

**AN ANALYSIS OF TEACHERS INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE  
DECISION MAKING, IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MANSA  
DISTRICT, ZAMBIA**

**By**

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## **AUTHOR'S DECLARATION**

I Friday Mucheka do hereby solemnly declare that this dissertation represents my own work, except where otherwise acknowledged and that it has never been previously submitted for a degree at the University of Zambia or any other University.

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## CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This dissertation of **Mucheka Friday** is approved as fulfilling the partial requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Educational Management of the University of Zambia.

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to determine teacher and administrative staff views on, teachers' participation in school related decision-making process who serves in secondary schools in Mansa district of Luapula province of Zambia. This study investigated the extent to which teachers' views are considered in school administrative decision making in secondary schools of Mansa district; the effects of not involving teachers in school level decision making in secondary schools in Mansa district; and measures that can help to improve teachers' participation in decision making. The study employed a qualitative approach. Data were collected from a sample of 5 head teachers, 5 deputy head teachers, 10 head of departments and 25 class teachers making the sample size 50 in total. The instruments of data collection were: semi- structured questionnaires, focus group study and interviews were analysed thematically and descriptive analysis into significant patterns so as to easily interpret and understand the real meaning of data collected. The findings of the study suggested that teachers were dissatisfied with the existing practice of decision making which did not involve them. Findings further indicated that teachers in secondary schools are involved in administrative decision making but at lower levels. The study recommends that head teachers evaluate and identify teachers' needs on managerial decisions in order to facilitate the implementation of their views. This in turn would encourage teachers' participation and enhance team spirit in decision making that would result in efficiency in management of secondary schools. The majority of secondary school teachers in Mansa had never participated in the decision making and this they thought was the main reason why they faced challenges with implementing certain programmes effectively. It was consequently recommended that school administration should broaden the scope of teacher involvement in school decision making through being in constant touch with the teachers especially through democratic leadership style which allows full participation and expression of views. From this study, it was concluded that teachers were not adequately involved in the decision making process with their role being mainly to implement the already developed programmes.

**Key Words:** Teacher involvement, leadership styles, Ownership, Administration, Empowerment

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my beloved wife Christine and children for the patience they exhibited during the entire period that I was kept busy with this work. You were always the source of my strength. I was always motivated by your presence for you always encouraged and lifted me up.

To my late father, Mr. Danford K. Mucheka and my mother Mrs. Grace Rebecca Mucheka, you have always been a pillar of my strength. To my entire family, thank you so much for believing in me. Your unfailing support and prayers kept me going.

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## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

APAS	Annual Performance Appraisal System
AWPB	Annual Work -Plan and Budgeting
CA	Continuous Assessment
COVID19	Corona Virus 2019
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DEBS	District Education Board Secretary
HoD	Head of Department
IDE	Institute of Distance Education
MBO	Management by Objectives
MoE	Ministry of General Education
MoGE	Ministry of General Education
PDM	Participative Decision Making
SBCPD	School Based Continuous Professional Development
SBM	School-based management
UNZA	The University of Zambia

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.0 Overview

In this chapter, the background of the study, the statement of the problem, aim of the study, research objectives, research questions, theoretical and conceptual frameworks as well as significance of the study were presented. Furthermore, the operational definitions of terms, its delimitations and finally a summary of the structure of the proposal were explained.

## 1.1 Background

Dating back to the colonial era, the education system in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) was centralised with no or little participation of teachers in school affairs, as everything was carried out by the colonial government (Carmody, 2004). Therefore, at independence, Zambia inherited a highly rigid system of education which gave no chance to stakeholders such as teachers to freely express their views in matters affecting their school administration, henceforth leading to inefficiency and inadequate planning (MoE, 2005).

Equally in the United States, Cheung, S. M. C.etal (2009) observed that, the role of a teacher was to be a classroom manager responsible for student academic performance and daily behavior within the classroom. School matters outside classroom like policy planning and decisions making traditionally were not related to teachers but to school administrators like head teachers. However, owing to the global trend of educational reforms like school restructuring in the US, teachers' new empowered roles in school had been discussed and advocated globally because for any school to offer quality education service to the learners depends heavily on the dynamics of term work and collaboration between the school administration and also the teachers,(Yao, 2014).Therefore any School administration requires concerted efforts and professional interaction to achieve set objectives and policies in order to structure the whole educational body and provide outstanding services.

Similarly, Wall and Rinehart (1998:50) denotes that, "teachers have been closely affected by decisions at school level; they should therefore play a significant role in making the decisions". This greatly requires consensus building between the politicians and school administrators in order to experience a major shift in their thinking about how schools should be best organized.

With the 1990s wind of democratization across Europe and Africa, the government of the Republic of Zambia, through the Ministry of General Education implemented a number of school-based

management policies namely; educating our future 1996 and focus on learning among others (Ministry of Education, 2005).The policies were meant to encourage teachers to take part in decisions affecting their schools. Chapman (1988 cited in Too, 1999) suggested that “teachers gained sense of power and mastery over the destiny of their schools through participation in decision-making”. Therefore, school systems must be reformed and restructured to activate the role of the teachers by giving them more authority and giving them constructive roles in addition to their teaching mission to make them active members in the school decision-making process.

Yao (2014), indicated that, there are potential benefits of teachers’ participation in decision making and among others includes; increased accountability and transparency between management and teachers in the use of school resources, it also fosters negotiations and consensus building which results into amicable resolution of conflicts. These goals can only be realised through a gradual process that involves the promotion of popular participation by teachers at all levels, furthermore the goals can be attained by devolution of administrative and authority to delivery point. This promotes broad-based participation in the management of education.

On the other hand, Duke (2005:24) observed that,

*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.*

Imber et al, (1983) proposed that, the rationale behind teacher involvement in school administrative decision making is associated with four distinct objectives: democratisation, improve efficiency, increased school productivity and the notion that workers have the right to participate in making decisions that affect their work. Furthermore (MoE, 1996) also denoted that, participation in decision making should not be limited to the teachers within the school setup but also the community involvement for the effective leadership to thrive at the school. Hence a school cannot progress without the engagement of other stakeholders especially teachers in decision making.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Much as it is affirmed in various literature that teachers are central to achieving universal access to high quality and equitable education for all learners, few studies seem to have been done to analyse teachers’ involvement in school administrative-decision making. Additionally, no study seems to have been done in Mansa district on teachers’ involvement in school administrative-decision making, in secondary schools.



Lack of involvement of teachers in school administrative-decision making is believed to have affected the performance of teachers in some secondary schools. In another place in Kenya, lack of participation in decision making among teachers has been manifested in teacher unwillingness to participate in school budgeting and procurement meetings, unexpected absence from school programmes, uncreative and non-stimulating teaching. This is what was discovered by (Okumbe, 1998) but it is not known whether it is still the same case in Mansa district.

However, a substantial amount of studies has been done in Zambia in relation to morale and motivation. These studies included the study done in Nchelenge by Chomba (1982) whose study focused on impact of management styles on teacher morale, while another study done by Mwanza (2005) investigated teacher perception of school management practices and their influence on teacher performance in selected high schools of Lusaka. Phiri (1989) conducted a case study in Lusaka province of Zambia whose purpose was to determine what kind of relations existed between educational managers and their staff, and to facilitate good working relationships between the managers and teachers of open secondary classes.

However, these researchers did not address the issues of teachers' involvement in school administrative decision making process. Consequently, teachers' limited involvement in school decision-making has become of great concern in secondary schools of Mansa District. It is from this background that, the researcher intends to carry out a research on the extent to which teachers are involved in school administrative decision making, in selected schools of Mansa district. Consequently, there is risk of managerial gap in many public schools and this may compromise in the quality of education if the aspect of teachers' involvement in decision making is not addressed.

### **1.3 Purpose**

The purpose of this study was aimed at analysing teachers' involvement in school administrative-decision making, in selected schools of Mansa district.

### **1.4 Objectives**

The objectives of this study were to;

1. investigate the extent to which teachers' views are considered in school administrative decision making in secondary schools of Mansa district.
2. examine the effects of not involving teachers in school level decision making in secondary schools in Mansa district.
3. Suggest measures that can help to improve teachers' participation in decision making.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

The research aimed at answering the following questions.

1. To what extent are teachers, views considered in administrative decision making in secondary schools in Mansa district?
2. What are the effects of not involving teachers in school level decision making in secondary schools in Mansa district?
3. What measures can help improve teachers' participation in decision making?

## **1.6 Theoretical Framework**

This study was guided by the Likert's System four of leadership style also known as the participative group system. In 1976 Rensis Likers conducted a research at the University of Michigan and composed four systems explaining the different management styles. It ultimately emphasizes on the four leadership styles that may be practised in any organisation namely exploitive-authoritative; benevolent-authoritative, consultative and participative system of leadership. This theory is linked to the study in the sense that system (4) style of leadership which is participative emphasizes on producing a subordinate who will be self-driven and delegated into conducting tasks, and ultimately be involved in decision making process (Hersey etal, 2008).

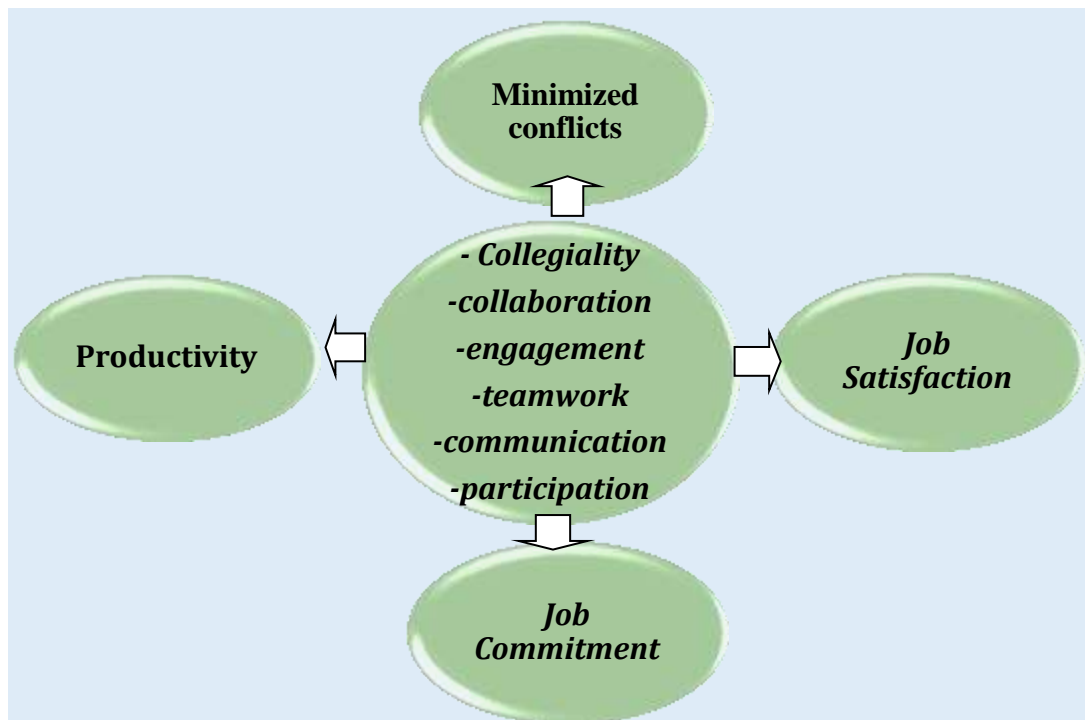
System four of Rensis Likerts' theory is of great significance and is informing study especially on participative approach and its emphasis on involvement in decision making on matters affecting teachers in secondary school. This will help to identify factors that can be considered in order to increase teachers' involvement in administrative decision making. In this research, it will imply how the teachers, managers and other administrative systems of the education system in Mansa district relate and engage teachers in decision making.

## **1.7 Conceptual Framework**

Participatory decision-making approaches may create working partnership between teachers, learners and other stakeholders and aim to increase ownership of the full learning process through improving the potential for effective learning through participation (Taylor, 1997). The involvement of teachers should be central in curriculum development, instructional material development and curriculum implementation. Active teacher participation and involvement in the

decision making process is likely to lead to teacher ownership of the school which may in turn lead to effective curriculum implementation and organisation of the institution.

**Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework**



Job Satisfaction, job commitment, productivity and minimised conflicts are significantly correlated with the level of participation in the school level managerial decision domains. Teachers with a higher level of perceived collaboration, engagement and collegiality has a significantly higher level of job satisfaction and job commitment than those in levels of lower participation. Once teachers in secondary schools get involved in school issues related to resource allocation, school administrative structures, staff recruiting, budgeting and school-evaluation systems or public relation it leads to reduced conflicts and improvement in job commitment, productivity and job satisfaction.

### **1.8 Significance**

The findings of this study may provide valuable information to the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) in Mansa district so as to come up with new strategies on how they should run the schools efficiently and effectively by involving teachers in decision making. It may also be resourceful to head teachers in Mansa district on how to engage teachers in decision making in various areas affecting the schools. The study is likely to provide the Ministry of General Education (MoGE) with an opportunity to identify weak areas in the running of secondary schools, and come up with appropriate decisions to reduce the challenges affecting the schools. In addition,

the study is likely to contribute to the existing literature on participative decision making with regards to teacher's involvement in decision making in secondary schools.

### **1.9 Delimitation**

This study was conducted in selected secondary schools in Mansa district of Luapula province. In addition, the researcher tried to analyse teachers' involvement in school administrative-decision making and will specifically investigate the extent to which teachers' views are considered and examine the effects of not involving teachers in school level decision making. Furthermore, the respondent was expected to suggest measures that can help to improve teachers' participation in decision making.

### **1.10 Limitation**

This study did not come to end without drawbacks. To this end, some limitations were also observed in this study. The major problem that faced the researcher in understanding this study was shortage of domestic reference book in Zambian context. Attempts were made to overcome these limitations by making use of some unpublished teaching materials, journals and literatures with the world wide experience.

Another limitation was some of the educational officials were creating delaying tactics by giving appointment for various reasons. In addition the outbreak of corona virus 2019 (covid19) which led to the premature closure of learning institution made the researcher consume more time than previously allocated for data collection.

### **1.11 Operational definition of terms.**

*Administrative skill:* the ability to make proper decisions that leads to goal achievement in an organization and leading subordinates.

*Collegiality:* a move towards a more democratic system of decision-making.

*Decision Making:* the act of making up on one's mind about something, or position or opinion or judgment reached after consideration.

*Decentralization:* refers to devolution of power from the head teachers to the teacher at local Level in promoting broad-based participation in school decision making.

*Democratic leadership style:* a leadership style which allows participation of subordinates before making a decision.

*Education:* the process of acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habits.

*Empowerment:* a set of measures designed to increase the degree of autonomy and self-determination in people in order to help them to present their interests in a responsible way.

*Job Satisfaction:* being content with the job.

*Ownership:* being accountable for the project within someone's jobs description

*Participative decision making:* will refer to higher level individual's effort to provide those at a lower level with a greater voice in organizational performance.

*Policy:* Guiding statement about practice

*Teacher:* a person whose professional activity involves the transmission of knowledge, attitudes, and skills to the learners.

## **1.12 Organization**

The study is organized in six chapters. Chapter one is composed of the introduction which include; the context of the evaluation, statement of the problem, evaluation questions, the significance of the study, scope and delimitations, the theoretical framework, the conceptual framework of the evaluation and operational definitions of terms. Chapter two presents a description of the teacher involvement in school decision. Chapter three gives an analysis and review of the related literature from within and outside the country.

Chapter three presents the study design and methodology. This chapter has described the evaluation design, the target population and a description of the sample and sampling procedures. A description of evaluation instruments, reliability, validity, collection procedures and data analysis procedures have also been described.

Chapter five contains a presentation of data and analysis. It shows the results of the interviews schedule and Focused group discussion schedule that were collected and their interpretation in relation to the research questions.

Finally, chapter six gives the summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations based on the findings of the collected data. Suggestions for areas of further study have also been given in the same chapter.

### **1.13. Summary**

In this chapter an overview, the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives and research questions were explained. Furthermore, the researcher explained the theoretical, conceptual framework and the significance of the study and in the next chapter a detailed review of literature was given so as to further understand the issue under study.

## **CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **2.0. Overview**

In this chapter, the following themes were presented; definition of teachers' participation in decision making, the historical background of teacher involvement in decision making, the benefits of teachers' involvement in decision making and review of studies related to the topic under study and finally, a summary were given at the end of the chapter.

### **2.1 Definition of teacher participation in decision making**

Decision making is the act of making up one's mind about something and efforts to put together ideas in order to arrive at an acceptable and worthy decision that will be embraced by all the concerned stakeholders for developmental purposes in an organization (Kahrs, 1996). Decision making is synonymous with the term consensus building as it brings people together in terms of sharing ideas. It is important to note that decision making is not a one man show or for those in administrative positions only, however it is something that requires concerted efforts by anybody tasked with responsibilities to support the wellbeing of an organization.

In the similar way, Marks and Louis (1987) also indicated that, participative decision-making is conceived as an aspect of shared leadership, and the idea of involving teachers in school-administrative decision-making empowers teachers to get involved in school decision making. This represents an internal perception by teachers of having increased authority in their positions. School decision making refers to the involvement of teachers in the processes of school level decision making, and the decisions are with reference to school critical policies or projects (David, 1993).

Among the activities that teachers may be required to participate include, textbook selection, curriculum development, learning assessment, student placement, personnel staffing, or

professional development (Feir, 1985). Ultimately any school administration should employ an approach which will bring about consensus building when it comes to decision making, unless in critical circumstances where there is limited time and resources.

On the other hand, teacher involvement in decision making brings about empowerment, and this has been defined as a process whereby school participants develop the competence to take charge of their own growth and resolve their own problems, (Rinehart and Short, 1998).

Decentralization could be defined based on the degrees of transfers of authority. As Zajd and Gamage (2009) had maintained, decentralization might involve deconcentration, delegation, and devolution. These three elements of decentralization are all concerned with the shifting of authority for decision making to lower levels whether they are represented in general or specific manners. This is relevant to the study in the sense that the officers at lower level are involved in resolving their own challenges and are actively participative in making decisions.

Lightfoot (1986) further defined teacher empowerment as the power or opportunity that teachers ought to have, sensed by teachers themselves, and endorsed by school stakeholders, such as administrators, teachers, students, or parents. Obviously, teachers not only needed to recognize the necessity that they should possess the power to share the right of decision making but had to be affirmed and assisted by those school interest groups who originally controlled the opportunity of policy making and resource allocation as well. It was not until decision making was given to teachers exactly from the hands of interest groups that teachers were capable of being authentically empowered.

A reason for involving teachers in participative decision making is to improve the quality of decisions that a school makes and the effectiveness of the school in achieving its goals. It is therefore useful that school administrators have enough knowledge of how and when to involve teachers in decision making (Conley, 1991). Where teacher leadership begins to flourish is where head teachers have actively supported it or, at least, encouraged it. Head teachers are clearly viewed as persons with the greatest power, and the ones who set the tone for the relationship between themselves and teachers.

It is critical therefore, for head teachers to be aware of modes of participation; influence and authority and to be mindful of the most appropriate strategies for involving teachers in each decision domain. Thus another role of the head teacher is to discern which decision domains require formal involvement of teachers and which require involvement limited to influence (Conley, 1991). Kahrs (1996) suggested formal structures that head teachers can develop to empower teachers. These include structures that are commonly seen in schools such as a leadership

team, a staff development committee, a curriculum development committee, teachers hiring and peer evaluation teams, inclusive budgeting process and school traditions of teacher recognition and celebrations.

As regards the role played by teachers, UNESCO (2005) writes that “without the participation of teachers, changes in education are impossible”. This proposition confirms that teachers are the corner-stone of school activities. Moreover, it can be said that the quality of schools’ performance largely depends upon teachers who occupy the most important place in teaching learning process. Therefore, the involvement of teachers in decision-making is likely to motivate teachers to exert their mental and emotional involvement in group situation that may contribute to group goals and shared responsibilities.

## **2.2 Historical background to Teachers’ involvement in decision-making**

Historical evidence regarding teacher’s involvement in administrative decision making in education has shown that undemocratic administration and management of education and authoritarian leadership styles have persisted in Zambia since the colonial period (Carmody, 2004). The role of a teacher was to be a classroom manager responsible for student academic performance and daily behavior within the classroom. School matters outside classroom like policy planning and decisions making traditionally were not related to teachers but to the school head Masters. This was evident when the British South Africa Company (B.S.A.C.) neglected African education, but built and managed the Barotse National School in Western Province in 1907 and even provided a headmaster, Mr. Williams, who was both the headmaster and resident magistrate for the company.

According to Snelson (1990), the school head dictated its policy, exercised strict control over its organisation and discipline of teachers and students. Teachers had no opportunities to decide or make contribution to the running of the school. However, all decisions were made by the head master and teachers were expected to implement whether it was in their best interest or not. This is significance to the study as it provides the back ground of teachers’ relationship with their management team in relation to decision making.

Snelson (1990) gave another account of the management style of Reverend John Fell who was principal of Kafue Training Institute (government) for teachers and later became principal of Jeanes Training School (government) in Mazabuka, as “a professional regarding educationist, he was outspoken, plain-spoken, no nonsense, autocratic.” Those who were engaged to teach in such schools were recipients of instructions and they were expected to follow exact orders from the Reverend and not to do things away from the orders. From this point of view, this kind of



leadership did not accommodate teachers to be involved in decision making but teachers were inculcated on what to do and in most cases their views were not considered.

Even after Independence, observations and experience have shown that in the 1970s and 1980s the majority of secondary school head teachers exhibited autocratic management styles in managing schools and supervising their subordinates. Studies done in civil service in the 1980s and 1990s managers in public service by Lungu (1990) and in education by Phiri (1989) still indicated the dominance of autocratic management styles among school heads in the Zambian education system. School head Masters were making decisions almost by themselves rather than involving teachers. Decisions were only made by the school head teachers while teachers and the other members of staff were expected to implement without any reservations. This tendency created a lot of suspicion amongst teachers especially in the area of financial management and handling of disciplinary cases.

Farrant (1990) described the central role of the head teacher in the school in various ways as; educational administrator, leader, school supervisor, school administrator or school headmaster. These terms were used interchangeably and have led head teachers to hold more powers. The situation is that those in administration especially the head teachers still override the decisions that are made even if teachers participate in coming up with such decisions.

These undemocratic management styles, which were part of colonial legacy, could not even be addressed immediately by many post-independence educational policies such as the Education Act of 1966, The 1977 Education Reforms, and Focus on Learning of 1992 (GRZ, 1977; MoE, 1992). However, owing to the global trend of educational reforms like school restructuring in the US, teachers' new empowered roles in school had been discussed and advocated around the world. Lucey and Hill-Clarke (2008) also reviewed that, the inception of industrialization, brought abundance information, differing ideas and the spread of technology in the postmodern world and this has diluted the traditional superior-subordinate relationship that defined the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Equally, it was not until the enactment of the third major education policy in 1996 "Educating Our Future" that the government introduced reforms in education leading to the creation of School Education Board in the Ministry of Education. The reforms were expected to cater for a higher degree of democracy, decentralisation and teacher involvement in the school management and administrative decision making process, MoE(1996). Hence this has seen a trend of massive engagement of teachers in various platforms aimed at enhancing pupil performance, curriculum development and ultimately in the provision of quality education. This is relevant to the study as it brings out the past systems of decision making and the challenges teachers used to experience in decision making as they interacted with school managers.

### **2.3 Benefits of teacher involvement in school decision making**

Participation in school decision making encourages teachers to understand how programmes and various projects are designed and implemented, hence giving them an insight and experience on pertinent matters affecting their school. Furthermore, their involvement will promote and enhance their commitment to school policies and increase their motivation. The commitment is derived mainly from teachers' responsibility for those decisions for their participation as decision makers.

When it comes to policy-making, teachers possess unique knowledge about the factors that affects the school system (Mac Crimmon, 1976). As the adults closest to classrooms and schools, teachers possess critical knowledge and expertise about the issues under discussion and furthermore, they are among the members of the public with the greatest and most direct stake in the policies developed. Similarly, policymakers can benefit from hearing teachers' narrations and incorporating their experiences in the classroom into policy-making processes.

Furthermore, when teachers are involved in the policy-making process, they also become better implementers of the policies because of an increased sense of ownership and responsibility of the outcomes through participative decision making. Teachers' voice has also been linked to stronger collegiality, increased collaboration among teachers, improved cooperation between teachers and administrators, greater commitment to educational improvement and participation of teachers. Ingersoll (2007). When teachers' voice is included in education reform; policies are more likely to be implemented as intended and will result in positive student outcomes. Teachers' educational voice speaks on teaching and other classroom-related issues such as pedagogy and curriculum, student progress and assessment, professional development and classroom management. Among the three categories, teacher voice on educational issues seems to be the most prevalent.

Another study done by Gemechu (2014) from Ethiopia revealed that teachers' involvement in all areas of school decision-making of secondary schools in general was unsatisfactory; and they participated most in issues related to student disciplinary problems and least in school building. School leaders in encouraging teachers' involvement in school decision-making was found to be ineffective. Absence of participatory and democratic school leadership, lack of trust between teachers and principals, lack of training and support, and absence of financial incentives were some of the factors that were found to have impeded teachers' involvement in school decision-making. It was thus concluded that teachers role in school decision-making not have been given due emphases in this study, This is likely to affect the overall activities of school in general and teaching learning process in particular.

As to the teacher level, the involvement could help them be engaged more in school matters. As for the decision level, the participation of teachers would effectively monitor which and how school decisions should be made. As to the school level, teachers' roles as active participants would lead to the successful restructuring of schools. Additionally, teachers' participation in decision making presents crucial information closest to the source of the problem. Furthermore, high involvement approach brings about job satisfaction and improvement in the functioning of schools. Similarly, Coch and French (1948) suggested that, there are likely to be dramatic improvements in learner performance, reduced absenteeism, efficiency, and the number of grievances will be minimised when teachers are involved in school administrative decision making. This means that teachers will be in support of the measures that the school authorities will undertake because they too had played a role in formulation of school policies and regulations guiding the running of the school.

Within this line of argument, it is apparent that teachers should be practitioners with high educational wisdom or solid knowledge base Mutuku (2014). By extension, therefore, it is clear that basic education teachers have a great responsibility of developing an individual holistically, and thus should actively participate in decision-making process in most educational matters. Thus, it is arguable that teachers who participate in decision making in a school organization are more likely to accept a decision and feel more responsible towards successful implementation. Participation in decision making results in teachers who are better informed and more knowledgeable about the decisions. The participants in the deliberation process are personally aware of the problems, the alternatives considered, as well as decision constraints, because they have been personally involved in confronting them while reaching the decision. Teachers who participate in decision making also develop a relationship towards each other (Golstein, 2011). Through participation in decision making, teachers reveal their goals, ambitions, interests. They achieve better understanding which is useful in improving interpersonal communications.

In the words of Mac Crimmon (1976), teachers who participate in decision making are able to correct false assumptions and inaccuracies in the thinking of individuals. Involvement in decision making is a "people builder". Properly managed, teacher involvement in decision making becomes the means by which head teachers develop the skills and horizons of employees and increase their motivation. Greater efficiency is not the only reason for head teachers to involve teachers in decision making, but also to increase collaboration amongst the team members. Enrichment of workers jobs can have important results such as increasing their job satisfaction because their interests in the job increase along with responsibilities and challenges.

Mac Crimmon (1976) justifies this study by stating the importance of teacher participation in decision making. His study indicated that induction would tell us that teacher morale would be associated with the terms “decision making” from two points of reference. The first one is that teachers’ morale would be higher if he had a fairly clear conception of who is responsible for making decisions. The second one is that teacher’s morale will also be aided if he believes he is capable of influencing the decision which he believes legitimately belongs within his sphere of responsibility.

Shared decision-making strategies are being promoted as a means to improve decisions about teaching and learning. Advocates make a variety of claim. Because teachers are closer to the classrooms and students, they presumably have important information to contribute to the decision-making process. As a consequence, it is expected that decisions will be better tuned to the needs of the learners. Advocates also claim that participation advances professionalism (Weiss and Wyeth, 1992). In support of this claim, when teachers have the opportunity to participate, they are not passive recipients of orders from the above but fully fledged professionals with latitude to shape the conditions under which they work and the kind of work they do. When teachers share decisions, they become committed to the decisions that emerge. They buy into the decisions, they feel a sense of ownership; therefore, they are more likely to see that decisions are actually implemented.

Consequently, it is argued that school systems must be restructured in a way they give teachers more space to participate in school based decision-making (MoE, 2005). School head teachers are also responsible for encouraging teachers’ involvement in different areas of school decision-making. In a situation where decision is made independently by head teachers, teachers’ commitment and initiation for effective implementation as well as proper utilization of resource in decision-making could be questionable. Nevertheless, important decisions need to be made by consensus; that is everyone should agree to that decision and for its acceptance everyone must speak up, open to hearing each other’s need, and be patient and honest.

#### **2.4 Barriers to teachers’ involvement in school decision-making**

A study conducted by Leithewood and Steinbach (1993) stated that, Principals play a critical role in establishing and maintaining school participative decision-making. The duo further argued that “principals, who develop a positive school climate, ensure opportunity for teachers’ collaboration and joint planning through a greater involvement in decision-making”. This section now turns to a consideration of the specific role of the principal in developing and sustaining participative approach to decision-making within school.

The first barrier was teachers' capacity for their involvement. According to Lawler's (1991) organization theory of high-involvement management, teachers need to be empowered by four basic elements, comprised of power, knowledge, information, and reward (Johnson and Boles, 1994). It is necessary for teachers to have all of the four critical elements in order for them to fully participate in decision making concerning school management. In most cases school head teacher just provides authority and time for teachers to participate in the meeting, without a guarantee of enough knowledge and information on how to work together.

Indeed, other limitations to teachers' decision making include the school political pressure, the lack of time, the complexity of shared decision making models, the discord between teachers and administrators (Spencer, 2001). Due to political pressure school management tend to take up instructional guidelines from the central government to the school level. Teacher's as specialists are not engaged in discussions as to why certain policies should be implemented. School head teachers have the principle role of ensuring that all members of staff in school respects and implement all the policies implemented. However, this normally affects the smooth running of the school programmes and the end result is that such programmes do not succeed.

However, Cambone and Wyeth (1992) in their study indicated that, there can be conflicts if the school administration is not being considerate on how decisions are made as this would raise conflicts among, between and within teachers involved in school decision-making. The emphasis should not be on who has the greater chances to be acknowledged but have a fair play ground regarding who would participate and who would not. If not considered there can be confusion also among teachers about the locus of final decision authority.

Teachers are the end users and when they are not aware of the objectives and goals of the programmes, it may not be possible to work for a practical decision. It is crucial for teachers to know the strength of the decisions for they have the first-hand knowledge of the ground realities in the classroom (Imber and Duke, 1984). Therefore, their involvement in the decision making process may create ownership of the school activities such as budgeting, planning and localisation of curriculum, thus providing teachers with the commitment necessary for the success of the new decision making process. Unless teachers are available and willing to participate in decision making process, there is no future for it. Therefore, teachers need to interpret the decisions correctly to the learners for it to be successful. However, most decision innovations in Africa, Zambia inclusive and a few other parts of the world practice the "top-down" approach. This implies that teachers have no opportunity to decide on what they want but programmes are set for them to implement.

Carl (1995) confirmed that, the “voice” of the teacher is to a large extent ignored or not heard. This creates a challenge because sustainability of reform initiatives relies on teachers maintaining position with the intent of the initiative. Implementation of decisions can be successful if teachers and other stakeholders are involved in its development. Since teachers have the enormous responsibility of implementing the school activities, they need to be involved far more widely in the development of the decisions such as School Based Continuous Professional Development (SBCPD).

In most cases, teachers seem to be treated as recipients of new directives about what should be taught and how it should be taught. In other words, teachers may have been considered as mere decision implementers. Chapman (1990) emphasized that the active participation of teachers in decision making and planning is limited and teachers are regarded as decision implementers whose role is to adapt official plans to their classroom. It is evident from the revelations from the Ministry of General Education joint annual review meeting that teachers did not understand the 2013 revised curriculum (MoE, 2013). The possibility could have been that teachers were not fully involved in its development. Lack of full teachers’ involvement in planning and other school programmes may hinder the attainment of national goals of education as teachers’ interpretation of the decisions may not be well articulated with the intended policy and programme.

## **2.5 Studies on teacher involvement in administrative decision making**

A study conducted in Arizona (USA) confirms that, giving teachers a greater voice in decisions that affect the school is of great significance as it helps to increase productivity and attainment of set goals in the institution Conley et al, (1991). She further denoted that, increased teacher involvement in a wide array of school assures maximum productivity. Similarly, Khoza, (2004) denotes that, if schools are to succeed in encouraging teacher participation they must redesign their management processes to help teachers to develop the skills and discipline needed for them to participate in order to reap all the benefits of participation. This is relevant to the study since the ideas of decision making and the characteristics of teacher participation points to the importance of involving teachers in decision making.

In another study conducted by Denis, (1994) revealed that, teacher input has a tremendous impact on the students’ performance and the whole school performance. His research further asserted that the teachers’ performance is directly proportional to the school performance and the results proved that involving teachers in school decision-making processes has a great and positive impact on school performance.

Furthermore, a study by Denis (1994) conducted in south west London, indicated that, involvement in decision-making does not often equate to 'making the decision', due to fixed

obligations as a result of external demands, and partly due to multiplicity of factors associated with time pressures, allocation of responsibility, and ultimate accountability of individuals, in particular the head teacher. Additionally, he argues that, decision-making sometimes involved a consensus and sometimes left the head teacher or senior staff with the final decision. Despite the researcher's view point, the study further intends to analyse the extent to which teachers should be involved in decision making in schools.

Smylie et al, (1996) found that the willingness to participate in school decision-making was significantly influenced by the relationship between teachers and the head teacher, and teachers who perceived their relationship with the head teacher to be open, collaborative, and supportive were more willing to participate in decision-making. The school management with a higher level of perceived involvement and participation in decision making process has a significantly higher level of job satisfaction and job commitment than those who are not engaged in participative decision making process. He further alluded that once teachers in schools get involved in school issues related to resource allocation, school administrative issues, budgeting and procurement, it leads to reduced conflicts and improved productivity.

Furthermore, Wanderi (2008) highlighted that, if teacher involvement in decision making is enhanced, may play a key role in resolving conflicts that might arise in an institution. However, it is important to highlight the fact that, the study actually focused on the levels of teacher's involvement in managerial decision making in schools of Kenya. Despite the study being carried out in a different context, it is similar to this study as it focuses on analysing teacher involvement in administrative decision making in secondary schools of Mansa district.

In another study by Aytac (2000) found that high morale, increase in sense of belonging to school, decrease in absenteeism and leave of employment, increase in decisions' efficiency and quality, high acceptance of change, increase in teamwork and decrease in disagreements, maintaining an efficient discipline, informing teachers more efficiently, increase in teachers intercommunications in school, increase in students' motivations, augmentation of inspiring events in school to keep qualified teachers in school and to attract other teachers, enhancing school's atmosphere, increase in loyalty towards shared decision making, and increase in teachers' and administrators' interrelations, are the positive effects of teachers' participation in decision making process

This is also supported by Ozdemir and Cemaloglu (2000) who noted that teachers who participate in decision making process, would have increased motivation levels. Participation in decision making can also increase organizational learning environments in schools. Teachers, who participate in decision making process, try to balance their individual goals and organizational goals. Participating in decision making process can cause an individual satisfaction. Teachers, who

participate in decision making process, tend to create a more qualified educational environment. Teachers' motivation levels can increase, if they participate in decision making process. This can affect teacher mobility, and a well-balanced, a steady teaching staff can be composed. And this make teachers harder to reach the purpose of decisions, and play the role of the protectors of the decisions. Also they may suffer from unjust behaviour by being unable to participate in decisions and this may cause their organizational commitments to decrease.

In another study conducted in Nigeria by (Olayemi and Olorunsola, 2011), their findings indicated that, teachers enjoyed active participation in decision making processes. Sex, age and educational qualifications of teachers did not hinder teachers' participation in decision making processes. Involvement of teachers in decision making shows that they are well empowered and they are seen as resources with knowledge and experience that are tapped. Although their research may be similar, it is important to note that it was done under a different context. However, their findings have been of great help as they have highlighted the significance of teacher involvement in decision making in the school set up.

In Botswana, Mosheti (2013) study also revealed that, teacher's participation in decision making results into job satisfaction and areas of their overall career as a teacher, and enjoyment in the teaching profession. However, the study also highlighted that teachers were not involved in other areas such as school income and budgeting Denis (1994). Therefore, it can be deduced teachers should be involved in all sectors of the institution not selectively so that productivity is attained. The study intends to research more on the extent to which teachers should be involved in decision making in the school environment.

In a study conducted by Andende (2016) titled, head teachers' leadership styles and their effects on teachers' morale in selected primary schools of Zambezi district in the North- western province of Zambia." The researcher's findings revealed that schools which were dominated by the democratic leadership style, teachers' morale and performance was better than those dominated by autocratic. The study also found that, for the head teacher to be said effective he or she had a combination of democratic and autocratic leadership styles. To the contrary Andende's study was undertaken in a different context hence it cannot be generalized to the rest of the country, beside this, its main focus was to link leadership styles with morale in schools. The aspect of democratic leadership style has some characteristics and similarities in participative decision making while this, study seeks to analyse teachers' involvement in administrative school decision making in Mansa district.

In another study on leadership styles, by (Phiri, 1989) conducted in Lusaka, revealed that, there is an amount of uncertainty resulting from the interaction between the head teacher and the subordinates at places of work characterized by; tension, mutual suspicion, enmity, and lack of



cooperation, which frustrated subordinates and their programs. Subordinates opinion were not respected neither were they addressed by head teachers. Only decisions passed by super ordinates are highly appreciated. As a result of this scenario many teachers do not take part in decision making for they feel neglected.

Other studies further emphasized that, democratic approach to leadership was used more as shown by Chomba (1982) in the study conducted at two boarding high schools of Luapula province namely; Nchelenge and St. Mary. Similarly Mwanza (2005) also highlighted that, effective school managers exercised management styles that were contingent upon the situation while the non-effective school managers used the democratic style occasionally but largely used either the autocratic style or the laissez-faire style of management. The case study also revealed that there was a relationship between school management practices and teacher performance. Educational leaders should promote forms of participation in decision making that increase teachers' actual involvement in decisions concerning their duties and opportunities for the effective management systems. Teachers and head teachers by and large, should maintain a reciprocal open door policy and also provide for more sharing on issues concerning the school management.

Ivancevich (2002) suggests a guideline for a leader to improve the quality of decision in groups. These are creating an environment in which the group members feel free to participate and express their opinions, include all the concerned bodies and people who can provide the needed additional information relevant to the problem and involved those individuals whose acceptance and commitment are important.

It is important for the school administrators to build trust in their employees through openness by keeping people informed and making certain criteria on how decisions are made. It is important to speak your feelings and tell the truth. Furthermore Robbins (2003) advised teachers and head teachers to demonstrate confidence as it develops the admiration and respect of others by demonstrating technical and professional ability. Thus, school administrators should strive to develop a trusted relationship among all the stake holders in the school as it might increase teachers' full participation in decision making process.

## **2.6 The Research Gap**

Most of the studies done in Zambia heavily focused on leadership styles. Therefore, it can be deduced that, there is no precise and exact study in Zambia, particularly in Mansa district which focused on teachers' involvement in administrative decision making. Therefore, it is the aim of this study to provide an analysis of teachers' involvement in school administrative decision making in selected schools of Mansa district of Luapula province.

## **2.7 Summary**

In this chapter, literature related to the study was presented and considered to be relevant to the study, thereby providing justification for the study. The following chapter gives a detailed research design and methodology that was used to conduct this study.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

### **3.0 Overview**

In this chapter, the methods and procedures were successfully carried out the study had been highlighted. It outlined the tools to be used in collection, analysing and interpreting data. It mainly focused on the following; research design, target population, sampling technique, sample size data collection procedure, trustworthiness of the data and lastly ethical considerations.

### **3.1 Research Paradigm**

There are three paradigms, namely; qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. Despite the existence of many research methods, the study employed a qualitative approach. The rationale for this is that, as compared to numbers as it is the case in quantitative studies, the study seeks to investigate the views, opinions, experiences and expressions of the teachers with reference to their involvement in school administrative decision making (Best and Kahn, 1993). The justification for using qualitative approach in this study is that, it would allow the researcher to use words and images to understand “what” is happening as well as “how” it is happening (Creswell, 2003). This would create openness and provide insight into the problems by recording attitudes, feelings and behavior of teachers in school decision making.

### **3.2 Research design**

Kumar (1996) defined a research design as a procedural plan that is adopted by the researcher to answer questions validly, objectively, accurately and economically. Therefore, this study adopted the phenomenological research design, as it aimed to understand practical aspect of decision making at the school setup. The researcher was concerned with lived experiences of the respondents. (Cresswell, 2003). In this research, the qualitative data was obtained through individual interviews from secondary school teachers from the selected secondary schools in Mansa district. Furthermore, qualitative research design was ideal for it was likely to provide in-depth information concerning teachers’ experiences in school administrative decision making. On the other hand, the qualitative data and its analysis helped the researcher to explain and link the statistical outcomes by explaining participants’ view so as to make interpretations and to come to a conclusion.

### **3.3 Site of the study**

The study was conducted in Mansa district of Luapula province of Zambia. Purposive sampling was used to select Mansa district as the study site since it is the provincial headquarters and had the greatest number of schools ranging from grant aided, government and private schools as compared to other districts within the province. Mansa district has Two (2) grant aided secondary schools of which one is a boys’ secondary school and the other one is a girl’s secondary school and

will be purposively sampled. The rest of the schools are core education schools and were selected using a simple random sampling through a raffle. The rationale for choosing the district with the highest population was that, the findings might help to understand the experiences of teachers in other district.

### **3.4 Target Population**

Kombo and Tromp (2006) states that, a target population is a group selected out of the population to which inference is going to be made. In this study the target population involved; all the head teachers, all deputy head teachers, all heads of department and teachers in all the secondary schools in Mansa district.

### **3.5 Sampling Technique**

Kombo and Tromp (2006) suggests that, sampling technique is a process of selecting a number of individuals from a population such that the selected group contains elements representative of the characteristics found in the entire group. It is worth to note that, various sampling techniques were employed to select the schools, head teachers, deputy head teachers, head of departments and teachers, as indicated below.

#### **3.5.1 Schools**

Mansa district had seventeen (17) government schools. Ten (10) secondary schools were all in the urban areas, of which one (1) is a boys' secondary school and the other nine (9) were all co-education schools. However, the remaining seven (7) secondary schools were in the rural areas of Mansa district, of which two (2) secondary schools were boys' schools and the other one was for girl's only, while the rest were all co-education schools. Four (4) of them were grade one schools while the other thirteen (13) were grade two schools. Grade one schools are big in terms of the school population of pupils and teachers while grade two schools had a lower population as compared to grade one schools. Thus, the seventeen secondary schools were stratified into two strata of urban and rural schools. Then using simple random sampling, three (3) schools were sampled from the first stratum of urban schools and the other two schools from rural stratum giving the researcher a total of five (5) schools that were part of the study. Stratified and simple random samplings were used to ensure that each of the schools had an equal and independent chance of being sampled.

#### **3.5.2 Head teachers**

All Head teachers of the five schools were purposely sampled because they were directly responsible for the leadership and school administrative decision making process and were

believed to be reliable with information for the study. All the five (5) head teachers participated in the study giving a study sample to five (5) head teachers.

### **3.5.3 Deputy Head teachers**

In the similar way, all the deputy Head teachers of the same five schools were purposively sampled because they were involved in school administration. They coordinate with the school head teachers in school decision making and are believed to be reliable for the study. All the five (5) deputy head teachers were expected to participate in the study giving a study sample to five (5) deputy head teachers.

### **3.5.4 Heads of Department (HoD)**

The heads of departments were identified through the use of a stratified random sampling at the mentioned schools. The researchers obtained a list of all HoDs and stratify the sample by gender strata, making sure that the female HoDs are sampled. In this study a total number of ten (10) heads of departments from the five (5) selected secondary schools were sampled. The aim was to have two respondents, one male and one female head of department from each sampled school. Thus, the study was expected to have five (5) female and five (5) male heads of departments from the sampled secondary schools.

### **3.5.5 Teachers**

Teachers were directly involved in the implementation of the programme activities and the way programme influences the programme's direction and outcomes. They are also co-administrators in the school administration. The teacher's registers were used in each school to get a sample of teachers for the study. They were then stratified into two strata of (15) male and (10) female so as to have a well representation of both sexes. On the other hand, the simple random sampling technique applied to the selection of teachers from the sampled secondary schools. A record of all staff members (male and female) was obtained from the office of the particular schools by request. Teachers were requested to assemble in the staff room from where respondents were selected using a raffle or rotary method. Using simple random sampling five (5) teachers, of which 3 male and 2 female teachers were expected to be sampled from each school, giving a sum total of twenty (25) teachers that were expected to be sampled. The variation in figures is ideal because most schools in rural provinces were dominated by male teachers.

## **3.6 Sample size**

According to Best and Kahn (2006) a sample is a small proportion that is selected for observation and analysis. It should be a representative of the population to ensure that the findings can be generalized to the population as a whole. The study sample therefore estimated of forty-five (45)

respondents. This was allocated as follows; (5) Head teachers, (5) five Deputy Head teachers, ten (10) Heads of department and (5) Teachers from each of the five schools, making total of (25) teachers were among the respondents in this study. The rationale for a small sample size is because in a qualitative study, the researcher is only concerned with the expressions, feelings and emotions of the respondents, besides this a small sample size was made and it is easy for the collected information to be easily analysed by developing themes from the respondents' data unlike having a bigger sample size. The sample size was illustrated in figure 1 below

*Table 3:1 Summary of the sample size*

<i>s/n</i>	<i>Respondents</i>	<i>Sample size</i>			<i>Percentage rate</i>
		<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>total</i>	
<i>i</i>	<i>Head teachers</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>11%</i>
<i>ii</i>	<i>Deputy Head teache</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>11%</i>
<i>iii</i>	<i>Heads of departmen</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>22%</i>
<i>iv</i>	<i>Class teachers</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>56%</i>
		<i>26</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>100%</i>

### **3.7 Data collection instruments**

The researcher used focus group guides and interview schedules as the main data collection instruments. A recorder was used for triangulation so as to supplement information that was given through interview process.

#### **3.7.1 Interview schedule for head teachers**

An interview guide can be understood as a set of written list of questions or topics that an interviewer asks the interviewee. In other words, it is a platform that involves presentation of oral-verbal stimuli and oral-verbal responses (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). Considering the small number

of the head teachers that were interviewed, the researcher used an interview guide to collect information from the selected head teachers from the five secondary schools.

### **3.7.2 Interview schedule for deputy head teachers**

Deputy Head teachers were also interviewed so as to capture the first hand and undiluted raw information from their own perception, with regards to teachers' involvement in school administrative decision making. In this regard a specific interview schedule for deputy head teachers was used. It involved oral-verbal responses and the interviewer was recording the responses.

### **3.7.3 Focus group guide for heads of departments**

French et al., (2001:132) explained that focus group interviews are interviews where-by "several participants are interviewed at the same time and place". Equally Patton (2002) also emphasize that focus group discussion is the most effective when used among participants who have had presumably the same understanding and experience of the phenomenon being studied (Gillham, 2000). Therefore, the researcher employed a focus group discussion when collecting information from the heads of departments. This was because this category of respondents were presumably said to have the same experiences with regards to teachers' involvement in school administrative decision making. Besides that, the approach allowed the respondents to freely express themselves in a group unlike if done individually as some would fail to disclose all the information that, they might have. The researcher was privileged to collect data through note taking or by using a record with permission.

### **3.7.4 Focus group guide for teachers**

It is further important to note that, the researcher also used focus group discussion to collect information from the teachers. In this case five teachers from each of the five schools were brought together in order to have a discussion with them about teachers' involvement in school administrative decision making. The rationale for this approach was that, it would allow teachers to freely express themselves in the presence of their fellow teachers, thereby collecting relevant and desired information. Furthermore, it brought together a good number of respondents to be interviewed at once, thereby lessening the researcher's burden. To ensure credibility the researcher was recording the participants experience and insights as well as taking notes. This enabled the researcher to have the true picture of the findings of the study.

## **3.8. Trustworthiness**

To ensure trustworthiness in this study, the researcher used a voice recorder so as to capture every tone of the voice as stated by the respondents and this was done through the authorization from the

respondents so as to comply with the ethics in research. With permission the researcher was allowed to put up a voice recorder alongside the interview. To ensure the trustworthiness, the role of triangulation was emphasized in order to reduce the effect of investigator bias. Other aspect of ensuring credibility of the study, among others included; dependability, conformability and transferability and were explained individually in details below.

### **3.8.1 Credibility**

Credibility is a criterion for judging a qualitative study. Credibility is how confident a qualitative researcher is with the truth in the research findings (Kumar, R. (2005). Here the researcher focused on two most important techniques (triangulation and member checking). Triangulation involves using multiple methods, data sources, observers, or theories in order to gain a more complete understanding of the phenomenon being studied. This was done by asking different respondents the same questions. In this regard Methods triangulation and Member-checking were employed. Methods triangulation involved utilizing different data collection methods in order to check the consistency of the findings.

The second important technique that qualitative researchers use to establish credibility is Member-checking. With this technique data interpretations and conclusions were shared with the participants. It allowed teachers to clarify intentions, correct errors, and provide additional information if necessary. Therefore, similar or related questions were asked to the targeted population namely; the school Head teachers, Deputy Head teachers, Heads of departments as well as the teachers from the five (5) schools. This was done to ensure that the research findings were robust, rich, comprehensive, and well-developed.

### **3.8.2 Conformability**

This involved asking the respondents repeatedly to confirm whether the information provided was correct. This was done at the time the interview session was going on. Therefore, in this study the quality of data was subjected to participant checking. Through verification the researcher was helped to do away with unnecessary information which might be altered by the respondents. Group interview guides were tested on some former students from Mansa district to make sure that they were comprehensive and appropriate. However, ambiguities that were observed during the piloting process were corrected.

### **3.8.3 Transferability**

This is the generalisation of the study findings to other situations and context. A researcher ensured transferability by giving a clear description of the analysis to the situation under study. Creswell, (2003) reviewed that; qualitative researcher can use rich, thick description to show that



the research study findings are applicable to the study. External audit was employed as it involved asking neutral individual to check through. This avoided and clarified some errors in the study. The researcher ensured that the research findings were transferred to another school of a similar size and setting under study and this was to show whether the findings are applicable to the study.

### **3.8.4 Dependability**

To ensure that, the information attained is of great value, the researcher checked with what other researchers have done. Therefore, the researcher employed dependability because it allowed the researcher to be more equipped with many skills that may be realized from checking what other scholars have written before. The researcher used inquiry audit in order to establish dependability and also engaged an outside person to review and examine the research process in order to ensure that the findings are consistent if repeated. It was hoped that it would clear up any confusion about trustworthiness and was likely to shed light on the different components involved in establishing a trustworthy research study. (Lankshear and Knobel, 2004).

### **3.9 Data Collection Procedure**

Before the commencement of data collection, the researcher first obtained an introductory letter from the Director for Institute of Distance Education at the University of Zambia to conduct the study. With the introductory letter, from the University of Zambia, permission was requested from the office of the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) to grant the visitation of the selected secondary schools for data collection. With authority from the (DEBS) office, arrangements were made with the Head teachers, Deputy Head teachers, Heads of departments and teachers on the convenient time when the interviews and focused group discussions could be conducted. Therefore, this study paid attention to ethical considerations in order to protect those who were involved in the research respectively.

### **3.10. Data Analysis**

Patton (2002) described the process of data analysis as the organization of what is collected into patterns and categories while looking for relationships and linkages among the descriptive dimensions. In this study, analysis involved reducing and organizing the data, synthesizing, searching for significant patterns and discovering what is important. Therefore the researcher used thematic analysis, through which information was put into themes so as to make sense of what was stated by the respondents. The rationale for adopting a thematic analysis is that, in qualitative studies collected data can be easily interpreted if such information is put into themes or categories as mirrored from the research objectives.

### **3.11 Ethical Consideration**

In any research, ethics are very important because they set ground rules through which the research is conducted and failure to follow these ethics compromises the standards of any research. In an effort to make the research study trustworthy, ethical considerations of confidentiality and protocol were followed. In the light of this, the researcher ensured that every respondent remain anonymous by not asking the respondents to mention their names during interviews.

Cohen et al (2007) explained that ethical principles when conducting research include acquiring research clearance and the informed consent of the participants as well as maintaining confidentiality. Permission was therefore sought from the appropriate offices and personnel before any information was obtained from the respondents. It was key to seek permission from the respondents in the process of data collection and this was done without persuading them to do so, but through their own will.

Similarly Lankshear and Knobel, (2004) indicated that, ethics is concerned with ensuring that the interests and the well-being of the respondents or participants are not harmed as a result of the research being done. Harm in this context may imply people experiencing insults to their dignity and being hurt by conclusions that are drawn about them all the way through to having their reputations or credibility undermined publicly. This aspect was particularly important for this study because the respondents were given an opportunity to express themselves concerning teachers' involvement in school administrative-decision making.

Another ethical issue that was considered in the study was to have a valid research design. This was necessary because poorly designed studies could waste participants' time and often lead to refusal to participate in other research studies. It is therefore important to bear in mind that researchers that faulty research is not only a waste of time and money but also could not be conceived as being unethical because it does not contribute to the well-being of the participants. In order to come up with a valid research design for the study, the researcher read widely and made consultations with other scholars on teacher involvement in decision making.

Furthermore, compensation was discouraged on the ground that it would induce unnecessarily 'favourable' responses from participants with a view of pleasing the researcher. Researchers must do their best to make sure that efforts in ensuring reciprocating research participants does not affect the quality of data (Patton, 2002 in Mulenga, 2015). To safeguard the quality of data to be collected in the study, the researcher ensured that no monetary or any other material favours were promised to the participants during the process of data collection. Instead, the researcher made an emphasis that the data to be collected in the study was of great significance to both the researcher

and the participants as it enhanced the understanding for both parties on teacher involvement in decision making in Zambia.

Adhering to appropriate ethical conduct throughout the entire process of the study was the responsibility of the researcher. In this study, the researcher asked for consent from the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) using the permission letter obtained from the Institute of Distance Education (IDE) at the University of Zambia and request for consent from the teachers by producing the permission letter and asking them verbally to participate in the study. Therefore, the study paid attention to ethical considerations that were meant to protect those who were involved in the research.

### **3.12. Summary**

In this chapter research methodology that was used for the study was presented. It included research design, study site which were schools in Mansa district, target population, study sample, sampling techniques, research instruments, trustworthiness, data collection techniques, data analysis as well as ethical considerations.

## CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

### 4.0 Overview

In this chapter, the findings of the study are presented. The presentations of the findings are presented and interpreted in relation to the questions under the following sections;

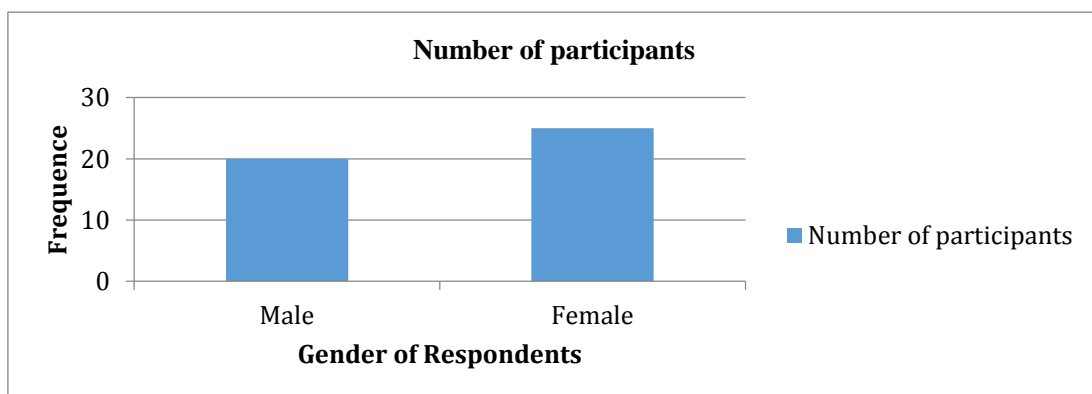
- i. To what extent are teachers, views considered in administrative decision making in secondary schools in Mansa district?
- ii. What are the effects of not involving teachers in school level decision making in secondary schools in Mansa district?
- iii. What measures can help improve teachers' participation in decision making?

This chapter presents the findings of the study that were obtained through the interview guide and focus group discussion. Interviews were conducted to (5) Head teachers, (5) deputy head teachers while focus group discussion were conducted to (10) head of departments (HoDs) and administered to (25) teachers respectively. In this study the qualitative data is summarized using narrative reports.

### 4.1 Demographic characteristics of the respondents

This section presents a brief demographic description of the participants. It also presents the demographic characteristics such as; gender, age, academic qualification, professional qualification and the number of years in the teaching profession. Each of these items was presented, discussed and an explanation was given as to why the information was relevant to this study. And finally a brief description of the findings is also presented.

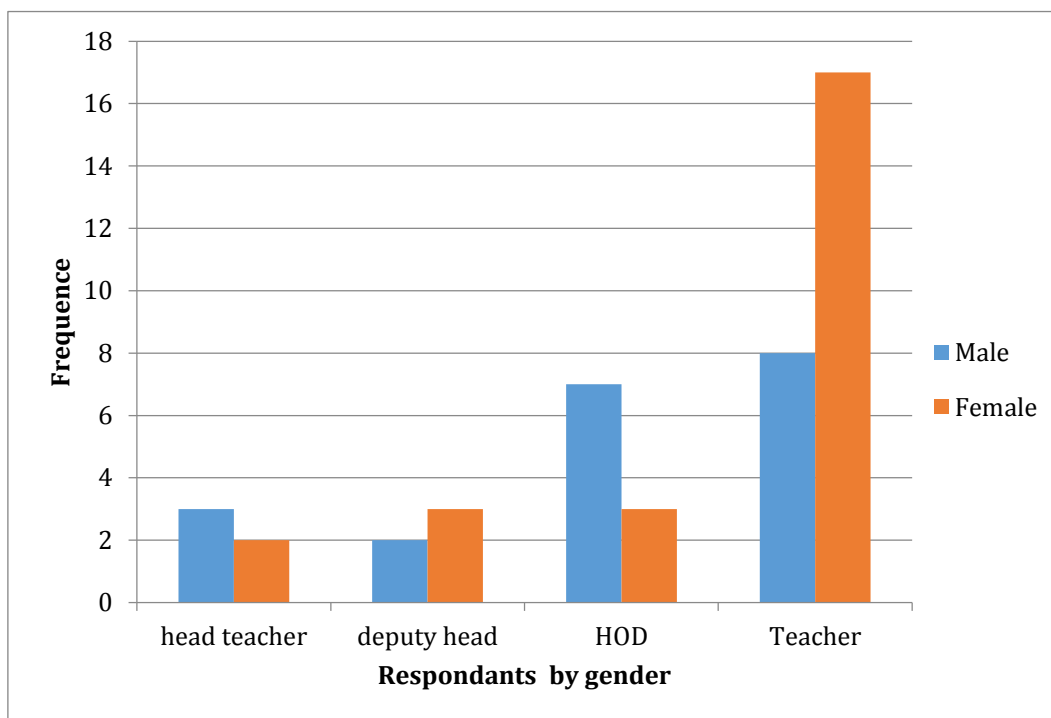
**Figure 4.1: Profile information of respondents by gender**



The table above indicates that, out of the (45) respondents, the highest percentage of them were female teachers with a percentage of 56% (25) while the least of the respondents were male with a percentage of 44% (20).

Figure 4.2: Demographic Information Indicating Position by Gender of the

**Respondents**



a) *Head teachers*

Using the interview schedules for head teachers, the researcher sampled five schools. Out of the five head teachers three were male while two were female, thus giving the study a total of five head teachers. All the head teachers participated in the study through the interviews that the researcher conducted in their respective schools.

b) *Deputy Head teachers*

Out of the five deputy head teachers, two were male while the other three were female. All the deputy head teachers participated in the study through the interviews that the researcher conducted.

c) *Heads of departments and class teachers*

This section presents the demographic information by gender of the heads of department and teachers who participated in the study. Seven of heads of department were male, while three were female. Out of the total number of twenty-five (25) teachers sampled seventeen (17) were females while eight (8) were males who participated in the study. Thus, the rate of focus group discussion completion was at 100 percent and this shows that there was a good representation of women in the study.

**Table 4.1: demographic information indicating the age of the respondents**

This has been illustrated in the table below as follows.

<b>Group</b>	<b>Age group</b>	<b>Number of participates</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Head teachers	20-29		
	30-39		
	40-49	3	6.8%
	50-Above	2	4.4%
Deputy head teachers	20-29		
	30-39		
	40-49	4	8.9%
	50-Above	1	2.2%
HoDs	20-29	1	2.2%
	30-39	4	8.9%
	40-49	4	8.9
	50-above	1	2.2
Teachers	20-29	5	11.1%
	30-39	19	42.2%
	40-49	1	2.2%
	50-above		

The table above elaborates that, the majority of the respondents were between the age range of 30-39 giving a percentage of about 42.2 (19), in this study. It is also important to note that, there were also those in the age range of about 50 and above and these included among them; one head teacher and one deputy head teacher giving a percentage of about 4.4 % (2) in total.

**Table 4.2 teaching experiences in service by the respondents**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Experience in service</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>Head teachers</b>	<b>1-3 years</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>4-6 years</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>7-9 years</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>10-above years</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Deputy head teachers</b>	<b>1-3 years</b>	
	<b>4-6 years</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>7-9 years</b>	<b>2</b>
	<b>10-above years</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>HoDs</b>	<b>1-3 years</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>4-6 years</b>	<b>4</b>
	<b>7-9 years</b>	<b>6</b>
	<b>10-above years</b>	
<b>Teachers</b>	<b>1-3 years</b>	<b>2</b>
	<b>4-6 years</b>	<b>7</b>
	<b>7-9 years</b>	<b>15</b>
	<b>10-above years</b>	<b>1</b>

It is evident from the table above that all the head teachers interviewed were 9 years and above in their positions as head teachers, similarly this was also familiar with the deputy head teachers, while most of the heads of departments were between 4 to 6 years of experience in their position and it is also important to note that most of the teachers interviewed were in between 3 to 10 years of teaching experience.

Table 4.3 indicates the professional qualifications of the respondents from the head teachers, Deputy heads teachers, HoDs and class teachers.

**Table 4.3 Professional Qualification of the Respondents**

<b>GROUP</b>	<b>PROFFESIONAL DETAILS</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
Head teachers	Masters	2	4.4
	Degree	3	6.7
	Diploma	0	0
	Certificate	0	0
Deputy head teachers	Degree	5	11.1
HoDs	Masters	1	2.2
	Degree	8	17.7
	Diploma	1	2.2
	Certificates	0	0
Teachers	Masters	0	0
	Degree	9	20
	Diploma	16	35.5
	Certificate	0	0

The table above elaborates the professional qualifications of the respondents and this has shown that only 3 respondents had master's degree and these included 2 head teachers and one HOD and the majority of the respondents have shown that, they were degree holders and among them were deputy head teachers, heads of departments, teachers while 16 teachers were holding diploma certificates. Besides that most of the teachers were studying in order to upgrade through distance programmes in different universities.



## 4.2. Findings of Research Questions

As mentioned in chapter three, the research followed a qualitative design. Presentation of the findings on the topic, 'teacher involvement in school administrative decision making' was presented in chronological order below as mirrored in the research objectives. Noting that the design that was used was a qualitative method, data was analysed using thematic analysis. It is also fundamental to note that the research instruments that were used had similar questions in both interview schedules and focus group discussion schedules in line with the study objective.

The findings from the focus group discussion guide for teachers and heads of department were presented alongside those from the head teachers and deputy head teachers' interviews. Actual words said by respondents were used as much as possible in the descriptions, while other words have been paraphrased. It is important to note that some ideas presented were interconnected and could fall into more than one thematic section.

Research question number one sought information from secondary school teachers and head teachers on the extent to which teachers' views were considered in administrative decision making in secondary schools?

In order to answer this question, the researcher saw it fit to first have the understanding of the term involvement in school administrative decision making. To address this, information was sought from the interview schedule item number one for the head teachers. The research question was as follows; *what was your view about teacher participation in school decision making process?*

### 4.2.1 Teachers' view about participation in school decision making process

Through the interviews that were conducted from the interview guides, the researcher asked the school head teachers to state their views about teacher participation in decision making using item number 1 in the interview schedule for head teachers.

Head teachers had different understanding of the concept of participative decision making in school administrative system.

*Decision making is the process of making choices by identifying a decision, gathering information and assessing alternative resolutions. It brings a diversity of experiences and perspectives to the decision process.*

In line with the first objective, another Head teacher responded as follows;

*Decision making is a very important component in school management. It is important that teachers are involved in whatever decisions are made in school.*

*Doing things alone, is the same as running to fail, however if you collaborate with teachers in decision making, there will be sense of ownership and every teacher becomes part of the school programme.*

One of the head teachers described a school in different perspective as stated below;

*A school is a group of different species of fish. Meaning that people with different background come to work together but may have different ideas and opinions in the manner they handle issues. They need to be involved in decision making so that everyone works for a common goal.*

Furthermore, another Head teacher lamented that;

*Despite being the head teacher, one may not be competent in all the fields and this may call for the head teacher to engage the teachers with different specialities so that professionalism is enhanced at school level.*

One of the teachers in a focused group discussion also stated that;

*Decision making is where you have been given a chance to come up with ideas on how to run certain programmes. Decision making can help you make more deliberate, thoughtful decisions by organising relevant information and defining alternatives. Teachers can take a great role in the overall success of the school when they commit to being active participants in the decision making process.*

In addition, one teacher through the focus group discussion confirmed that;

*Decision making is an on-going process which should not be done by one person, but should involve teachers on how to handle issues affecting the management and administration of the school. It attaches its importance to the issues of internal monitoring, learner management and financial management. If teachers are brought on board they will be aware of how much money the school is having and how the money is spent.*

Therefore, involvement of all the stake holders in decision making is likely to enhance productivity in terms of learner performance and motivated work force. Still insisting on the aspect of teacher involvement in decision making another head of department stated as follows;

*Participation in decision making is the inclusion of the teachers in the decision making process of the school organization. Teachers Participation is described as a process in which influence is shared among individuals who are otherwise hierarchically unequal.*

#### 4.2.2 The roles of the head teacher in school decision making process.

During the interviews, 3 head teachers who were in the decision-making 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 of the affairs of schools and conduct internal monitoring of Human, Financial and material resources.

On the same issue, two of the five head teachers who were interviewed shared the view that head teachers have the big responsibility to improve teacher involvement in decision making through motivated staff and enhancing professional practices in schools. They added that that they prepare proposals and submit to the DEBS and other cooperating partners for developmental projects; develop strategic plans and striving to achieve the institutional goals and quality control in school. One of the head teachers had this to say;

*The head teacher ensured that schools run through committees and the members of such committees are teachers. Decisions are therefore made in these committees and heads of department merely consolidate the decisions and make a submission to the head teacher for the approval.*

Another head teacher gave this view that;

*It is not always that all decisions made by teachers are taken on. He said that the head teacher has the authority to shoot down those views which are regarded to be irrelevant and not to the advantage of both the learner and a teacher. He further said that, in managing schools there should be room to practice non-participative leadership style. This is done to safe guard the interest of the organisation.*

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 significant learning taking place, inspiration to learners to continue learning and a motivated work force. (Interviews with head teacher 19th, January, 2020 Mansa).*

Though decision-making was welcome, Head teachers interviewed said it was important and they needed to be trained in management skills so that they embrace the idea of teacher involvement in school decision making. It is important to build critical thinking skills with our decision making training. We make thousands of decisions a day with a range of value and importance and this should enable head teachers to appreciate the aspect of staff engagement in decision making.

One of the deputy head teachers pointed out that;

*Critical thinking, problem solving and decision making training can provide and enhance the management and leadership skills needed at every level of the organisation. Head teachers should promote forms of participation in decision making that increase teachers' actual involvement in school decision making concerning duties and opportunities for teacher participation, and also sharing on new ideas concerning the school management, particularly the issue of decision making*

#### **4.2.3 Consideration of Teachers' Views in Decision Making**

The study also sought to find out the extent to which teachers' views are considered in administrative decision making in secondary schools in Mansa district. This was done through questions 3 for both interview schedules and focus group guides for secondary school teachers and head teachers. Teachers' responses indicated that only a few teachers had been involved in decision making process. In line with the first objective, (2) Head teachers responded as follows,

*Teachers views are considered in a number of ways; among them is through financial management of the school, where budgeting and planning are done inclusively through consultation of all teachers. Through such meetings the head teacher engages teachers to discuss the requirements for the school.*

In addition to the above mentioned narration, another head teacher stated that,

*There are different levels at which we involve teachers in school decision making. Sometimes at class room level, teachers make decisions and they actually bring their opinion to the administration to look through and if found worthwhile an approval is considered.*

Adding to this, another head teacher said that;

*Sometimes we have different forums where teachers meet and discuss issues concerning the school, for example School Based Continuous Professional*

*Development (SBCPD) meetings, where a number of issues that affect teachers in their professional matters are discussed. Sometimes it's through school councils where issues that affect teachers and their work are looked at and teacher's voices are heard.*

In contrast (2) of them responded as follows;

*Sometimes teacher's views are not considered especially if there some issues that needs urgent attention and as a matter of priority. In such instances, the school administration usually informs teachers on the new development or changes made.*

They further added that,

*Holding meetings more often simply leads to the consumption of precious learning time for the learners as well as for teachers' preparations. Therefore, teachers do not have an opportunity to present issues that affects them in the execution of duties.*

With reference to the findings, most of the head teachers argued that, teachers are involved in administrative school decision making at school level. Meanwhile, out of the 5 deputy head teachers, 3 deputy heads responded as follows;

*There is an element of dishonesty by most head teachers especially on financial matters. Even if teachers are involved in planning and budgeting, some head teachers still override all decisions of which not even a deputy can question the head teacher. This also makes some deputy head teachers to influence some teachers and go on backbiting the head teacher.*

However, one of the head teachers said that,

*Involving teachers, we do, but it is not always that their ideas are implemented, because certain activities may conflict with the available resources in school. For instance, teachers would sit for a meeting and decide to conduct a field trip, but such may not be approved by the head teacher due to insufficient resources. Consequently, teachers may think their ideas are not well thought. Such a gap is normally as a result of not engaging teachers in matters affecting the school.*

Out of the ten (HoDs) who took part in the focus group discussion, two of them stated that;

*“Partly yes, partly no, there is little participation that comes from HoDs. The head teacher overlooks the decisions of the HoDs, for instance at our school, in the procurement of a school printer, the head teacher went ahead to procure the school printer despite various suggestions that come from the teachers who were consulted. He (the head teacher) only involves us when it comes to budgeting and not in the procurement of the school materials for the departments. He normally has pre-determined ideas even when meetings are held.”*

To the contrary, one HoD said that,

*Teachers are always involved in school administrative decision making, as they are consulted on a number of relevant issues on how the school should be run, as running of the school cannot be a one-man show.*

Another teacher also argued that:

*Views are not considered as head teachers tend to disapprove teachers’ suggestions because they feel that they are the custodians of the schools hence their decisions matters most. They normally address the school as “my school” making it too personal.*

Most of the teachers were not satisfied because their views were not considered. This was evidenced from the responses they gave from item number 3 from the interview schedule which sought information on their views as whether secondary school teachers were adequately considered in decision making. One teacher lamented that;

*At our school we have challenges. In most cases you would find that decisions are already made even before we are called for deliberations and we have nothing to say but to simply comply in order to avoid to be labelled as agitators. This is quite irritating in the sense that none of our views are tapped.*

Another teacher added that;

*We just follow what is tabulated as the head teacher does not give us room to propose our opinion. This implies that we don’t participate, however the head teacher command what should be done and we just follow what comes from the head teacher.*

**Figure 4.3. Gives an illustration of the response from the respondents.**

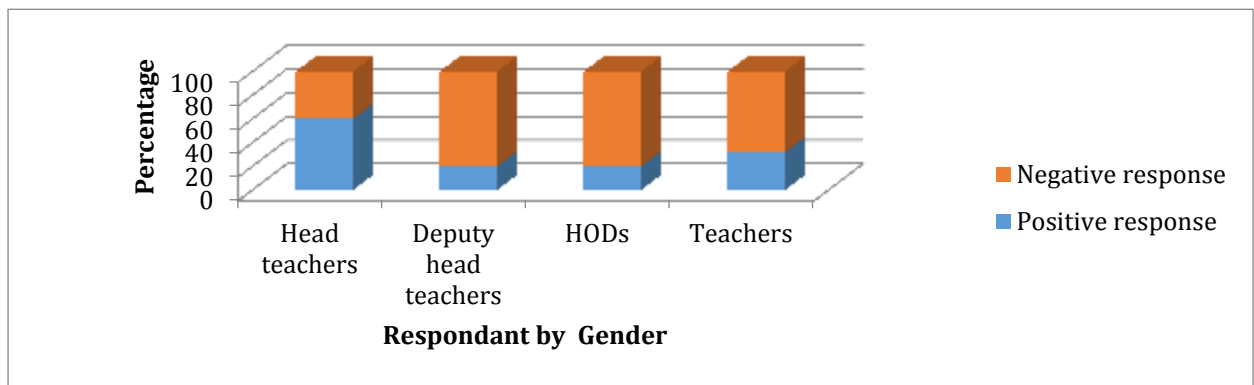


Figure 4.3 shows that, out of the 45 respondents, 3 (60%) of the head teachers responded positively that, teachers are usually involved in decision making while 2 (40%) of the head teachers provided a contrary view. Similarly, 4 (80%) of the deputy head teachers said that, due to submissiveness, the authority of the head teacher overrides the contributions of the teachers while (1) 20%) deputy head teachers gave a contrary opinion. Equally 8(80%) of the heads of department (HoDs) confirmed that, not all opinion are considered in decision making as illustrated in the graph. Furthermore, it can also be deduced that, most of the teachers were of the view that, their opinions in most cases seemed to oppose those in management.

#### **4.2.4 Level of teacher involvement in school decision making process**

The study also sought to find out teachers’ perceptions on the level of teacher involvement in school administrative decision making process. This level of involvement focuses on the interaction among school members as teams, groups or departments. The decision making area at this level of participation includes issues that mainly relate to functioning of groups, for example subject committee, promotions within the department, supervision of members and other issues; extracurricular activity groups and groups that handle discipline and disciplinary issues

Respondents were asked if the current level of involvement of secondary school teachers in decision making was satisfactory and if at all they had ever been contacted by school managers to participate in any aspect of the decision making process. This was done through questions 4 in the focused group discussion for secondary school teachers. One of the deputy head teacher said that;

*The multidimensional approach to measuring the level of teachers participation in decision making revealed quite high actual participation in decisions concerning learners’ and teachers’ issues, but low levels of participation in managerial decisions. The discrepancy between the actual and desired levels of participation showed significant deprivation across all decision-making domain.*

Another teacher said that;

*Some head teachers have a specific set of individuals that they respect and listen. No matter how valuable the idea could be, they cannot take it up, unless it is coming from the same individuals who are termed to be royal.*

Some teachers also argued that invitation to participate in issues to deal with finances and purchasing was not extended to them, making the situation worse for those who are merely class teachers. Other reasons indicated by respondents included mistrust and lack of confidence in the subordinates.

Most head teachers were not engaging teachers who were highly qualified and controversial but opted to work with less qualified staff who easily agree to whatever decision is made. This was evidenced from the responses they gave from item number 4 from the interview schedule for secondary school head teachers, which sought information on their views as to whether secondary school teachers were adequately involved in the decision making process. One head teacher lamented that;

*There are a lot of setbacks. The head teacher normally sidelines teachers with higher qualifications and opt to work with the less qualified staff who usually agree to whatever is decided, but then, at the implementation stage, the people that implement are not well informed and it becomes challenging to know whether they are practicing and implement what is beneficial to the learners and the entire school community.*

Another teacher said that;

*At our school, I may say we have a challenge. Most of the time you would find the head teacher has already written what she wants us to do as teachers. We just follow what is tabulated and she does not give us room to suggest according to our opinion. This implies that we don't participate, however she just dictate what should be done and we just follow what comes from the management. This has been ongoing despite several suggestions that we have been presenting to the head teacher.*

The second one committed that:

*It's like teachers are not involved in planning, but they are involved at the implementation stage and that is the beginning of failure, because teachers are*



*not recognized as very important stakeholders in the management and administration system, Normally we are just told what to do and we are expected to implement whatever is setup by the top leadership.*

Other deputy head teachers confirmed that;

*They (head teachers) don't involve teachers at the grass root especially with issues to do with money. The development is done from the top and teachers are only told what to do and sometimes implementation becomes difficult. I think there isn't much representation from the grass root meaning that teachers are left out.*

Similarly, other heads of department explained that;

*Most of the things seem to be hidden. You only come to learn about it when the project is already in process. For example, we have had situations where some learning and teaching materials are procured without following tender procedures or without the knowledge of teachers. Grass root involvement is usually not taken into consideration.*

Furthermore, one teacher argued stated that;

*Teachers are only involved at the implementation stage. Otherwise it's the accounting officer, the stores and the boarding masters who are involved in decision making. Development of activities is done from the top and teachers are only told what to do and in the end it becomes challenging to implement some activities.*

One teacher sighted that;

*At our school decision to enroll student teachers who come for teaching experience is not monitored and there are no limitations regardless of the qualifications. The head teacher and deputy head normally decides without the consent of other members of staff such as HoDs and class teachers.*

*This was confirmed when one of the heads of department confirmed that;*

*As a permanent teacher of civic education at grade 10 level, I have seen more student teachers taking up classes from first term to term two while the permanent teachers do not take part in assisting and orienting students. This implies that permanent teachers will only introduce the pupils in the examination room in*

*third term. This has an adverse effect on pupil discipline and poor learner performance and if we are consulted, such cases may not arise.*

In responding to question number 6 from the interview schedule for secondary school deputy head teachers which sought information on whether the participation of secondary school teachers in decision making process should be increased, some head teachers emphasized that the level of teacher participation should be increased. This was confirmed when they said that;

*Yes, they should increase the level of teacher participation in decision making such as budgeting and planning, procurement, CPD activities, time tabling and school projects because they are the people on the ground, they are the people who knows what to teach or the problems that they face when they are teaching our learners.*

In support of this, one respondent said that;

*They should increase the level of teacher participation, because they are the major stakeholders who implement various activities in school. However we need a system that is bottom-up, by allowing teachers at school level to get involved before the decisions are implemented so that they know what is in the school strategic plan.*

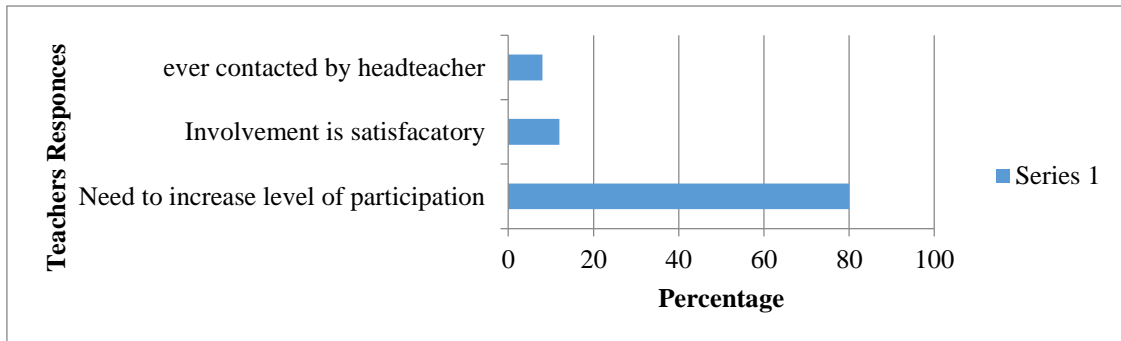
On the other hand, information was sought from the teachers, through item number 4 and 5 in the interview schedule for teachers on whether secondary school teachers were involved in decision making in procurement of curriculum materials and as to whether they felt that the level of participation of teachers should be increased. The response revealed that teachers were mostly involved in the development of the teaching and learning activities. In line with this, one teacher said that;

*Teachers are mostly involved in the preparation of schemes of works and lesson plans; however, they are not involved in tendering and procurement process of appropriate textbooks and teaching materials. Because of that, wrong materials are purchased and that discourages teachers from performing well. Cheaper materials are accessed from publishers who do not observe standards and quality.*

With regard to being contacted by the head teachers to participate in decision making process, as sought by secondary school teachers' focus group discussion schedule item number 5 and figure 4.4 provides a summary of results. Results show that very few teachers (8) felt the involvement of

teachers was satisfactory, with many respondents (80%) emphasizing the need to increase the level of teacher participation in decision making. The teachers' responses indicated that only a few teachers had been involved (12%) in the decision making process.

**Figure 4.4 Percentage distribution of teachers on current level of involvement in decision making.**



In an attempt to verify the validity of the claims by the responding teachers, it became prudent that school heads be asked to provide their views on involvement of teachers in decision making. The holding situation was that all the school heads agreed that they involved teachers in many areas. Two of the heads admitted that teachers were represented by their HoDs when such decisions were made. The school heads' position can be summarized in the following response from the 3 head teachers, who had to say that, the HoDs and the head would agree and make amendments as they see fit. The other three heads confirmed that HoDs were required to sit down with all teachers in the department and make suggestions as illustrated below:

*I involve all my teachers in critical decision making areas, however there are certain times when I just call the HoDs to finalize activities such as budgeting and planning, projects and local policies without involving teachers. HoDs will be representing their teachers, therefore teachers should not complain because they will be represented.*

The study also reviewed minutes of staff meetings which had been held in each of the five schools under study. Indications were that in only one school, it has always been the trend that departments were asked to sit down and come up with their proposals in this area of budgeting and procurement. However, the minutes did not indicate if the planned activities were implemented according consultations that were in respective departments.

### 4.3 Research Question Two

The second research question sought to find out the effects of not involving teachers in school level decision making in secondary schools in Mansa district. These effects were given in response to question 8 in the interview schedule for the head teacher as well as focus group discussion

schedule for heads of department. The deputy heads and teachers were asked to state the effects using item number 3 and 4 respectively.

#### **4.3.1 Effects of not involving teachers in school level decision making in secondary schools.**

Under this theme the following were the responses from the head teachers interviewed. Therefore the 5 head teachers interviewed lamented the following;

*The effects of not involving teachers in administrative decisions have greater consequences to the running of the school administration. This is because when decisions are not conclusively arrived at, conflicts will arise resulting into negative workmanship and may consequently lead to mismanagement of school resources.*

In addition, most of the deputy head teachers interviewed also lamented the following,

*“When teachers are not involved in school decision making, there will be a feeling of dissatisfaction, which may greatly affect the performance of the learners in school. Since teachers are the ones who are linked closer to the pupils at school level, it is very important to engage them in the school decision making process. Once teachers are involved in decision making, there will be efficiency and improved learner performance.”*

Furthermore, one of the heads of department (HoD) during the focus group discussion stated the following,

*A feeling of being useless arises when teachers are not considered in decision making, besides this, it brings about undesirable working systems, and teachers become demobilized and above all they shun to participate in the future meetings.*

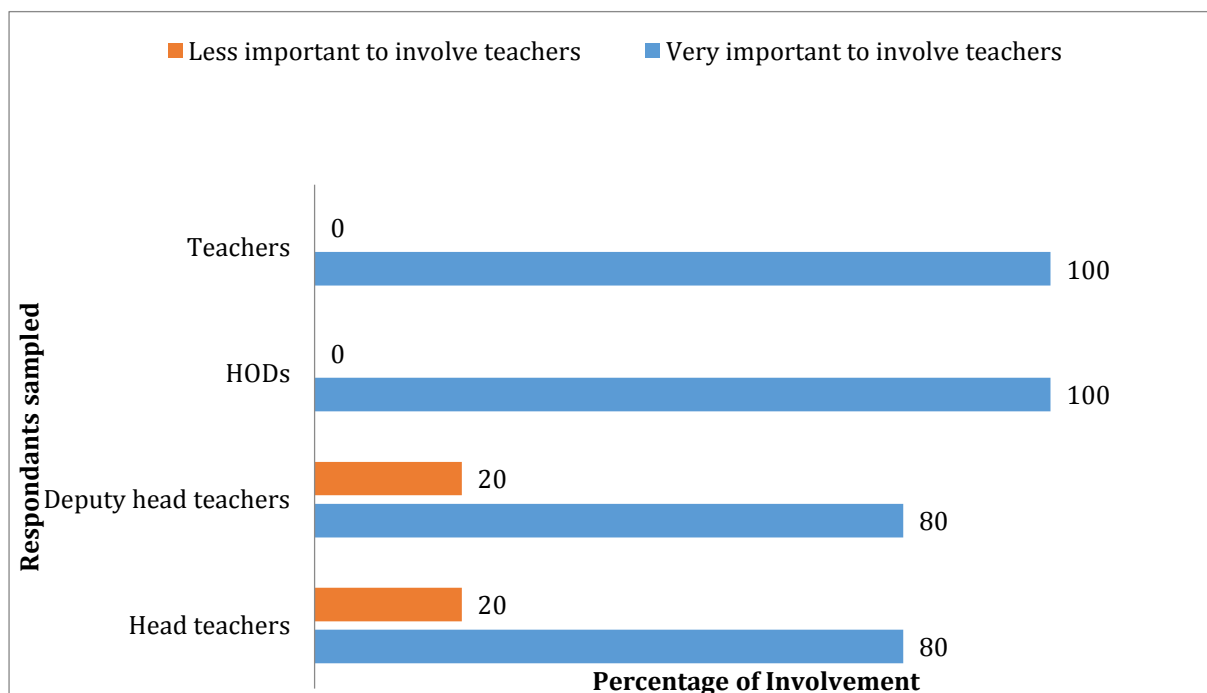
With focus group discussion questions that were asked to the teachers, most of the teachers lamented the following;

*In most cases teachers are asked to make suggestions and opinion, but to their surprise, their views are not valued by the school administration, thereby making them being frustrated. Furthermore when teachers are frustrated, it becomes difficult to run a school accordingly.*

Most of the teachers observed that school administrators did not consider their views and ideas. Apart from that, their opinions were shattered by the senior officers and contributing to this idea, another teacher had this to say;

*Our views are not considered due to the fact that, our needs are not addressed. For example, each term teachers are requested to present departmental budgets, however it's surprising to learn that not all things budgeted for are procured. The waist part of it all is that, even essential materials and equipment's are not purchased. These tend to be the basis for frustrations and in the end affects both teachers' and learner performance.*

**Figure 4.5 Illustrates the effects of teachers' involvement in decision making.**



It can be deduced from the illustration above that, most of the respondents indicated that, it is very important to involve teachers in decision making because teachers share experiences in School activities and inspire head teachers to stimulate their teachers to be creative and to effectively teach with confidence in Zambian schools.

Some teachers also argued that;

*Administrators do not teach and they may not know what is expected for our learners; however they come up with some programmes for our learners. Certain activities are just imposed on us and sometimes wrong instructional materials are procured for our learners and this leads to poor performance in our learners.*

Teaching load allocation involves the deployment of the subjects to teachers usually at the beginning of the year. It was necessary to examine this area of decision making process because any blunder may negatively impact learners' performance. In most cases the responding teachers from four of the five schools indicated that they were not involved in decision making areas on class and subject allocation. The respondents further revealed that such decisions were a prerogative of the school head, deputy head and Heads of Departments (HoD) with the exception of three schools where respondents were consulted in such decisions. Below are responses from the responding teachers who participated in subject allocation:

*My observation is that, this is done by the head, deputy and HoDs. Teachers in this school are not involved in this process. You only see the information on the notice board. There is no room to complain; even if you are not happy, the decision will be binding.*

During a focused group discussion at one of the secondary schools, a similar trend was observed regarding teacher's participation in subject and class allocation, where some teachers denied having participated in decision making. Thus, they reported that;

*The head teacher and deputy head are the only two people involved in this critical decision making area. Teachers are not consulted at all and at times their friends are given very good classes whilst if you are not in the camp, you are given the worst classes. We are not happy at all and to make matters worse we can't complain because once you do so, the next thing is to find yourself in serious troubles.*

The responses above tend to concur with the earlier view that the school management teams in some schools make certain decisions without consulting teachers. Teachers revealed that they are keen to be involved in decisions of teaching programmes. To them, this is one of the areas of their expertise. They wanted their HoDs to facilitate meetings in which teachers rationalize the allocation of teaching loads. They felt that democracy would prevail if as groups of individuals were to participate in mapping out a 'best practice' strategy of managing school activities. They went on to say that they were rational professionals who would make supportive decisions in a manner that would maximize the performance of their learners. It emerged that there were a number of problems that arose as a result of consulting HoDs alone in this area. One of the problems was cited by a teacher when she asserted that;

*A certain teacher was deployed to teach a subject he did not specialize in at college and most of the learners failed his subject at the end of the year*

Some of the responding teachers indicated that they only come to know of their teaching loads from the time table that is produced by the administration. This shows that teachers in most of the participating schools are not consulted in this area of teaching load allocation. In the same vein, teachers asserted that at times one is allocated a subject is not trained to teach. The researcher's view is that such practices tend to undermine the schools' ability to maximum use of the human resources at their disposal. The opinion above was supported by one of the responding teachers who made the following comment:

*Subject allocation is normally done by the head in consultation with the deputy as well as the HoDs. Worse still, the professionals who do the actual teaching are left out in the dark.*

The staff meetings attended gave workable insights into how decisions are made in the area of teaching load allocation. This particular issue was on the agenda of all five schools under study. As has been echoed by most of the teachers it was observed that in three of the participating schools, it was either the head of school or the deputy head who announced the teaching loads for the coming year.

When teachers are not involved in school decision making, there is a feeling of dissatisfaction, which may greatly affect teachers performance, hence when they are not involved in decision making, there will be inefficiency in the running of the school. Among other reasons includes; absenteeism, failure and many more. While less percentage of the respondents namely; the head teachers and deputy heads argued that it is not always important to engage the teachers since certain decision are sensitive and requires firmness.

It was found in this study that in four of the five participating schools, teachers were not involved in subject and teaching load allocation. If a teacher is deployed to teach a subject where she / he has lower competence, what will happen is that the teacher may underperform or teach the wrong things altogether. Once concepts are wrongly applied, children may get confused further. One head teacher noted that;

*Poor teaching creates misunderstanding which has socio-emotional effects on the learner. The learner becomes frustrated, temperamental and may withdraw from school. The point is, better schools tend to produce better students and schools become so because of their ability to make the right decisions of involving teachers in decision making at the right time.*

Indeed, as pointed out earlier on, teachers may not take delight in cases where decisions on issues of teaching and learning materials and other related activities are made on their behalf. They want to

engage their decision making faculties at their organisational levels. They want to demonstrate to their superiors that they command both pedagogical and administrative skills which can be harnessed for the benefit of the organisation. Such informal leaders may have a great audience than the school head. Failure to acknowledge and commit such potentials in decision making may see such leaders working against the school head and the entire system may collapse.

#### **4.3.2 Factors that hinders teachers' participation in decision making.**

Guided by the interview schedule, the researcher asked head teachers and the deputy heads to state the Factors that hinders teacher participation in decision making. This was also shared by almost all the teachers who were interviewed. One of the heads of department actually observed that;

*Some administrators have lower qualifications as compared to their teachers, therefore, they fear to engage such teachers in decision making, due to their inferiority complex. They regard such teachers to be threats.*

Interestingly, one deputy head from a boarding school who had challenges with the head teacher confessed that;

*Some administrators have negative attitude towards participative leadership and they work in isolation. This normally occurs where the school manager is trying to cover certain ideas from the teachers so that he can benefit alone.*

Some participants expressed the following;

*When administrators are involved in sexual relationships with the junior officers at work place, they fail to make decisive decisions in order to maintain the relationships, thereby affecting the working system. For example if the head teacher is going out with a class teacher and that class teacher class is found in a group of culprits , it becomes difficult for the head teacher to pass disciplinary measures against the offenders because of the relationship.*

One of the head teachers said that;

*Due to personal relationships built among teachers at the work place, it becomes difficult to handle and to make decisions especially if the issue concerns the head teacher. Some head teachers are nervous to engage teachers for fear of being embarrassed in the audience.*

This view is seemed to have being supported by another HoD from the same department who also felt that;



*When head teachers have favourite teachers to work with, it becomes difficult to engage other teachers as they are considered less important. Because of this, work becomes difficult as other colleagues may tend to shun the work. For example whatever programme that comes in school some head teachers prefer using same teachers to attend to such programmes especially where there is money. This makes other teachers to feel inferior and they normally do not cooperate or take up the responsibilities seriously.*

A deputy head from one of the schools said during the interview that;

*No matter how good the head teacher may be, one cannot work without adequate support level from his subordinates. Lack of adequate support either from the top level or class teachers may result in a great danger for the head teacher. The rigid mentality of top level management and the subordinate is the biggest impediment, where the head teacher cannot make positive amendments even if he wishes to do so.*

In stressing this point one of the heads of department from literature and languages at one secondary school remarked as follows;

*Where some teachers are favoured in certain school activities, others tend to withdraw their contributions towards certain decisions, because they feel to be less important.*

The fear of being labelled as one who talks too much, especially if one is trying to be against the ideas raised by the administration. This is another barrier faced during school decision making.

Regarding the same issue another teacher said that;

*There is also lack of motivation from the administration and the syndrome of pulling down each other, even when one is trying to put up a very good point or ideas.*

Every experience is a good teacher and head teachers should take a cue from their previous experiences, and learn to boost their decision-making capacity. Good schools have benefited greatly from positive changes and results, which implies that the head teacher should first and foremost improve his ability to deal with risks as he takes up a good decision.

### **4.3.3 Challenges encountered by secondary school teachers in decision making.**

This section provides information sought by focused group discussion items number 6 and 7 on the challenges secondary school teachers faced when implementing decision making. The study established that challenges to participate in school administrative decision-making process that the teachers faced in one way or the other, contributed to the ineffective implementation of the desired goals.

Generally, the responses showed that a large proportion of secondary school teachers (77.8%) faced challenges in decision making process. Most teachers indicated that lack of teacher participation in decision making hindered effective implementation of the local and external policies. Among them is the implementation of homework policy, re-entry policy and many more.

Furthermore, a respondent stated that;

*Teachers' lack of training and understanding of the involvement in decision making was another challenge faced during the implementation of the policies.*

In addition, information was elicited from secondary school teachers using the interview schedule item number 5. Teachers were asked as to whether they are involved in selecting the practical subjects that they offered in schools. The responses from teachers were not very different from what the deputy head teachers noted. For instance, some teachers explained that;

*Especially with the revised curriculum, most teachers are complaining in the area of practical subjects. A lot of work is involved and the syllabus has been made in such a way that, it's difficult to do Continuous Assessments (CA). This is due to lack of engagement of teachers in planning for practical subjects such as expressive Arts, Natural sciences and computer subjects. Well, I think teachers partially understand the concept of CA, as a result some practical subjects are not conducted in the most efficient manner.*

Some teachers argued that certain decisions made in the school set up were not in line with the expected activities for the teaching and learning process and in some cases there were a lot of mistakes. Challenges were also attributed to lack of consultation with teachers which consequently led to the removal of some important build up topics. This was evidenced when one of the head teachers said that;

*Some teachers have complained over subjects like social studies which is a combination of civics, history and geography. The challenge is that teachers who are not specialized in these areas are forced to take up all the three components. No matter how Teachers may complain, they have no option but to implement regardless of the knowledge base of the teacher. This is attributed mainly due to non-involvement of teachers in decision making.*

It is clear from the responses from all the head teachers and deputy heads that teachers encountered a number of challenges when implementing the developed curriculum. It can further be noted that almost all the challenges that teachers faced were as a result of lack of teacher involvement in the decision making process as most teachers were seemingly not consulted when coming up with such policies

Secondary school teachers expressed concern that lack of communication regarding the changes in the school activities provided an obstacle when implementing the developed activities. This was noted from some teachers' responses who said that;

*Teachers are not communicated to on time regarding changes in the school programmes. Therefore it becomes difficult for the teachers to introduce the new programmes especially if they don't have the full knowledge and the background of the project.*

Other challenges that came out from the secondary school teachers responses included lack of involvement in the procurement of curriculum materials. Some text books bought were not matching with the expected learning and teaching process. For instance, a teacher stated that;

*Most of the books and other teaching materials that are purchased from some publishers and suppliers are not in line with current curriculum and syllabi objectives. They do not meet the content and the concepts that the learner require.*

Other challenges included lack of funding and poor quality of materials. Additionally, lack of support, awareness and encouragement for teachers to participate in the entire decision making process emerged as one of the challenges. Other teachers argued that, they were not given the necessary materials on time and teachers were usually not involved in decision making process on the matters that affect them which was very discouraging and demotivating. In this regard, a teacher noted that;

*Secondary school teachers are only considered to be implementers of all the ideas that comes from the head teacher.*

Another teacher indicated that;

*I have actually never been found in a forum where teachers are given awareness or are encouraged to participate in the development of the school programmes. In short, teachers are not utilized in decision making and they are not considered to be very important stakeholders in decision making.*

Similarly, another teacher noted that;

*There is no sensitization or awareness campaign regarding teacher participation in the management and administration of schools. This has created many gaps in the implementation of suggested opinions, since teachers are not taken as important stakeholders in decision making at school level.*

Most teachers argued that activities and programmes such as budgeting and procurement were imposed on them. For instance, one head teacher said that;

*Teachers are not involved in the budgeting and procurement process; the learning materials are just imposed on them without their input. To overcome this challenge teachers tend to be innovative by coming up with local material which sometimes do not meet the intended objectives.*

Most teachers from Secondary Schools lamented that;

*Schools were not implementing the structures that exist in their institutions. Committees are just there for formalities to impress the standard officers and other external monitors. Committees such as procurement and finance committees barely meet to discuss on what should be procured. However head teachers and school accountants are the ones who procure school materials and such discourages teachers from taking part in school decision making process.*

Most teachers noted that;

*Lack of proper communication between the teachers and head teachers led to poor teacher involvement in decision-making. In addition, respondents noted that they lacked teacher participation and in most cases they are just directed to implement the programmes without teachers input.*

The implications of these results were that the teachers did not own the programmes which led to poor learner performance. In addition it also led to conflict and lack of trust in the management system.

#### **4.3.4 Head teachers' reaction to criticism from teachers in decision making**

Item number 5 and 11 in the interview guide for the HoDs and teachers sought to find out information on the reaction of head teachers when criticised by teachers.

Criticism is the practice of judging the merits and faults of something. It is the act of expressing disapproval and noting the problems or faults of a person or thing. Regarding head teachers criticism one head teacher claimed that;

*Criticism is one of the approaches in management system, normally teachers are given room and platform to speak against what they feel is not appropriate, however it is our expectation as head teachers to see our teachers express maturity as they present their opinion and not to dictate what they want but something that will benefit the entire system.*

Similarly, one teacher emphasised that;

*As you criticise head teachers' views, it is important to note that the head teacher is the final authority in the issues you discuss at school level. Therefore, it is important to be mindful of the way you present yourself and not to upset the head teacher but to argue in a manner that does not frustrate the head teacher and the school management.*

Another teacher through a focus group discussion mentioned that;

*Head teachers are the final people in decision making, whenever you try to turn down what they have sealed up, then you will be considered to be an agitator and you never be considered in any school programmes. Most of the time they solicit for support and would not like to be criticised.*

To the contrary, one teacher responded that;

*One of the most negative elements in most of our head teachers is the fear to be criticised and any of the critics are not considered in the running of school programmes. In addition, some head teachers create group systems. These are teachers who report to the head teacher on whatever they hear from the fellow teachers. This instils fear and it is quiet frustrating.*

Another teacher noted that;

*Normally teachers are viewed as enemies whenever they try to speak against certain decision that does not seem to benefit them as well as the learners. This affects the way teachers respond to certain undertakings in school.*

It is therefore important to note that any good leader has to be comfortable in taking up criticism. Among personal qualities, the head teacher should be companionable and of jovial disposition. He must always bear in mind that he is responsible for the educational of all the learners' advancement under his care.

#### **4.3.5 Benefits of teacher participation in decision making**

Teacher participation in decision making is critical. In this regard, the research question item number 6 and 9 from the secondary school teachers on their views on the benefits of teachers' involvement in school decision making process. The results on the benefits as a result of teacher participation in decision making is that teachers would feel recognized and involved in various school activities. Thus other responses on the benefits indicated that;

*If teachers are involved in decision making process, it brings about accountability, unity and cooperation, thereby increasing efficiency and high productivity. It was further reviewed that administrators further develops a consultative attitude and involve teachers in making decisions and encouraging team work.*

One Teacher also suggested that;

*As we interact in the school system through decision making process, it creates an opportunity for us young teachers to embrace the skills and knowledge on how we could be in position to address certain challenges in our future leadership.*

Furthermore, one Heads of Department through focus group discussion pointed out that;

*Involvement approach brings about job satisfaction and improvement in the functioning of schools. In addition it also leads to high productivity, problem solving and collaboration among the teachers and the management team.*

Similarly, one deputy head teacher who was interviewed suggested that;

*There are likely to be dramatic improvements in learner performance, reduced absenteeism, efficiency, and the number of grievances will be minimised when teachers are involved in school administrative decision making.*

This means that teachers would be in support of the measures that the school authorities might undertake because they also play a role in formulation of school policies and regulations guiding the running of the school.

A teacher from one of the schools said that;

*Active teacher participation and involvement in the school decision making process is likely to lead to teacher ownership of the school which may in turn lead to effective curriculum implementation and organization of the institution.*

One teacher through a focused group discussion lamented that,

*Involvement of teachers in decision making has a positive impact because, when teachers are involved, they become part of the activities and whatever they decide, is done collectively and projects succeed. Since teachers are the ones who handle learners, they know what is best for their pupils and the end result will be improved learner performance.*

Similarly, one head of department noted that,

*Teachers will have a wider and greater ownership of the school, its vision and priorities and they are likely to be motivated to carry out their tasks.*

Regarding the same issue, another teacher observed that;

*When teachers are involved in decision making, staff absenteeism is reduced and there is greater organizational commitment, improved performance, increased relations in the management system.*

One heads of department argued that;

*Greater participation of teachers in schools is in tune with a democratic society and lead to enhanced commitment, improved performance, and better productivity in the school system. Above all, teachers' participation in decision-making could improve their job satisfaction, commitment to duty and minimized conflicts.*

Furthermore, through a focused group discussion with heads of department, it was discussed that teachers with a higher level of collaboration and engagement have significantly higher level of job satisfaction and job commitment than those in levels of lower participation. Once teachers in secondary schools get involved in school issues related to resource allocation, school administrative structures, budgeting and public relations, it leads to improvement in learner performance and reduced conflicts.

Teachers can take a greater role in the overall success of the school when they commit to being active participates in the decision making process. In line with this view, one of the teachers suggested that;

*Head teachers must understand that the entire system will benefit when teachers play an active role in controlling their work environment than restricting themselves to teaching within the classroom. Moreover, teachers need to feel that they have more to offer to the school than just teaching within their classroom.*

Teachers were furthermore asked to give their opinion on the benefits of involvement of teachers in decision making in schools. One of them said that;

*Participation enables teachers to become active participants in school management process. As a result, teachers will have a wider and greater ownership of the school, its vision and priorities. Teachers will then be motivated to carry out their tasks; participation leads to a higher level of meaningful involvement of teachers and their teams in the decision making process. Participation accords teachers opportunities for professional development in decision making skills.*

Furthermore, one of the heads of department (HoDs) during the focus group discussion stated that;

Participation is a proactive approach to information sharing among teachers and it makes teachers become good decision makers; it nurtures teachers' creativity and initiative, empowering them to implement innovative ideas. This makes decisions more likely to be acceptable and implemented because they reflect and serve the interests of the people responsible for putting them into action, above all participation results in increased trust between senior management and the teachers.

It can be concluded from the above findings that, teacher involvement results in the development of more inclusive partnerships among heads and teachers and there is harmony, trust, competence and



joy in such an environment. This situation would impact positively on the academic performance of pupils since on several occasions they meet to establish a common goal. A deputy head from one of the schools said during the interview that;

*Participation is good for the schools' long range planning and improves the quality of managements' decisions since there is greater diversity of views and expertise as inputs to decision making.*

In general teachers and heads of departments pointed out that, participation enhances effectiveness, efficiency and productivity by improving the schools' ability to respond rapidly to problems or opportunities in their environment. . Involving departments is a way to formally draw together people of relevant expertise from the whole staff complement. The advantage is that this strategy widens view points and sharing out of responsibilities.

#### **4.4 Research Question Three**

The third research question was to solicit for the measures that can help improve teachers' participation in decision making. This question was presented qualitatively as all the respondents from the teachers, heads of department, deputy heads and head teachers were asked to give suggestions on the possible measures that could help improve teacher participation in decision making of secondary schools in Mansa district. The responses were presented according to the themes that came out more prominent from all the respondents.

Question 13 in the head teachers' interview schedule, sought to answer this question while this question was contained in item number 11 and 12 for teachers and HoDs respectively.

##### **4.4.1 Measures that can help improve teachers' participation in school**

###### **decision making Process.**

There was an overwhelming response from the respondents under this theme; therefore the following were the responses from the respondents. The results on the suggestions that could help to improve teacher participation in decision making revealed that 68% of teachers were not involved in various school activities apart from teaching. Thus their responses on the suggestions indicated that;

*Teachers should be involved in school decision making and their contributions should be valued in relation to the issues affecting the school. Further, head teachers should have a consultative attitude, involving teachers in decision-making and encouraging team work.*

Various suggestions were made to improve teacher involvement in school decision making. Another suggestion was made by one of the HoDs that;

*The responsible officers at the DEBS offices should monitor and ensure that Head teachers practice good leadership. Most teachers do not have morale due to bad and coercive leadership which destroys professional relationships between administrators and teachers in schools.*

As indicated by the respondents, much effort have to be done by the school authorities to ensure that teachers' are fully involved in decision-making process and their views should be looked into and possibly considered after scrutiny, so that the school system is not affected.

Secondary school teachers expressed concern that lack of motivation regarding the changes in the school activities provided a challenge when implementing the developed activities. This was noted from some teachers' responses who said that;

*Teachers are supposed to be motivated by providing them with snacks as they meet to plan for the school programmes as SBCPD. This encourages teachers to participate in decision making process and implement decisions made. Apart from this kind of motivation, it is also very important to ensure that ideas and suggestions from teachers are considered and implemented. Such practices build good relationship between the head teacher and the teachers and in return it builds confidence in them and reduces conflicts in the school organization.*

Furthermore, one of the heads of department (HoDs) during the focus group discussion stated the following;

*There is need to develop a culture of coming and reasoning together when faced with challenges. There should be support from the deputy head teachers and heads of department. A deputy head teacher is a professional person while the head teacher is under public relations and for that, HoD should work in a coordinated effort in order to come up with decisions that can be appreciated by everyone in the school community.*

Furthermore, another respondent stated that;

*We should provide forums and come up with different committees so that teachers could meet in school groupings to discuss issues that affect the*

*learners and then bring those on board so that collective decisions are established.*

One Teacher also suggested that;

*Teachers should be involved in decision making and head teachers should value their contributions on important matters affecting the school. It was further suggested that administrators should further have a consultative attitude and involve teachers in making decisions and encouraging team work at all levels. The head teacher should aim at establishing a trusting and collaborative climate where each individual is responsible for the welfare of the group and the success of the school*

Some teachers during a focused group discussion stated that;

*Teachers should not be working in fear but to be free to address their needs, and in case there are financial challenges, it is important for the administrators to elaborate on the reasons as to why such areas are not addressed and the immediate measures to be taken in addressing the challenge. This is done to avoid some suspicions.*

The interview guide questions 11 and 12 (see appendix 3 and 4) guided the researcher in eliciting of data for research question eleven and twelve. The participants who were mainly teachers and HoDs were asked for their understanding regarding the measures that can further enhance teachers' participation in decision making process.

The responses that the teachers from the five schools gave revealed that;

*The involvement of teachers in school decision making can motivate teachers to participate in various activities because they feel to be part and parcel of the programmes.*

For instance, upon being asked one teacher from a school under study said;

*Motivation is the force that drives us to do things; this is as a result of our individual needs being satisfied (or met) so that we have the aspiration to complete the task. Our level of motivation may determine the effort we put into our work and therefore increase the standard of the output in making decisions.*

The decision making at this level includes areas that affect the school as a whole, some of the examples includes, setting school goals; formulation of school policies; formulation of admission policy; compilation of school budget; personnel management and staff development programmes. All the HoDs responded to this strategy and, they had the following comments;

*The advantage with this type of strategy is that groups can generate a greater number of alternatives that are of a higher quality than the individual. Group decision making may also lead to a greater collective understanding of the eventual course of action chosen. This promotes a sense of ownership.*

Interview conducted with deputy heads and teacher's partially confirmed that;

*In one way or another, teachers' involvement in school decision-making depends largely on school leaders' ability and interest to divide and delegate tasks to teachers, train and involve them in all areas of decisions that affect them.*

In order to carry out these tasks effectively and efficiently, school leaders should be equipped with the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitude. As indicated in the finding of the study, the Ministry of Education, need to recommend that head teachers train in educational leadership currently started by the government with Chalimbana University formally known National In-service Training College (NISTCOL).

#### **4.4.2 Possible roles secondary school teachers can play to improve decision making.**

Given that most of the teachers were willing to participate in school decision making process and suggested strategies to ensure effective teacher participation in decision making were brought forth, it was imperative to establish both possible roles that teachers felt they could play in enhancing decision making process. Similar information was sought from secondary school head teachers through item number 12 and 13 from the interview schedule for the head teachers. Firstly, most teachers suggested direct involvement in decision making. In connection with this, a teacher noted that;

*To avoid challenges that are encountered, teachers should be given an opportunity to participate in making decisions in various school programmes so that it can be easier to implement the policies initiated in school.*

Other Heads of department indicated that;

*Teachers should play an important role in contributing to ideas on how they would want certain activities be revised and suggest the possible measures that can make the programmes more effective and convenient. Moreover, teachers know the kind of pupils and the problems they go through. Through such it may give them an opportunity to find the possible ways of addressing issues affecting both teachers and the learners.*

Some teachers during a focused group discussion stated that;

*It should start with the head teacher to embrace all the members of staff. She/he should open up to each and every teacher, by trying to incorporate them in the discussion process and giving them freedom to express their views. However, if such an arrangement is not there, then they will be working in fear and sometimes they will be backbiting the head teacher.*

One deputy head teacher emphasized that;

*Some head teachers do not engage teachers in matters affecting the running of the school, they are too ridged and close to themselves. Because of that it becomes difficult to monitor and supervise teachers. It is therefore important to be open and social, but fame in your dealings and in addition you need to know your teachers as well as their back grounds. If teachers are free to interact with the head teachers in school administrative decision making, it could be possible for the head teacher to know who is in support of the management systems.*

Through focus group discussion some participants expressed the measures below;

*Head teachers and teachers need to be trained in participatory methodologies. The programme train the teachers and school managers to work together in decision making process, in this way, both teachers and head teachers appreciate and complement each other's role. Teachers and the school management need to engage each other in decision making process by identifying, prioritising and finding local solutions to the local problems affecting the teachers, heads of department and the school programmes at large.*

#### **4.4.3 The policies to encourage teacher participation in decision making.**

The researcher understood that every organisation has its own unique culture which describes its working policies and one of the main predictors to achieve educational goals is by introducing democratic leadership style in schools and focus on involvement of teachers in decision making. It seems less likely that head teachers alone can successfully manage such diffuse and diverse educational demands without the help of teachers. One head mistress from a granted school attested as follows;

*In order to cope with dynamic changes and move towards strategic planning that characterize the management practice in schools, the task would be enhanced if teachers are involved in decision makings, thereby making the running of the school more committed, responsible and innovative.*

Educational leaders should promote forms of participation in decision making that increases women actual involvement in decision making concerning their duties and opportunities for the development of various activities. In addition, it also provide for more sharing on issues concerning the school management, particularly for women.

One of the policies to improve teachers' involvement in school decision is by encouraging SBCPD meetings where teachers are assigned various responsibilities that involve them in decision making. Some of the tasks they are involved in includes disciplinary cases for both staff and learners. One of the deputy head teachers had this to say;

*As administrators, it is important sometimes to be the last persons to decide by paving the way for the teachers to make decisions on how they wish to handle certain cases. Such may develop teachers' confidence and may lead to a good relationship between the teacher and the head teacher.*

Moreover, this study revealed that teacher involvement in school decision making was not been implemented in many schools. The monopoly exercised by some head teachers over the provision and management of schools had several negative consequences. They included failure to tap valuable ideas and issues related to accountability of resources, On the other hand, four teachers from a focused group discussion that was conducted reported that the decentralisation policy did not meet the desires of the teachers in decision making at school level. They claimed that;

*Some head teachers in these schools have too much power, such that teachers do not have an opportunity to air their grievances and to subsequently make decisions affecting them at school level. The great restriction of teachers to*

*participate in school policy formulation and decision making has an adverse effect on teacher performance, consequently affecting the learners.*

While the majority of the respondents in this study hold the view that teacher involvement in decision making necessitate a broad-based participation in the management of education with great emphasis placed on creativity and innovation at school level, however, it is clear from the findings that the support rendered to participation of teachers in decision making is not sufficient. The above findings seem to indicate that, the work relationship in such schools does not guarantee participative leadership where teachers have influence in some local policies that are initiated by the school management.

The findings revealed that the engagement of teachers in decision making was meant to develop a sense of local ownership and to promote more efficient management. During the interview session with one of the deputy head teachers from the secondary schools under study said that;

*It was hoped that since many decisions will be made collectively at school level, bureaucratic procedures that impede efficiency in the education system would be eliminated or minimised. And that when power is delegated to the teachers to take part in decision making at school level, it would result into good working relationship with enhanced learner performance.*

#### **4.4.4 The kind of support that teachers receive in school decision making process**

As mentioned earlier, secondary school teachers were asked if they were given enough support and encouragement to enable them participate in decisions making activities. This was done using question number 12 in the focus group discussion for secondary school teachers. Some teachers during a focused group discussion reviewed that,

*The most challenging part in decision making is that, at times administrators do not consider teachers' opinion and what is really frustrating is that, the reasons as to why such ideas are not taken, is not explained. Sometimes even when the school administrators know very well that departments have no teaching material, they tend to ignore them. It is in view of this that we feel that the school management do not adequately support the teachers in decision making;*

Similarly, other teachers explained that;

*The support is not there, because they just delegate what to do and we are mandated to implement without fail. It is also important to note that support*

*goes with motivation and if you are not given an opportunity to participate in school dealings, it means that you cannot be encouraged to work extra hard and it may lead to poor performance at both learner and teachers levels.*

## **4.5 Other Findings**

Apart from answering research questions, other questions were asked in the interview schedules both for head teachers and teachers in order to obtain more information on teachers' involvement in decision making. Therefore, other findings were presented as follows:

### **4.5.1 Good working environment**

Aside from the job scope itself, one factor that significantly influences how employees feel about work is the environment. Environment implies everything that forms part of the employee's involvement with the work itself. Such as the relationship with co-workers and supervisors, organisation culture and room for involvement in decision making. A good working environment is one of the measures that could further help to enhance teacher involvement in school decision making and makes employees feel good about coming to work and this provides motivation to sustain them throughout the day.

Under this theme the following were the responses from the teachers interviewed on the suggestions of improving teacher engagement in decision making;

*Transparency and open form of communication addresses the teachers need to feel that what they have to say has value and it is what makes teachers feel that they belong in the organisation. Work then becomes meaningful because teachers know that what they contribute affects the organisation that they are affiliated with. This also develops teachers' confidence and makes them to remain committed to the organisation goals.*

Still insisting on the aspect of teacher involvement and team work in decision making another head of department stated as follows;

*Teachers should be involved in decision making and also to value their contributions on important matters affecting the school. It was further suggested that administrators should further have a consultative attitude and engage teachers in coming up with appropriate decisions by promoting team work.*

Another suggestion that was made by the head teacher was;



*To give teachers a platform to air their views on what is leading to the poor learner performance in secondary schools. Recognition of teachers' views and their efforts during various activities can lead to motivation of staff and it might be a way to address challenges affecting schools in a collective manner.*

Apart from these suggestions given, other respondents had this to comment that;

*Head teachers should be encouraged to change their mind set and view teachers as an opportunity in decision making process. There is need to create a conducive environment where teachers are engaged to practice positive criticism if concrete solutions are to be found.*

The findings of the study revealed that it was therefore important to note that, teachers must go beyond classroom instructor. They must expand their role to include curriculum development, teacher evaluation, school improvement, leadership and research. One of the deputy head teachers pointed out that, as social beings, we naturally seek support from our peers and seek to belong to a group. Come tough times, the team should come together to deal with whatever problems are out there. This is where a sense of unit is evoked in the team and teachers will no longer just feel that they are working for themselves but towards something bigger than themselves as a team. All of these are crucial to the participatory decision making process.

#### **4.5.2 Continuous Professional Development (CPD)**

All the respondents acknowledged that, through CPD activities teachers can present and participate in decision making process and any school that is serious with raising achievement and morale cannot afford to operate without such activities. These programmes sharpen teachers' skills as well as keep their knowledge updated with current developments in their subject areas.

Adding to the suggestions that were given in response to the question; What measures or strategies could be put in place to boost teacher involvement in decision making, the deputy head suggested that;

*Teachers need to be part of the education system through Continuous Professional Developments (CPDs), making suggestions on how to prepare for learners. They should be involved in monitoring the progress of learners and find the best measures of addressing challenges affecting both teachers and learners.*

Supporting this statement, another HoD emphasised that;

*Through SBCPDs, some programmes to capacity build teachers can be discussed with divergent views and in the end a concrete solution can be found. For example, in Zambia we have a challenge of staffing in Zambian languages, natural sciences and mathematics. Through SBPD the school can train and orient more teachers to take up the challenge unlike waiting for the government to deploy staff.*

Another suggestion that was made by Heads of department from 3 schools was;

*To give teachers a platform to present their views on the factors affecting the smooth running of the school. For instance, the way teachers are selected for awards during commemoration days is only known by the head teachers and their deputies without the input from HoDs. However, the trend can change, where teachers who attend more CPDs and lesson study cycles are awarded through the credits they obtain upon attending professional meetings where they make various decisions.*

Teachers and head teachers were asked to mention some of the ways in which teacher participation can be improved. All the heads of department and 70% of the teachers acknowledged that the recognition of teachers and heads of department for their efforts by giving them an opportunity to select the deserving teachers during various activities was one of the measures listed to boost teacher participation in school decision making. Most of the heads of department interviewed through focus group discussion revealed that the situation in most of the schools did not give room for the teachers to participate in decision making.

The other response given by one of the heads of department was that;

*Teachers in Mansa district should be promoted on merit by engaging heads of departments to produce reports basing on their performance and not through corruption. The heads of departments normally has the records of teacher performance and such should be used as a litmus paper to establish who should be awarded. This can only be achieved once teachers are involved in participatory decision-making processes.*

She went further to say that;

*The responsible officers at the DEBS office should ensure that Head teachers practice good leadership as most teachers did not have morale due to bad and coercive leadership which destroys professional relationships between*

*administrators and teachers in schools. This can be done through regular monitoring, supervision and teacher engagements.*

In addition, through focus group discussions some HoDs attested that, specific trainings should also be enhanced to capacity build teachers on the relevance of teachers' involvement in school administrative decision making. This may strengthen the relationship between the head teachers and class teachers and may result in teachers' positive change as well as improved learner performance.

#### **4.6 Summary**

In chapter four, the research findings of this study based on the research questions and research objectives have been presented. The questions which the chapter attempted to answer were; (1) to what extent are teachers, views considered in administrative decision making in secondary schools in Mansa district? (2) What are the effects of not involving teachers in school level decision making in secondary schools in Mansa district? (3) What measures can help improve teachers' participation in decision making? Based on the three research questions, that have been presented in this chapter, the findings that were arrived at through the qualitative data set, strongly suggested that teacher involvement in decision-making was extremely low and this brought about a number of challenges with regard to decision making process and its implementation. Furthermore, the research findings revealed that a majority of the teachers were willing to participate in making decisions. Teachers felt that they could play important roles in making decisions as a whole which could guarantee effective implementation of suggested ideas to the management of the school system. In the next chapter, a discussion of the findings will be presented.

In this chapter, a summary of the main research findings as answers to the research questions has been presented. Furthermore, the study's recommendations and some suggestions on areas for future research have been presented. As a remainder, the main purpose of the study was to analyse teachers involvement in school administrative decision making, in selected secondary schools in Mansa district.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

### **5.0 Overview**

In this chapter, the researcher discussed in detail the findings of the study using the three main themes generated from the research objectives which are; the extent to which teachers' views are considered in school administrative decision making in secondary schools, measures that can help improve teacher's participation in decision making and effects of not involving teachers in school administrative decision making in secondary schools in Mansa district.

### **5.1 The extent to which teachers' views are considered in school administrative decision making in secondary schools of Mansa district.**

The findings of the study revealed that, teachers are involved in school administrative decision making in different disciplines such as staff council meeting, school based continuous professional programme and disciplinary affairs. This gives a platform for teachers to air their opinions and make decisions on matters affecting the school. The head teachers further stated that, they understand the important roles the teachers play in administrative decision making process since they are the major stake holders who are found at grassroots. The school head teachers have pointed out that they do involve their teachers in decision making where running of the school programmes is concerned. This came to light when the researcher asked the participants, the extent to which they involve their teachers in administrative decision making process. In response the participants indicated that, despite them being head teachers, they may not be competent in all the fields and this may call for them to engage the teachers with different specialities so that professionalism is enhanced at all levels.

This was also observed by the researcher during one of the departmental meeting that, teachers were involved in administrative decision making at school level. The researcher observed that teachers make suggestions to administrators through their heads of department, who later present the suggested information to the head teacher for him to analyse if the suggestions would help to improve the performance of the learners. The participation of teachers in the administration-decision making process was also observed by the researcher during staff-briefing where the head teacher asked the teachers to suggest the penalty that could be put in place to stop pupils from absconding classes without any concrete reason. At this point, the researcher was overwhelmed with the participation of teachers in proposing some possible measures that the administration can take to discipline the absentees. The researcher also observed that teachers are actively engaged in administrative decision making process even during staff briefing for they are given chance to contribute towards the development of the school. The findings of this study has also revealed that the running of an institution like a school cannot be done by a single person, but rather the

involvement of every member of staff. Furthermore, it was disclosed that head teachers ensured that schools run through committees and the members of such committees are teachers. Decisions are therefore, made from these committees and heads of department merely consolidate the decisions and make submission to the head teacher for approval.

## **5.2 Level of teacher involvement in school decision making process**

The study also reviewed that the level of teacher involvement in school administrative decision making process is limited. The level of involvement focuses on the interaction among school members as teams, groups or departments. The decision making area at this level of participation includes issues that mainly relate to functioning of groups, for example subject committee, supervision of members and other issues; extracurricular activity groups and production unit.

Through the focused group discussion for secondary school teachers. One of the deputy head teacher said that, the multidimensional approach to measuring the level of teachers participation in decision making revealed quite high actual participation in decisions concerning learners' and teachers' issues, but low levels of participation in managerial decisions. The discrepancy between the actual and desired levels of participation showed significant deprivation across all decision-making domain. Chapman (1990) emphasized that the active participation of teachers in decision making and planning is limited and teachers are regarded as decision implementers whose role is to adapt official plans to their classroom. Some teachers also argued that invitation to participate in issues to deal with finances and purchasing was not extended to them, making the situation worse for those who are merely class teachers. Other reasons indicated by respondents included mistrust and lack of confidence in the subordinates.

Most head teachers were not engaging teachers who were highly qualified and controversial but opted to work with less qualified staff who easily agree to whatever decision is made. This was evidenced from the responses they gave from item number 4 from the interview schedule for secondary school head teachers, which sought information on their views as to whether secondary school teachers were adequately involved in the decision making process. One head teacher lamented that; there are a lot of setbacks. The head teacher normally sidelines teachers with higher qualifications and opt to work with the less qualified staff who usually agree to whatever is decided and it becomes challenging to know whether they are practicing and implement what is beneficial to the learners and the entire school community.

## **5.3 Challenges encountered by teachers in decision making.**

The discoveries of the research in the forgoing discussion are supported by the findings of Lucey, (2008). which revealed that, teachers are not provided with enough opportunities to contribute or to fully participate in the decision-making process because decision-making is highly centralized with the head teachers and deputy heads being the main governing board of institution charged

with the responsibility of running a school. This was revealed by most teachers during a focus group discussion. Some teachers in Mansa district have no opportunity to present their challenges and sometimes head teachers do not respond to their needs, as a result teachers are frustrated and performance is also affected.

In contrast, other studies indicates that, teacher involvement in decision making should never be side-lined in any instance as this is of great significance in the attainment of school objectives, this has been supported by (Vann, 1988) who argues that, a strong involvement of grass root sources such as active involvement of the teachers and learners in decision-making is essential. Thus leaving out full teacher participation in the entire decision making process is likely to create a gap between the intended decision, the implemented decision and the achieved decision which may pose great challenges and negative effects on the consequently implemented programmes. This in the long run may make it difficult to produce learners who are fully equipped with skills, values, knowledge and attitudes necessary for economic and national development.

#### **5.4. Factors that hinders teachers' participation in decision making.**

The findings of this study has further disclosed that head teachers do involve their teachers in administrative of decision making process at school level, while on the other hand, the study has shown that teachers feel that they are not involved in administrative decision making process. They lament that some of their views are not implemented due to lack of resources in school. In addition, teachers who took part in the study argued that their head teachers do not involve them in administrative decision making processes. Teachers feel that head teachers do not pay attention to their views as they are regarded as juniors who are just supposed to be confined into preparing lesson plans and teaching the pupils. This was disclosed during the interviews which were conducted on teachers and heads of department. It was reviewed that head teachers just impose decisions on their teachers on how they want the school to be managed, forgetting the fact that if they want an effective running of the institution, every member should feel to be part of management team and this can only happen if the teachers are consulted before coming up with a decision. When teachers are consulted, they become part of management and they make sure they defend and implement the school goals whole heartedly because they know they are the decision makers themselves.

The discoveries of the research in the forgoing discussion are supported by the findings of Gemechu (2014) which revealed that teachers' involvement in some areas of school decision-making of secondary schools in general was unsatisfactory. The general trend was that, HoDs and teachers participated mostly in issues related to student disciplinary problems and least in financial matters. In addition, head teachers, deputy heads and senior teacher's involvement in encouraging

teachers' in school decision-making was found to be ineffective. Absence of participatory and democratic school leadership, lack of trust between teachers and head teacher, lack of training and support and absence of financial incentives were some of the factors that were found to have impeded teachers' involvement in school decision-making. It was thus concluded that teachers role in school decision-making have not been given due emphases in this study, This is likely to affect the overall activities of school in general and teaching learning process in particular.

Historical evidence regarding teacher's involvement in administrative decision making in education has shown that undemocratic administration and management of education and authoritarian leadership styles have persisted in some schools in Mansa district. This is in line with (Carmody, 2004) who pointed out that, since the colonial period the role of a teacher was to be a classroom manager responsible for student academic performance and daily behavior within the classroom. School matters outside classroom like policy planning, budgeting and decisions making traditionally were not related to teachers but to the school head Masters. Such traditional approaches in school management system has continued in most schools that were studied in Mansa district and that is an indication that most schools are not involving teachers in school decision making process.

Supporting the above ideas, Snelson (1990) stated that, the school head dictated its policy, exercised strict control over its organisation and discipline of teachers and students. Teachers had no opportunities to decide or make contribution to the running of the school. However, all decisions were made by the head master and teachers were expected to implement whether it was in their best interest or not. This trend was noted during the focus group discussion were some teachers viewed that most decisions were made by the head teachers without the involvement of teachers and that normally affects the implementation process.

From the discussion of the findings it was reviewed that the majority of secondary school head teachers in Mansa exhibited autocratic management styles in managing schools and supervising their subordinates. This is in line with Lungu (1990) who indicated that, dominance of autocratic management styles among school heads in the Zambian education system hinders teacher participation in decision making. School head teachers make decisions almost by themselves rather than involving teachers. Decisions are only made by the school head teachers while teachers and the other members of staff are expected to implement without any reservations. This tendency creates a lot of suspicion amongst teachers especially in the area of financial management and handling of disciplinary cases.

These findings are supported by Farrant (1990) who described the central role of the head teacher in the school in various ways as; educational administrator, leader, school supervisor or school

headmaster. These terms were used interchangeably and have lead head teachers to hold to more powers. The situation is that those in administration especially the head teachers still override the decisions that are made even if teachers participate in coming up with such decisions. Such undemocratic management styles, in most school hinders teachers' participation in decision making.

Just like what is tabulated in figure 4.3 on the response from the respondents, the head teachers does not give room to teachers to propose there opinion. This implies that teachers do not participate, however the head teacher command what should be done and teachers just follow what comes from the head teacher.

Furthermore, respondents were asked to give other factors, if any, which can deter the involvement of teachers in school decision making. One of the factors is lack of financial incentives. This indicates that there is a poor rewarding system to teachers. However, Davis and Newstorm (1989) put that employee participation is more successful where employees feel they have a valid contributions to make, it will be valued by the organization, and they will be rewarded for it.

Language problem is also another factor that affect teachers' involvement in school decision making. Regarding this, the interview conducted with head teachers and teachers also reveals that some of the teachers come from different region of the country. As a result, they lack to communicate easily in the official language. That is because language problem is one of the factors that affect the involvement of teachers in decision making.

### **5.5 Effects of not involving teachers in school administrative decision making.**

The second objective was to investigate the effects of not involving teachers in school administrative process were decision making is concerned.

The findings show that if teachers are not actively involved in administrative decision making process, then the administration is planning to fail. This is because no member of staff would want to implement something one was not part of in the first place. The study has noted that teachers are not consulted by the head teachers, and this came to light when one of the teachers during a focus group discussion lamented that sometimes they even feel worthless because even when they have good ideas, their head teacher just shut them up. Furthermore, the study has also revealed that it is difficulty for teachers to be actively involved in decision making process at school level because the head teachers position themselves to be intelligent and wisest of all. Teachers in Mansa district stated that their views were not considered for they were never addressed. They complained that each term, teachers are requested to present departmental budgets but to their surprise head



teachers do not approve the budgets and this affects the supply of teaching and learning materials in school.

These findings are supported by the discoveries of (Lucey, T. A., 2008) who found that the active participation of teachers in decision making and planning is limited and teachers are regarded as decision implementers whose role is to adapt official plans to their classroom. In addition, Lungu, G. F. (1990) found that teachers in Zambia are not actively involved in administrative decision making process at school level because decision-making in Zambia is highly centralized with the top management team (head teacher and deputy heads) being the main governing board of institution charged with the responsibility of running a school.

This was also disclosed by one of the deputy head teachers who took part in the study that teachers are the people who have a direct linkage with the learners. So the impact of not involving the teachers in decision making process at school level might lead to frustration on the part of the teacher which may negatively affect the core of business which is teaching and learning. This acknowledgement of the effects which comes as a result of not actively engaging the teachers in school decision making by the head teacher showed how this can affect the school as a whole. During a focus group discussion with the deputy head teachers, it was disclosed that when teachers are not involved in school decision making, they develop a feeling of dissatisfaction, which may greatly affect the performance of the learners in school. Since teachers are the ones who are linked to the pupils at school level, it is very important to engage them in school decision making process.

In this research, it was further revealed that Secondary school head teachers do not actively involve their teachers when it comes to administrative decision making process at school level. This resulted into teachers in Mansa district to consider their head teachers as rivals because they think that head teachers are just there to impose everything on them. Furthermore, the research has disclosed that the effects of not involving teachers in decision making at school level can negatively affect the smooth running of the school programmes, not only that but it can also has an in-direct negative impact on the teaching and learning process because teachers are frustrated. The researcher has also noted that, if teachers are not involved in administrative decision making process at school, this can result in conflict between teachers and their head teachers.

Contrary to the above findings Leithewood and Steinbach (1993) stated that, head teachers play a critical role in establishing and maintaining school participative decision– making. The duo further argued that “head teachers, who develop a positive school climate, give an opportunity to teachers’ to collaborate and joint planning through a greater involvement in decision–making”. This section now turns to a consideration of the specific role of the head teacher in developing and sustaining participative approach to decision– making within school.

Another study contrary to the above findings is that of Smylie et al (1996) noted that teachers typically have more complete knowledge of their work management; so if teachers participate in decision making, decision will be made with a better pool of information. Teacher participation is thought to give school administrators access to critical information closer to the source of many problems of schooling, such as the classroom. Increased access to and use of this information are thought to improve the quality of curriculum and instructional decision.

### **5.6 The benefits of teacher involvement in decision making process**

The findings above are in line with what Aytac (2000) found, the researcher discovered that a high morale increases a sense of belonging to a school, decreases absenteeism, increase efficiency decisions' and quality which are the positive effects of teachers' participation in decision making process. In addition, high acceptance of change, increase in teamwork and decrease in disagreements are the positive effects of teachers' participation in decision making process. Furthermore Aytac (2000) disclosed that, teachers' participation in decision making enhances school's atmosphere and increase loyalty towards shared decision making. This also results in maintaining an efficient discipline, increased teachers intercommunications, increased students' motivations which attracts and keeps qualified teachers in school.

This is also supported by Ozdemir and Cemaloglu (2000) who noted that teachers who participate in decision making process, would have increased motivation levels. Participation in decision making can also increase organizational learning environment in schools. Teachers, who participate in decision making process, try to balance their individual goals and organizational goals. Participating in decision making process can cause individual satisfaction. Teachers, who participate in decision making process, tend to create a more qualified educational environment. Teachers' motivation levels can increase if they participate in decision making process. On the other hand, lack of teacher involvement in school decision making affects teacher mobility. They may also suffer from unjust behaviour by being unable to participate in decision making and this may cause their organizational commitments to decrease.

The findings of the study has further indicated that teachers' views in decision making at school level are valued. The participants also noted that teachers are the people on the ground while head teachers spend much of the time in their office doing paper work. Therefore, if teachers' views when making any decision at school level cannot be heard then management teams may be failing in their duties. This came to light when the head teachers who participated in the study stated that teachers are allowed to walk into the head teachers' office if they have any suggestion to make on the running process of the school. The head teachers indicated that they do engage teachers on different levels and forum to ensure that there is active involvement of teachers for effective

delivery of their duties for the benefit of the learners and the school as a whole. The head teacher disclosed that there are different levels at which they involve teachers in school decision making. The finding of this study is in fact in agreement with that of High and Achilles (1989). They also reported that teachers more involved in curriculum and instruction efforts. Similarly, Aggarwal (1993) points out that, "... individual and cooperative efforts by teachers to decide when, how and what to teach, to revise courses, select content, plan units and produce teaching aids has become a common practice" (p.196

Furthermore, the participants disclosed that sometimes teachers have different forums where they meet and discuss issues concerning the school. For example, School Based Continuous Professional Development (SBCPD) meetings, where a number of issues that affect teachers in their professional matters are discussed. Sometimes it's through school councils where issues that affect teachers' work are tabled.

The study also has revealed that in most cases head teachers come to just inform the teachers if there is an urgent matter which should be attended to by all members of staff. This was revealed when the participants were responding to a follow-up question on teachers' views consideration when it comes to decision making at school level. The head teachers further disclosed that there was no harm in them taking views from the teachers as long as the proposed views are timely and good for the management of the school. To the contrary, the findings of the study has further shown that not all decisions made by teachers are taken on, the head teachers have the authority to take note of relevant ideas for the benefit of both the learners and a teachers. Furthermore, the participating head teachers noted that in managing schools, there should be room to practice non-participative leadership style so as to safeguard the interest of the organisation.

The study findings also revealed that important decisions are made by group than individuals. This is because there is great deal of information available in a participative decision-making process. Supporting this idea, Chanda (cited in Legesse, 2008) stated that, "group decision would become particularly appropriate for non-programmed decisions because these decisions are complex and few individuals have all knowledge and skills necessary to make the best decisions" (p.10). This implies that groups can make higher quality decision than individuals because different ideas come together from different groups and select the best form the given alternatives.

Other studies shows that, it is not always that, teachers may be involved directly in decision making with the school management but in some cases may be participating in school affairs through their departments or committees. This has been highlighted by Vann, (1988) who laments

that, 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. This was in line with the research findings where a good number of respondents indicated that, the involvement of teachers in making decision stimulates teachers to get committed and work to support the aspiration of the entire management.

### **5.7 Measures that can help improve teacher's participation in decision making.**

Research objective three was addressed by research question three as follows; the measures that can be put in place to help teacher's participation in decision making process at school level.

The findings of the study show that there are a number of measures that school head teachers in Mansa district have to put into consideration so as to improve teacher involvement in decision making. Like the teachers lamented during the focus group discussion, the head teachers should start embracing change and individual difference amongst the teacher. The findings of this study has also shown that it is only when head teachers start embracing change and understanding the individual differences would make teacher participation in decision making improve . Supporting this idea, Mangunda (2003) also stated that, participative management ensures that members in organization take ownership of the decision, and are willing to defend decision taken through collaborative means. This means that participative management results in a great sense of commitment and ownership of decisions. The school administrators should form more committees in the school so that every member of staff is not left out in decisions that are undertaken. Bringing the teachers together to actively participate in decision making processes at school level will help develop a feeling of inclusiveness in the school organization. The study has further indicated that running an organization such as a school involves maximum consultation from various stakeholders who are directly involved in the delivery process of teaching and learning such as HoDs and teachers.

The study findings also revealed that one of the measures the school administrators can put in place is to ensure that ideas and suggestions from teachers are considered and implemented. Such practices help build good relationship between the head teacher and the teachers. This in return builds confidence in them and reduces conflicts in the school organization. The school administration should not overlook teachers' decision and should also motivate the teachers by considering their ideas when making decision. Motivation of teachers is one of the measures which head teachers can also put in place to ensure that teachers actively participate in decision making process.

Moreover, one factor that significantly influences how teachers feel about work is the environment. Environment implies everything that forms part of the teachers' involvement in all the process of decision making at the place of work such as, the relationship with co-workers and supervisors, organisation culture and room for involvement in decision making. A good working environment is one of the measures that could further help to enhance teacher involvement in school decision making and makes employees feel comfortable when reporting for work and this provides motivation to sustain them throughout the day. Transparency and open form of communication address the teachers need and make them feel that their contributions are valuable, This also make them feel that they belong to the organisation or they are part of the management team and when it is like that, work becomes meaningful because the teachers know that what they contribute affects the organisation that they are affiliated to.

In agreeing with the above findings, Ivancevich and Kono (2002) suggests a guideline for a leader to improve the quality of decision making in groups. This creates an environment in which the group members feel free to participate and express their opinions. Therefore, include all the concerned bodies and people who can provide the needed additional information relevant to the problem and involve those individuals whose acceptance and commitment are important.

Supporting the above ideas, Robbins (2003:146-147) lists the following methods by which school administrators can build trust in their employees and explained each of them as follows: a) practice openness: keep people informed, make certain criteria on how decisions are made, explain the rational for your decision, and fully disclose relevant information; b) Be fair: be objective, impartial in performance appraisal and pay attention to equity perceptions in reward distributions; c) Speak your feelings: if you share you feeling, others will see you as real and human. They will know who you are and their respect for you will increase. d) Tell the truth: you must be perceived as someone who tells the truth; e) show consistently: people want predictability. Take time to think about your values and beliefs and then let them consistently guide your decision; f) Fulfil your promise: keep your words and commitment, promise made must be promise kept; g) Maintain confidence: people trust those who are discreet and up on whom they can rely; h) Demonstrate confidence: develop the admiration and respect of others by demonstrating technical and professional ability. Thus, school head teachers should strive to develop a trusting relationship among all the stake holders in the school.

### **5.7.1 Continuous Professional Development (CPD)**

It should be noted that CPD activities are very important, and any school that is serious with raising teacher involvement and morale cannot afford to operate without them (Forrest and Parkay, 2001). These programmes sharpen teachers' skills as well as keep their knowledge updated with

current developments in their subject areas and how to address the challenges they go through. Banda (2002) found that the lack of CPD in schools lowered the performance and participation of teachers in decision making. Therefore CPDs should be enhanced in most schools. This was in line with the response of one Head teacher who mentioned that 'one of the contributing factors to low participation in decision making was that some teachers did not know their job because they graduated from the mushrooming colleges of education which did not have proper selection procedures.

The major suggestions that were made to boost involvement among teachers in Mansa District were to improving the working environment and involving teachers in various school activities. From the study, it was established that one of the ways that was suggested to boost teacher involvement in decision making was by encouraging school managers to practice good leadership and support their teachers. This is very cardinal in any organisation as Perumal (2011) agreed by contending that the key to improving teacher participation in decision making is building a positive school atmosphere that would accommodate teachers view and opinions. When teachers' views are adopted, teachers are happy and they fully support and implement the school programmes.

Further, Hoy and Miskel (1987) posited that when a conducive school environment exists and teacher involvement is high, teachers feel good about each other and at the same time they feel a sense of belonging of their work. As such, interpersonal relationships are very important in every organisation as the state of every relationship determines the involvement in decision making that someone has in that environment.

The majority of the respondents suggested that school head teachers should be engaging teachers in matters affecting the school. 65% of teachers indicated that they were not involved in decision making. Further all the Deputy Head teachers and the HoDs also suggested that the government should consider formulating policies that which would compile head teachers to engage teachers in decision making in the district.

It can therefore be concluded that most schools have not been engaging teachers in decision making especially on issues to do with finances. The findings show that all the respondents gave possible strategies to promote involvement in decision making among teachers. Head teachers in Mansa District should start implementing the measure to promote participative leadership.

## **5.8 Summary**

The study established that; teachers were eager to participate in decision-making at school level though, there were a number of factors that lead to non-involvement of teachers in decision

making. Therefore, possible strategies to enhance teacher involvement were suggested thereby providing justification for this study.

The findings of this study are in line with the studies of other researchers, study conducted in Nigeria by Olayemi and Olorunsola (2011) indicated that teachers enjoyed active participation in administrative decision making process which in turn had a positive impact on the performance of learners because teachers felt they were part of the whole system. Involvement of teachers in decision making shows that they are reservoirs with experience and knowledge that can be tapped.

The findings of objective two of this study on the effects of not involving teachers actively in decision making process at school level are in line with the findings of Cambone and Wyeth (1992) who indicated that there can be conflicts if the school administration is not being considerate on how decisions are made, as this would create conflicts, between head teachers and teachers. The emphasis should not be on who has the greater chances to be acknowledged but have a fair play ground regarding who would participate and who should not. If not considered there can be also confusion amongst teachers on the final decision authority.

Another study supporting the findings of this research is that of Smylie et al (1996) who found that the willingness to participate in school decision-making was significantly influenced by the relationship between teachers and the head teachers. Teachers who were open, cooperative and supportive to the head teachers were more willing to participate in decision making process. The school management with a higher level of perceived involvement in decision making process has a significant higher level of job satisfaction and job commitment than those who are not engaged in decision making process. He further alluded that once teachers in school get involved in school issues such as, resource allocation, budgeting and procurement leads to reduced conflicts and improved productivity.

## **CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.0 Overview**

This final chapter is an attempt to show that the research questions raised in chapter one have been answered. The researcher has also endeavoured to show that the gap in knowledge that was identified during the literature review has been filled. In this chapter efforts have been made to remind the reader of the purpose of the study and then a summary of the main research findings as answers to the research questions has been presented. The researcher has also presented the recommendations and some suggestions on areas for future research and interventions since some of the findings may require further research.

### **6.1 Conclusions**

The objective of this study were; to investigate the extent to which teachers' views are considered in administrative decision making in secondary schools of Mansa district; examining the effects of teachers' involvement in administrative decision making in secondary schools of Mansa district and also to suggest measures that could help improve teachers' participation in administrative decision making. In line with the study objectives which mirrored the research questions, the following conclusions were made;

The study established that the majority of secondary school teachers were not involved in the school decision making process. They noted that their role has been mainly to receive the already developed decisions and then implement in their different schools. The majority of respondents further indicated that the selection criteria of the few teachers involved in the decision making process was not well known by most teachers. They felt that the policies and activities that were developed, hardly represented their views since there was poor and inadequate representation of secondary school teachers in decision making teams.

The findings of the study revealed that it was not always that, teachers' views were considered by the school administration when it comes to decision making, it was stated that their views were moderately involved meaning in some instances they were involved while in most cases they were overridden by the school administrator. It was also stated that, in some cases teachers were not involved in decision making because some matters required agent attention hence teachers were not being consulted.

The participants further indicated that they experienced various challenges when implementing the developed programmes. The vast majority of the secondary school teachers emphasized that the challenges they encountered when implementing the developed decisions and activities were due



to lack of full consultation between the school management and the practicing teachers in secondary schools.

With regards to the important roles that secondary school teachers can play in the decision making process, the majority of respondents felt that as many teachers as possible should be involved at all stages of decision making were they should undertake various roles in developing the activities. Most respondents emphasized that decisions should not be developed in the absence of practicing teachers and then impose it on them. Teachers should be central in the process of decision making and this will enable them to understand the principles of various programmes and its work for easy and better implementation of the developed plans.

The study also reviewed that, if teachers were fully involved and their views considered, it would improve school management system and motivated work force. This positively affected the development of school organisations. It was also concluded that participative decision making was preferred by teachers, Heads of Department and Deputy Head teachers. This was to uphold the principle of democracy. Decision making on the contrary was not effectively implemented because in certain instances, some decisions required immediate attention and were passed without teachers' attention.

The findings also indicated that, if teachers are not involved in administrative decision making, this would have harsh repercussions on the school management bearing the fact that, teachers are the ones who are at the grassroots hence they understand the needs of the school namely the required teaching and learning materials, budgeting in the various departments and many other activities. As for the school head teachers are most of the time confined in their offices.

Furthermore, the study established that most of the teachers in the participating schools were not consulted in in decision making. Therefore, teachers desired more involvement in critical issues as mentioned above. They wanted to be consulted before a decision is taken. This is a critical decision making area. They were keen to be involved or rather consulted before a decision on procurement was finalized. The study established that teachers further wanted their views to be heard and acknowledged by the school system.

## **6.2. Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusion arrived at, the following recommendations has been awarded:

1. The study recommends the need for teachers to be actively involved in decision-making in their schools to encourage, motivate and utilize their wide range of experience and personal

characteristics, and capability. In order to promote teachers involvement in school decision-making, the school head teachers together with teachers ought to: - Provide meaningful encouragement as well economic incentives to teachers with exemplary performance both in their teaching activity and in their involvement. - Provide proper orientation on the right, duties and responsibilities of individual teachers in each areas of decision-making and involve them to bring a change in teaching learning process and other related issues of school activities.

2. The school decision making process should be participatory in nature where teachers and school administrators should be actively and adequately involved in the process. This is likely to ensure that teachers have positive attitudes towards the changes resulting in an effective programme implementation process.
3. The majority of secondary school teachers felt that school administrators had lost touch with what was happening in schools. Therefore, it is necessary that administrators be in constant touch with the teachers especially through extensive research, adequate communication channels and making visits to the class teachers. This may enable them develop activities that are flexible to be used by all teachers depending on the learners needs and different school environment.
4. All colleges of education and the Universities to scale up training teachers in Education Management students. This would enable them to be more efficient and will encourage participative leadership in our education system.
5. To promote management of secondary schools through sub-committees and Departments for all teachers by involving them in the day today running of the school. Head teachers to embrace democracy as a principle in the general administration and management of schools.
6. It is important for the school head teacher to quickly explain to its subordinates, such as heads of department and deputy head teachers on why certain decisions taken are not implemented despite the appreciation of teachers input. Failure to explain the reason why some programmes are not taken could result in negative attitude towards work among the teachers.
7. Some teachers and heads of department recommended departments to come up with a deliberate policy of making it easy to involve teachers who are not in administrative positions to be in school committees so that they familiarise themselves with matters that affect the running of departments and how best they could be presented to the school administration without disrupting the school system.
8. The study recommends teacher's empowerment in decision making. This implies that teachers need the opportunity and space to participate in decision making at a level that is

beyond the classroom. Such involvement leads to teachers' creativity, contributing to the running of their schools.

9. As shown in the findings of the study, absence of participative and democratic leadership style was mentioned as one of the constraints in involving teachers in school decision making. To alleviate this problem, the school leaders have to treat all teachers equally regardless of their sex, experience, academic qualification, religion and ethnicity. There is need to practice various leadership styles depending up on teacher's needs, experiences, maturity level along with the organizational objectives.
10. School head teachers are strongly advised to involve teachers in preparing school plan so that teachers can have a say on the overall school plan. In addition, the school leaders need to communicate, involve and give clear information to teachers on the issues related with income generation and school budget and school building to develop the sense of transparency between teachers and school leaders.

### **6.3 Areas for future research.**

This study was only carried out among selected secondary schools of Mansa district. Related studies can be done in other geographical areas not covered in this study. A larger sample of teachers can be used.

The main focus was on secondary school teacher's involvement in decision making. It did not establish the position of other key stakeholders such as the parents, PTA members, standard officers to mention but a few on their role in school decision making. It would be interesting to find out the extent to which other key stakeholders were involved in the school administrative decision making process.

This study is not complete. It has just acted as a foundation for other studies on programmes that are in the country and the world over which are trying to provide access and participation of different stakeholders in school decision making process. However, there is still need to conduct more research on education decision making programmes in Zambian schools so as to find the best ways to provide an inclusive leadership and quality education system through decision making process. Some of the areas for further research in decision making are;

- i. The level at which female teachers participate in decision making process in Zambian Schools.
- ii. To ascertain the relationship that exists between parents and teachers participation in school decision making.

- iii. To establish the attitudes of district education board secretaries and primary schools towards devolution of powers to democratic governance system through local government.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix I: Interview Schedule for Head Teachers**

Good morning/afternoon, my name is Friday Mucheka, pursuing a Master of Education in Educational Management at the University of Zambia in collaboration with Zimbabwe Open University. I am here to collect data for my research on the topic “An analysis of teacher’s involvement in school administrative decision making in selected secondary schools of Mansa district. “Could you kindly share with me your opinions and views about the topic? The information you will provide is purely for academic purposes. With your permission, I would like to use a voice recorder so that I can capture all the important information that you will share with me.

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What are your views about teachers’ involvement in school decision making?
2. To what extent do you allow teachers to participate in different decision Making actives in your school?
3. To what extent are teachers views considered as they participate in school decision making actives?
4. How is the level of teacher involvement in school decision making process?
5. How do you react to criticisms from your teachers when it comes to decision making?
6. How does the involvement of teachers in school decision making process impact teaching quality.
7. What challenges do you encounter when involving teachers in school decision making?
8. In your opinion, what factors hinders teacher participation in decision making?
9. What are the benefits of involving teachers in school level decision making?
10. What kind of encouragement do you provide to increase their participation?
11. What role do you play as head teacher, in order to make environment conducive for teachers to be more participative in decision –making?
12. What school policies are you implementing to enhance teachers’ participation in decision making?
13. What measures do you suggest that can further enhance teachers’ participation in decision making process?

**Thank you for your participation**

## **Appendix II: Interview Schedule for Deputy Head Teachers**

Good morning/afternoon, my name is Friday Mucheka, pursuing a Master of Education in Educational Management at the University of Zambia in collaboration with Zimbabwe Open University. I am here to collect data for my research on the topic “An analysis of teacher’s involvement in school administrative decision making in selected secondary schools of Mansa district.” Could you kindly share with me your opinions and views about the topic? The information you will give me will be treated with due confidence and will only be used for study purposes. In addition to taking notes, I would like to ask for permission if I can use a voice recorder so that I can capture all the important information that you will share with me.

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What is your view about teacher participation in school decision making process?
2. To what extent are the teachers allowed to participate in different decision making actives in your school?
3. In your opinion, in what areas of decision making are you actively involved?
4. To what extent are your views considered as you participate in different school decision making actives?
5. How is the level of teacher involvement in school decision making process?
6. In your view, should the participation of secondary school teachers be increased in the decision making process?
7. What factors do you think hinders teacher participation in decision making?
8. What are some of the effects of not involving teachers in decisions making?
9. What are the benefits of involving teachers in school level decision making?
10. How does the involvement of teachers in the school decision making impact teaching quality.
11. What are some of the policies are you implementing to encourage teacher participation in decision making?
12. What role do you play as deputy head, in order to make environment conducive for teachers to be more participative in decision –making?
13. What suggestions do you have for the improvement of teachers’ participation in school decision making process?

**Thank you for your participation**

## **APPENDIX: III**

### **Focus group discussion guide for head of department (HoD)**

I am a post graduate student pursuing a Master of Education (Educational Management) at the University of Zambia in collaboration with Zimbabwe Open University. I am conducting a research on, “the extent to which teachers’ are involvement in school administrative decision making in selected secondary schools of Mansa district.” Kindly spare few minutes to respond to the interview, and the information you will provide will be purely for research and will be used as such.

### **FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS**

1. What do you understand by the term administrative school decision making?
2. What are your views on teachers’ involvement in school decision making?
3. To what extent do you participate in different school decision making actives?
4. How is the level of teacher involvement in school decision making process?
5. According to your opinion, in what areas of decision making are you actively engaged?
6. To what extent are your views considered as you participate in different school decision – making actives?
7. What are some of the constraints do you face in decision making at school level?
8. How does your head teacher react to your criticisms when it comes to decision making?
9. How does the involvement of teachers in the school decision making process impact teachers’ performance.
10. What are some of the benefits of involving teachers in school decision making?
11. What support system does your school administration provide, to enhance teacher participation in decision making?
12. What role do you play as HOD, in order to make the environment conducive for teachers to be more participative in decision –making?
13. What are some of the measures do you suggest for the improvement of teachers’ participation in school decision making?

**Thank you for your participation**

## **Appendix IV: Focus Group Discussion Guide for Teachers**

Good morning/afternoon, my name is Friday Mucheka, pursuing a Master of Education in Educational Management at the University of Zambia in collaboration with Zimbabwe Open University. I am here to collect data for my research on the topic “An analysis of teacher’s involvement in school administrative decision making in selected secondary schools of Mansa district. “Could you kindly share with me your opinions and views about the topic? The information you will provide is purely for academic purposes. With your permission, I would like to use a voice recorder so that I can capture all the important information that you will share with me.

### **FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS**

1. What do you understand about the term, decision making in a school setup?
2. Why is it important to engage teachers in school decision making process?
3. To what extent do you participate in school decision making?
4. How is the level of teacher involvement in school decision making process?
5. According to your opinion, in what areas of decision making do you actively participate?
6. To what extent are your views considered as you participate in different school decision – making actives?
7. What are some of the benefits of teacher participation in school decision making?
8. What challenges do you encounter when it comes to decision making at your school?
9. What consequences are likely to be there, when you are not involved in school decision making?
10. How does teacher involvement in school decision making affect learner performance?
11. How does the head teacher react when you stand to criticise some decisions made by the top leadership?
12. What measures do you suggest can help improve teachers’ participation in decision making?
13. What support do you get from the head teacher in enhancing teachers involvement in decision making?

**Thank you for your participation**