assessment and marking, staff recruitment through Parent Teachers Association and school Boards, Annual Work plans and budgeting, analysis of final examination results and departmental meetings.

It was revealed that in consultation with the teachers, the Heads of Department prepared minutes which he/she presented to the Management meeting. Heads of Department also said that,

*Decentralization was a vital tool for teachers' participation in decision-making and that it could work completely if complete power and authority was given to schools in policy making. (Focused Group Discussion 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2008, Mkushi).*

Furthermore, the Heads of Department lamented that though schools were Education Boards they still did not have the capacity in terms of Financial, Human and Material resources. At the same time the education Boards were still attached to central government although they were mandated to decide the best they could give to learners. Curriculum for example was supposed to be a guide to give room to individual schools with regard to prioritizing what best to give their learners.

On one hand, decentralization through the principle of democracy was valuable. Schools had more to say on decision making and teachers were at the centre of this. The system was now down-up. The PTA had no power now compared to the School Education Board. On the other hand decision-making in an organization was very important. In the school setting all decisions made were supposed to lead to the improvement of the institutions in general and learning in particular. The goal of every learning institution was centered on the improvement of pupil performance. This was because decisions made may or may not lead to the attainment of organizational goals. Most of the decisions bring about change in school policy. It was this change which should be handled with care, depending on the leadership style of the Head teacher. These decisions would be effectively implemented if teachers participated in formulating them. Therefore, teacher participation in decision making was accepted by the majority of the Heads of Department.

**TABLE 4.9 HEADTEACHERS DESCRIPTION OF THE TEACHERS' DECISIONAL CONDITION IN THE SCHOOL**

TEACHERS DECISIONAL CONDITION	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS		TOTAL	%
	M	F		
Participative	06	01	07	87.5%
Non-Participative	01	00	01	12.5%
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>100%</b>

87.5% of the Head teachers showed that the teachers' decisional condition was participative.

12.5% established that it was non-participative.

#### **4.10 THE ROLES OF HEADTEACHERS (BOARD SECRETARY) IN THE SCHOOLS DECISION MAKING**

During the interviews in schools, 04 Head teachers who were also Board Secretaries in the Decentralized structure came up with various roles that they performed. To begin with, they said they gave direction and interpreted government policy in Educational delivery, control the affairs of schools and conduct internal monitoring of Human, Financial and material resources.

The other 04 Head teachers identified the following roles: preparation of proposals and submit to the Education Board, develop strategic plans, striving to achieve the institutional goals and control quality in the schools. They also added that they motivated teaching staff and enhance professional practices in schools.

According to the 08 Head teachers, the roles above improved on teacher participation in decision making. They said schools run through committees and the members of such committees were teachers. Decisions were therefore made in these committees and departments and the Head teacher merely consolidated these decisions and submitted them to

the governing body (the Board). 01 Head teacher boldly confirmed that it was not always that all decisions made by teachers were taken on. He said he had the authority to shoot down those he thought were irrelevant or were not to his advantage. He further said in managing schools there should be room to practice non-participative leadership style.

All the Head teachers interviewed observed that teacher participation in decision making had notable effects on the school. One head teacher put it this way:

*In a school where teachers participate in decision-making there is useful learning taking place, inspiration to learners to continue learning and a motivated work force.  
(interviews with Head teacher 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2008 – Kabwe)*

Though democracy was welcome, Head teachers interviewed said it was expensive and they needed to be trained in management to assimilate it positively.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

#### 5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a discussion of the findings. The discussion follows the variables upon which data collection was based, namely, tasks undertaken in schools, increased teacher involvement, teacher decisional condition, effects of the decisional condition on institutional development, participative decision making practice, tasks to increase involvement, practice of decision making, Head teachers' description of the teachers' decisional condition and roles of Head teachers in the schools' decision making. Furthermore the chapter discusses the statement of the problem raised, "... it is not clear whether decentralization in schools has been effectively implemented and brought about participative decision making for effective school organizational development".

The study revealed (as in table 4.1.1) that out of the four tasks undertaken in schools, namely, coordinated resource sharing, decentralized school organization, teacher participation in decision making and follow up on suggestions, the majority of responses (36.8%) established teacher participation in decision making as a widely undertaken task in schools. Levin and Lockheed (1991: 12) concluded that,

*In effective schools teachers are typically decision-makers and play important roles in shaping the school.*

In Brazil, a sharp contrast was found in schools where teamwork and collegiality characterized the relationship among teachers and the principal, and a conversional school, where teachers did their work individually and had a distant relationship with the principal. In Thailand principals of improving schools promoted shared decision making within the school and greater collaboration among teachers. (Levin and Lockheed, 1991).

In Zambia the principle of decentralization allows the devolution of power from the centre to local levels, in districts and schools. This promotes broad-based participation in the management of education. This in schools happens by allowing teachers participate in annual work planning and budgeting, assessment, extra curricular activities and resource allocation. Ministry of Education, (1996: 127) purports that “decisions will be made closer to the point of delivery. This will allow for greater responsiveness to local needs.”

It is therefore apparent that an organization like a school has a structure of decision makers. Literature has also revealed that involvement of teachers in decision making in budgeting, text books, curriculum and instruction and staff recruitment makes teachers set their own standards. Only insecure leaders fail to share power (Vann, 1988). From the responses on tasks undertaken in schools, there is a clear indication that in the sampled high schools teachers participated in decision making. Increased teacher involvement in high schools is best done through departmental meetings. It was revealed that Departmental meetings where teachers in that particular department meet had a lot to discuss. In high schools today six departments are provided for in the establishment. These were Business Studies, Literature and languages, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Practical Skills and Social Sciences. Through these departments teachers made decisions affecting their teaching and pupils. Teachers met regularly as a team. Through such small meetings teachers were prevented from being treated as a commodity but teachers became active, educated and self conscious thereby increasing chances of institutional development. Teachers who participated in such meetings were more satisfied with their work. The Teaching Service Commission on its visit to central province (2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2008) lamented that teaching was a profession and called for teacher participation in decision making as this would enhance necessary changes in schools. Departmental meetings improved the understanding of the issues involved by those who had to carry out the decisions. As such teachers became less

competitive and more collaborative when working as a group. According to Lungu, (1981) lower levels employees are motivated when increased participation in decision making is accorded to them.

In Central Province the high schools piloted a programme called Strengthening Mathematics, Science and Technology Education (SMASTE). This was a Continuous Professional Development (C.P.D) programme done in departmental meetings. Through this, teachers planned together. In so doing uncertainty and doubt was reduced and a reasonable choice was made among themselves. According to MoE (1996) Teacher participation in decision making through the decentralized system promotes a sense of ownership and responsibility for education institutions.

In addition staff meetings, school activities such as sports, school preventive maintenance, school committees and the budget process allowed teachers to work in groups and make decisions.

In high schools, several sub-committees existed and the latest one being the budget committee. In here programmes were identified and allocated with funds for them to run. This was done collectively. One thing that all schools denied was the existence of a decision making council. In the high schools in the Central Province decisions were made in Departments, staff meetings then presented to the management committee meeting where all chairpersons of sub-committees and all Heads of Department were in attendance. Levin and Lockheed (1991) observed that effective management is a characteristic of a good educational institution. This is where the administration is planning, accountable, transparent, resourceful and practices a mutual communication system with both teachers and pupils. In such institutions there should also be the existence of sub-committees and prefectorial board. MoE (1996) reaffirms the existence of sub committees as a way to devolve power under the principle of decentralization which is governed by democracy. Management systems in the Ministry of education still had flaws because of inadequate resources in terms of Human, Financial and

materials to facilitate decentralization. Democracy is expensive. Teachers also established that their decisional condition in schools was highly participative. This is also reflected in the *National Policy on Education, Educating Our Future* that,

*Zambia is a liberal democratic society. Hence, it is the value of liberal democracy that must guide the formation of educational Policies and their implementation. (MOE, 1996:1)*

In this system, the people were expected to participate fully and rationally. Teachers observed that many bureaucratic procedures that impede efficiency in the schools were eliminated. They cited the creation of Education Boards, Education Management Training (EMT), Budgeting committees in schools, decentralized salaries unit and capacity building. The system had also shown free expression of one's own ideas and exercising tolerance for other people's views (MoE, 1996).

A participative leader, rather than taking autocratic decisions, seeks to involve others in the process, possibly including all stakeholders. Often, however as it is within the managers' whim to give or deny control to the subordinates, most participative activity is within the immediate team. The question of how much influence others are given thus may vary on the manager's preferences and beliefs, and a whole spectrum of participation is possible. The study identified characteristics of a highly participative system; there was joint decision with team as equals and full delegation of decision to team.

There are many varieties of the two characteristics, including stages when the leader sells the idea to the team. Another variant is for the leader to describe the 'What' of objectives or goals and let the team or individuals decide the 'how' of the process by which the 'how' will be achieved (this is often called Management By Objectives).

The level of participation may also depend on the type of decision being made. Decisions on how to implement goals may be highly participative, whilst decisions during subordinate performance evaluations are more likely to be taken by the manager. There are many potential benefits of participative leadership. This approach is also known as consultation or joint decision making or democratic leadership or management by objectives. (MBO)(Coch and French, 1948).

The Ministry of Education today has adopted the Annual Performance Appraisal System (APAS) which, for teachers, is highly participative. 85% of the Head teachers said that the teachers' decisional condition in schools was participative. This was so because these Head teachers practiced democratic principles in managing schools. Somech, (2000) also concluded that more principals utilized participative decision making and that there were formal structures for determining who participates and in which decisions. There was full participation by teachers in developing a shared vision, planning and implementing instructional improvements, working with community, and participating in professional development in job-embedded collegial ways in addition to participation in decision making.

The research also revealed effects of the decisional condition on institutional development. The majority of the respondents agreed that participative decision making improved schools, motivated staff and developed positive professional practice in staff. The Ministry of Education (2005) elaborated on the goals for decentralizing the Ministry of Education. These goals are to promote community participation in all matters related to national development, to enhance coordination of development efforts and alleviation of poverty. Through this the governments' wish is to improve schools. That is, it intends to make,

*A systematic, sustained effort aimed at change in learning conditions and other related internal conditions in one or more schools with the ultimate aim of accomplishing educational goals more effectively (Miles, 1987:3).*

From the findings in the field the above definition is interpreted to mean a general effort to make schools a better place for students and for students to learn and teachers are on an intrinsic part of the change process. This focuses on changing school culture and not school structures. This is unique to each school because each school's context is unique. Schools therefore address these processes in different ways and no blue print can be proposed. It all means school improvement comes from within and can not be externally mandated. However, this is not to say a school can ignore its external environment; but rather a way of confirming the importance of schools making choices about the directions they take towards school improvement. It is evident, from the study that the teachers' decisional condition has a significant impact to the level of organizational development. The condition deals with empowerment and empowerment evolved from democratic principles. There is a strong relationship between democracy and Education. This is so because Education is necessary for the practice of democracy and Education is necessary for the growth of democracy. In democracy it is acknowledged that authority comes from the people, (the delivery point). In schools the teachers are at the delivery point. Through teacher participation in decision making a door to free, fair, just, right and liberal society is opened. It is therefore the teachers' responsibility to inculcate these values to posterity. This, according to the study, can only be possible if the decisional condition of teachers was participative. In return an improved school will improve society. If schools are to improve there must be effective teaching. In this situation teachers become free, motivated and satisfied with what they do. They are not considered as machines but as human beings with consciousness and intelligence to effect change. This leads to teachers practicing their profession.

Though the positive effects of the decisional conditions on institutional development are frequently cited as a rationale for employing teacher participation in decision making for school improvement, there is limited empirical evidence of its actual benefits. In many cases, studies of teacher participation

and leadership have been criticized because they tend to utilize small samples with interview and focused group discussions. This was observed by Leithwood and Janti, (1999). Furthermore research on participation has generally centered on non-instructional individual and organizational outcomes. Very few studies have attempted to relate teacher participation in schools' decision making to student performance, choosing instead to look at its effects on teachers in rare cases, principals. While it is generally acknowledged that participation in decision making is positively related to teacher attitude about work research examining the instructional outcomes of participative decision making yields generally equivocal conclusions.

The empowerment of teachers generally improves schools but other variables may be in place to compliment the improvement of student outcomes. In developing countries school improvement requires three elements; Basic inputs, facilitating conditions and the will to change. Levin and Lockheed, (1991:16) concluded that;

*A principle emphasis is placed on empowering teachers, students, parents and the community to take responsibility for making educational decisions and for the consequences of the decisions.*

Active participation among all stakeholders in the process is required rather than following a formula or script set out by higher levels. Schools are expected to make their own activities within the framework of the larger school improvement programmes. In Zambia today lower levels still have strings attached to higher levels. Templates are made high up for lower levels to use in their activities.

To sustain decentralization therefore there was need to improve on resources which were far much below the threshold.

Therefore 74.6% of the respondents preferred participative decision making practice. They cited school improvement, motivated staff and positive professional practice as their stronghold.

Somech, (2002) observed that some schools have underscored the need for principals to be supportive facilitators of teacher participation. Leaders must be willing to let go of traditional authority roles, not only allowing teachers to have greater voice but helping to prepare them, providing support and establishing an environment of trust. Similarly administrators must know how to create conditions that foster empowerment and release their control over teachers, alter their roles and engender commitment, trust and respect. Principals must therefore develop and facilitate strong relationships with their teachers. The relationship established between teacher leaders and their principals is consistently identified as a strong influence on teachers' leadership. Crowther et al, (2002:33) conclude that:

*Where we have seen teacher leadership begin to flourish,  
Principals have actively supported it or, at least encouraged it.*

In the study both teacher and Head teachers preferred participative decision making practice. And according to literature the effectiveness of teacher participation depends on the cordial relationship with the Head teacher. The head teacher's role was to implement shared governance. In this case Head teachers should be aware of both modes of participation, namely authority and influence and to be mindful of which strategy for involving teachers is most appropriate in each decision domain.

Head teachers should be aware of differences among teachers regarding potential desire or ability to participate and must develop participative decision making accordingly.

Though the vast majority of Head teachers (87.5%) strongly preferred and supported participative decision making, 12.5% of them demonstrated a leadership style which is not generally compatible with high teacher involvement. These reported feeling challenged by the shift in the perceived power

structure. Many of them wondered if they were really needed. In other words, some Head teachers struggle with when to maintain authority and when to give it up. In the study some Head teachers identified numerous rewards from participative decision making, many of which were increased self-confidence, awareness of values, and involvement in the learning and growth of others. Many of these Head teachers never did any management courses and learnt these things through the involvement in shared governance initiatives in a position other than Head teacher. More inquiry is needed to establish more about how Head teachers' attitude and skills are formed, especially in order to enhance the development and training of up coming school leaders.

The study was conducted in rural and urban settings. In relation to the decisional condition of teachers the two were compared. 41.8% of the urban respondents agreed that the teachers' decisional condition was participative while only 1.5% of the respondents disagreed to the teachers' decisional condition as being participative. In the rural setting 52.2% of the respondents established that the teacher's decisional condition was participative and 4.5% disagreed. This may be interpreted that teachers in rural areas are more involved in decision making than those in urban areas. One of the reasons associated to this was that in rural areas the majority of high schools are boarding schools and teachers lived together in big compounds. On the contrary, most high schools in urban areas were day schools and teachers lived far apart in different compounds. They only met in the staff room with diverse ideas. In rural areas teachers became loyal to Head teachers. This was one characteristic which made many of the rural respondents to opt for participative decision making. The participation in the governance of a school is a moral imperative because teachers have the right to exercise some control over their work and their lives.

The Ministry of Education has adopted democratic principles in managing the education system. Therefore, to uphold such a principle, schools have to be managed in the same way. Decentralization is one characteristic of democracy through which decisions are made at the point of delivery. In schools teachers are cardinal elements to make the school move forward. Head teachers therefore have adopted a participative approach to decision making.

Due to inadequate thresholds in financial, material and human resources, it has become expensive to implement this practice effectively. It might have yielded positive effects in some parts but other variable may also be considered for such positive effects.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1. CONCLUSION

The general purpose of this study was to examine the teacher's decisional condition in high schools and the effects it had on organizational development. The study therefore aimed at filling the knowledge gap by finding out how decision making in high schools could be participative for successful organizational development.

Through responses from teachers, Focused Group Discussions with Heads of Department and interviews with Head teachers, the study revealed that schools undertook several tasks and that teacher participation in decision making as a task scored highly. This shows that schools were practicing participative decision making. Increased teacher involvement took place in departmental meetings where teachers were in attendance and at the centre of all discussions. In such meetings teachers planned together. School Based Continuous Professional Development activities also were done through departmental meetings. Teachers, Head teachers and heads of Department agreed that the teacher's decisional condition was participative.

The study also revealed that improved schools, motivated staff and positive professional practices were results of the participative decisional condition of teachers. This positively affected the development of institutions. But on school performance other variables were cited to affect it. It was also concluded that participative decision making was preferred by teachers, Heads of Department and Head teachers. This was to uphold the principle of democracy. Decentralization on the contrary was not effectively implemented because the central

government (Ministry of Education Headquarters) still had strings attached to lower levels. It still provided templates for lower levels to follow. This was evidenced in the current budgeting process where thresholds were provided and templates to follow. The lower levels acted on what was already tailored. The Ministry of Education Headquarters still engineered what lower levels had to do. There was no total freedom. Decentralization was a vital tool which needed adequate resources to be real.

Regarding rural and urban settings, it was observed that there was more participation in rural areas than urban areas. In rural settings teachers were more loyal to Head teachers hence their involvement was high. Generally schools did not have adequately trained human resources; they also had inadequate funds and material resources to run as boards. The Head teachers cited the inability to manage schools to poor managerial skills or the skills were not there at all. Decentralization in Education boards can effectively be implemented if Head teachers also practiced non-participative styles of leadership, for example Autocratic leadership styles.

## **6.2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings discussed above, the following recommendations are made:

1. Head teachers should be pro-active in implementing what they learnt under the Education Management Training.
2. All colleges of Education and the Universities training teachers should provide Education Management to its students.
3. Head teachers not having Education Management Training qualification to be provided with such.
4. To orient teachers in the Management of Education Boards under the decentralized system of governance through school based Continuous Professional Development programmes.

5. Teachers to take advantage of the benefits of participative decision making to improve on curriculum delivery in order to improve school performance.
6. To promote the Management of high schools through sub-committees and Departments for all teachers to be involved in the day to day running of the school this will make them feel part and parcel in the general administration of the school.
7. Head teachers to embrace democracy as a principle in the general administration and management of an institution of learning.
8. To effectively implement decentralization in high schools through Education Boards.
9. To effectively utilize research findings from various Education Management faculties.

### **6.3 AREAS OF FUTURE RESEARCH**

The following were identified as areas of possible future research; To begin with there is need to establish the attitudes of Head teachers towards democratic governance which is done in a decentralized system through Education Boards. Secondly some researchers may ascertain the relationship between democratic governance and school performance. Lastly it is the author's wish that future research may be conducted to establish whether teachers with visual impairment and hearing impairment have access to enable them practice participative leadership in their school set up.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND POLICY STUDIES

## **QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS**

**TOPIC:** TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN THE SCHOOLS' DECISION-  
MAKING PROCESS AND ITS EFFECTS ON ORGANIZATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT IN SCHOOLS: A CASE OF SELECTED HIGH  
SCHOOLS IN KABWE, MKUSHI AND SERENJE DISTRICTS OF THE  
CENTRAL PROVINCE

Dear Respondent,

I am a Post-graduate student at the University of Zambia. I have the pleasure of informing you that you have been selected to participate in this study. You are required to give relevant and objective information which would assist in investigating teacher participation in the schools' decision making process and its effects on organizational development in schools.

This study is purely academic therefore all responses will be treated as confidential. You need not write your name on the questionnaire.

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**THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IS CONFIDENTIAL AND YOU DO NOT NEED TO WRITE YOUR NAME**

**PART ONE – DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

Please complete the following.

1. Your School:.....

2. What Grade(s) do you teach 10  11  and 12

3. Nature of School: (TICK)

Day-Co-education

Day - Girls School

Day - Boys School

Boarding Co-education

Boarding Girls School

Boarding Boys School

4. State the location of your school. (TICK)

Urban

Rural

Peri Urban

5. Indicate your Gender. (TICK)

Male

Female

6. Indicate your age of teaching experience. (TICK)

1-5 years

11 - 15 years

over 21 years

6 - 10 years

16 - 20 years

7. What is your highest professional qualification?

Primary Teachers' Certificate

Secondary Teachers' Diploma

Advanced Diploma

University Degree

Higher University Degree

8. Indicate your responsibility in school: (Apart from teaching)

.....  
.....

## PART TWO

Teacher participation in the Schools' decision-making and the effects on the school organizational development.

1. Which of the following school tasks are undertaken in your schools (tick the ones undertaken)

- Coordinated resource sharing .....
- Decentralized School organization .....
- Teacher participation in Decision Making .....
- Follow up on suggestions .....

2. Which of the following tasks directed towards increasing teacher involvement in decision-making are working in your school? (Tick those that are working)

- In-service/formative evaluation .....
- Budget process (Annual Work plan and Budgeting) .....
- School Committees .....
- Staff meetings .....
- Departmental meetings .....
- Activities - Sports, School Preventive Maintenance .....
- Decision making council .....

3. What can you say is your decisional condition in school? (Tick appropriately)

Participative - where teachers are involved as stakeholders in committees

Non-participative -- where the decisions are made without teachers' input

4. What is the effect of such a decisional condition in 3 above? (Tick appropriately)

High productivity

Improved Schools

Motivated staff

Job security

Low student performance

Demotivated staff

Loyalty to Head teachers

Conflict among teachers

Positive professional practices

High absenteeism among staff

Negative professional practices

Others specify .....

5.(a) Is participative decision making as an administrative practice preferred by administrators in schools? (Tick appropriately)

YES

NO

(b) If NO in (a) above what type of administrative practice do the administrators prefer?

.....

6. What role(s) do the P.T.A/Board play in the school?

• P.T.A.....

• BOARD.....

7. In Your own opinion how can decision making in schools be participative?

.....

Thank you for your cooperation and support .

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR HEADTEACHERS**

1. As a Board Secretary in this school, what is your role in the schools' decision-making?
2. How do you describe the teachers' decisional condition in the school?
3. Has the teachers' decisional condition any notable effects on the school?
4. Under the decentralized system, participative decision making is one of the processes for school Improvement, do you prefer this practice? (Probe further)
5. What is your position on the principle of democratization in schools?

**FOCUSSED GROUP DISCUSSION FOR HOD's**

1. As HODs you are in the school management group, how do you increase staff involvement in Decision-making? (TASKS)
2. As a department do you practice participative decision-making with members of your Department?
3. In your own opinion, how do you value decentralization in democratic principles?