

Intervention Measures To Ensure Participatory Decision Making By Teachers In Mbare- Hatfield District Primary Schools

John Tenha, Tichaona Mapolisa

Zimbabwe Open University, Faculty of Education.
P. O. Box MP 1119, Mount Pleasant, Harare, Zimbabwe. PH 263 242 793003/2.
jenha@gmail.com & tenhaj@zou.ac.zw

Zimbabwe Open University, Department of Research, Innovation and Technology Transfer,
P. O. Box MP 1119, Mount Pleasant, Harare, Zimbabwe. +263785306351/ +263242251890.
tichmap@gmail.com & mapolisat@zou.ac.zw

Abstract: The educational landscape comprises both autocratic and inclusive administrators. Inclusive administrators engage teachers in decision making unlike autocratic administrators who make unilateral decisions. Successful engagement of teachers in decision making is possible when there exist intervention measures that allow the involvement of teachers in decision making. These are absent in many Zimbabwean schools resulting in low pass rates. This prompted this study where the researcher analysed the intervention measures related to teacher decision making in Zimbabwean primary schools. The researcher used the quantitative research approach and survey research design to conduct this study. Simple random sampling was used to select 50 primary school teachers and ten school heads from Mbare-Hatfield District of Harare in Zimbabwe. Structured self-administered closed-ended questionnaires were administered to teachers, while structured closed-ended interviews were administered to teachers. Tables and figures were used to present researchers' biodata and actual research findings. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse data. Teacher input has a tremendous impact on students' academic achievement. The research asserts that teachers' performance is directly influenced by the school head's leadership preferences and that involving teachers in school decision-making processes has a positive, lasting impact on school performance. The formulation of school policies is done by school heads in most of the schools. Few teachers were involved in crafting policies in their schools. The leadership preferences by school heads play a significant role in determining whether teachers have opportunities to partake in decision making activities at school. Teachers need to be staff developed and they regard this as an important intervention measure that aids teacher participatory decision making since it develops their instructional, curricular, administrative and leadership competencies, knowledge, and skills. It also develops teachers understanding of school activities thus resulting in knowledgeable staff who can proffer constructive ideas that assist in the day-to-day function of schools. Staff development is crucial in schools as it enables informed decision making by teachers. It is a way of capacitating teachers with knowledge and skills to make informed decisions and improve classroom performance. Croft et al. (2010) [1] argue that when staff development is supported by the school head and well implemented, this creates a powerful lever that increases learner performance. Enlightened teachers are likely to make decisions that help schools develop and improve learner academic outputs, outcomes, and societal, national, and global impact. In that regard, staff developing teachers is an important intervention measure to their decision making. Creating work enabling environments is crucial in schools. The study concluded that the idea of teamwork is not new to schools but is not given value by school heads as an intervention measure that boosts teacher participation in decision making. Heads promote individual achievements at the expense of team efforts. It also concluded that the choice of a leadership style by school heads is a determining factor on how teachers participate in crucial school decision making activities. Another conclusion was that there is very little if any staff development activities in schools. In addition, teachers are motivated by praise, especially when recognised for outstanding performance and decisions. Last, positive school environments pave way to teacher participatory decision making in crucial school programmes. The study recommended that school heads should be trained by mentors from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Schools or other expert external agents on the importance and benefits of teamwork in schools. Another recommendation from the study was that school heads should adopt leadership styles that are forward looking, participatory and progressive in nature and practise that in schools. In addition, teacher participation needs to be active, recognised, meaningful, and effectively improve their skills and abilities, so that they in turn benefit learners. The other recommendation was that school heads need to create conducive teaching and learning environments that enable teachers to participate in school decision making willingly and voluntarily. Finally, there is need school heads and teachers to define the parameters mutually and clearly for staff development in schools by candidly identifying individual training needs so that teachers are staff developed in areas relevant to their jobs. Eventually, study recommended that further research needs to be carried out by other researchers from similar and different settings within and without Zimbabwe to examine how teacher participation in decision making is enacted at secondary school level.

Key words: decision making; intervention measure; participatory decision making; school environment,

1.0 Introduction

Much as the corporate world has realised that the input of valued employees can greatly benefit a company, the educational landscape is also shifting from autocratic administrators making unilateral decisions to inclusive administrators who allow teachers to participate in the daily functions and policy-making procedures to benefit schools. Directly involving teachers in the decision-making process has many positive impacts on both the school and the teachers, which are then reflected in the

performance levels of learners. The availability of intervention measures that ensure teacher participation in decision making make it possible for schools to experience the benefits of teacher participation. Participatory interventions increase workers' ownership of activities in their organisations as they see themselves as part of the success of their organisations. With measures in place that allow teacher participation in decision making, effective ways of implementing programmes can be found. Sukirno & Siengthai (2011)[2] show the

importance of teacher participation when they posit that teacher participation is fundamental to the success of schools especially when educational changes are being made in schools. Thus, intervention measures to participatory decision making enhances school instructional performance. The measures that enable teacher participation help increase the commitment of teachers to their jobs and in releasing teacher potential. In a study conducted by Mualuko et al. (2009) [3] on the extent of teacher involvement in decision making in relation to what the teachers desired, it was noted that teachers participated less than they desired. Teachers want to participate in decision making in schools thus intervention measures need to be in place that allow teachers to take part in decision making. With teachers in Zimbabwe becoming highly educated because of the increased access to the many universities in the country, the ideas, and contributions they make cannot be overlooked (Mbera, 2015) [4]. Their contributions help in the improvement of quality education in schools. The rural-urban migration in Zimbabwe has resulted in schools becoming large which in turn increased the leadership tasks of school heads and the complexity of their jobs. Somech (2010) [5] advocates that the challenges facing schools today are too much to be solved by lone individuals. It thus needs shared leadership with teachers participating in decision making for successful school instructional performance. Shared leadership taps the varied knowledge and skills in different individuals for the benefit of the learners and the school. Shared leadership shows that knowledge is not concentrated on an individual. It thus signals the existence of intervention measures that allow teacher participation in decision making. Without measures to allow teacher participation, school optimum performance will not be realised and in turn a continued trend of low pass rates will be experienced. Leadership, as a social process which involves leaders seeking the participation of other members to achieve organizational goals, calls for the involvement of teachers in decision making to improve learner academic performance, teacher motivation and improved school performance. School heads determine the climate of schools through their choice of leadership styles (Mbera, 2015) [4]. It is thus upon school heads that they create conducive school environments since they are the ones who occupy the highest school official positions. Through their leadership styles, school heads can either encourage or hinder positive climates. Virtuous leadership is critical for the improvement of schools. This is characteristic of the democratic or inclusive leadership style which allows for positive climates in schools. Such school environments encourage the participation of teachers in decision making. Schools across the world were established to fulfil the needs of people educationally. Low pass rates are a sign that schools are losing the essence of why they were established. Egbe & Ushie (2019) [6] cites poor leadership disposition as one of the major causes to declining educational systems. As teachers are main actors in the teaching and learning process in schools (Kingdon & Teal, 2003) [7], they need to be actively involved in matters that concern instructional activities. This is lacking in Zimbabwean primary schools as the school heads do not acknowledge the important contributions teachers make in schools.

There are no opportunities for teachers to participate in making decisions for the development of the schools. School heads still carry the old belief of being the most knowledgeable people in schools. The heads have a 'my school mentality'. This has resulted in them failing to tap the knowledge and skills in teachers for the benefit of schools. The effects are low pass rates. Teacher participation in decision making is an important element in the education system for the success of curriculum implementation. With the introduction of the new curriculum by the government in Zimbabwean schools, it needs teachers' involvement if it is to bear fruits. This however appears not forthcoming as attention by school heads is on the curriculum implementation aspect than at the intervention measures that ensure the success of curriculum implementation. This lack of collaborative effort by the elements of the school system has led to low learner academic outcomes in Mbare Hatfield district primary schools. This has prompted the researcher to carry out this study and analyse intervention measures that ensure participatory decision making by teachers in Mbare Hatfield district primary schools. Through teacher participatory decision-making, schools benefit from the motivated teachers who form part and parcel of the development of the school. It also enhances teachers' personal values in their schools. Through active teacher involvement in decision making there is increased job satisfaction, improved school, and student academic performance. Through intervention measures teachers can share their viewpoints with other staff members and the school head. This contributes to high learner outcomes. Appelbaum et al. (2013) [8] advocates that the sharing of information gives members a clear picture of their schools. It also creates trust among members and improves communication. This helps in improving teacher performance and learner academic outcomes.

2.0 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to analyse the intervention measures that ensure teacher participatory decision making in Zimbabwean primary schools.

3.0 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the conduct of the study.

1. What role is played by teamwork in increasing teachers' participation in decision making?
2. To what extent does staff development take place in schools?
3. What effect does teacher motivation have on their instructional performance?
4. How does a school environment affect teacher performance at school?

4.0 Review of Related Literature

The ever-changing environment and the needs of the evolving universal economy has put schools under strong pressure for change. There are demands on schools to produce students with competitive skills (Moran, 2009) [9]. This has increased today's need for increased teacher school participatory decision making to meet the growing demand for schools to concentrate on educational quality,

flexibility, and a commitment by teachers to their work. The demands on schools can be met if teachers are part and parcel of decisions made in schools (UNESCO, 2005) [10]. As schools search for better educational outcomes a number of factors are explored, one of which is the involvement of stakeholders in the management of the schools (San Antonio & Gamage, 2007) [11]. Cheng & Cheung, (2003)[12] are of the idea that school performance can be determined by the performance of key working members who are teachers and school heads. The participation of the different components of a school in improving learner academic outcomes is one important characteristic for a successful school. Teachers are an important element of the school system whose presence contributes to the life of the school. It thus signifies the importance of involving them in the decision-making processes and the day to day running of schools. School systems, therefore, 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 decision-making community. Directly involving teachers in the decision-making process has many positive impacts on both the school and the teachers, which are then reflected in the performance levels of learners. Teachers spend more time with learners in classes resulting in them having more impact on them when compared to other members. They also impact on the quality of education and the school's progress. Somech (2010. p.179) [5] comments that teachers' "... participatory decision making carries an expectation of enhanced school functioning and outcomes." The importance of having in place measures related to teacher participation can be deciphered here. The presence of those measures means teachers take part in decision making, this in turn improves the daily functioning of schools. Majoni's (2015) [13] study focused on leadership styles in primary schools in Zimbabwe. In the study he indicated that teacher participation in school administration enhances "... efficiency; sharpens competencies, and increases goal orientation to understand the administrative system, goals, procedures, and policies" (Majoni, 2015. p. 196) [13]. This shows how crucial teacher participation in decision making is. As teachers participate in school administrative activities, it broadens their knowledge of running schools. In the absence of school heads, schools do not run smoothly. It is thus important that measures are put in place that allow teachers to participate in school programmes. Teamwork is often associated with positive outcomes in schools. When operating in teams workers have a high level of job satisfaction (Kim, 2002)[14] and on the other hand low levels of absenteeism than those working as individuals. When properly utilised teamwork improves the attainment of objectives, increases social support and employee participation in decision-making. Persily (2013) [15] believes that outcomes in organisations increasingly depend on teamwork. A team-based organisation has its leadership evenly distributed among members of the organisation resulting in decisions and authority in many hands (Truijen, 2013) [16]. Teamwork encourages teachers' professional development (Newmann et al., 2001 [17]; Ohlsson, 2013) [18]. Through teamwork, much can be achieved when compared to individual

activities. The knowledge and skills of team members can be utilised to arrive at solutions. When made use of at schools, teamwork generates ownership and commitment by members (Cook, 2009) [19]. Being part of a team leads to improved learner outcomes, improved teacher capacity and motivation, and improved school climate and environment (Pitsoe & Isingoma, 2014) [20]. Those environments where workers have authority and responsibility over their work enables them to effectively make developments to the education system. Such environments rarely exist in schools. De Nobile et al. (2013) [21] believe that collective decision making between school heads and teachers give teachers who are the workforce, opportunities to exercise control over their work environment. Management as an activity is done for a purpose. It directs group efforts towards the realisation of pre-set goals. This involves working with and through others to achieve organisational goals. Ashima et al., (2010) [22] defines management as a discrete process comprising of planning, organizing, motivating, and controlling done to accomplish specified objectives using human and material resources. Armstrong (2009) [23] defined management as a process of getting results through making use of available human, financial and material resources. The careful coordination of group activities and resources is all that management is concerned about. In a school environment, the school head, is both the manager and school leader who does the coordination of resources. People are the most important resource in an organisation because it is through people that other resources can be managed (Armstrong, 2009) [23]. Teacher involvement in decision making at school stimulates cooperation and attention to the goals of the school (Adams, 2010) [24]. It results in high learner academic performance. The missions of teachers in classrooms are successfully achieved through involving the teachers themselves in school decision making activities. When the functions, tasks and behaviours of a leader are carried out proficiently, the work of others in the organisation will be made easy (Lunenburg, 2008) [25]. School heads as leaders of schools have the responsibility to motivate, direct and drive teachers to move schools forward (Pitsoe & Isingoma, 2014) [20]. The leadership style adopted by school heads influence subordinate performance which in turn affect the performance of learners in schools. The autocratic leader requires teachers to follow instructions to the dot. The characteristic work situations where autocratic leadership prevails is a hierarchical structure with all authority to make decisions vested in the school head, teachers rarely participate in decision making (Bhatti et al., 2011) [26]. In such a leadership style all major decisions are made by the leader (Rollinson & Broadfield, 2002) [27]. Schools with such leadership experience coercion, low morale, and a feeling of powerlessness among staff members. This type of leadership affects the effective instructional execution by teachers. Pitsoe & Isingoma, (2014) [20] advocate that several school heads try to carry out tasks alone without involving teachers, this has not been effective. Heroic leadership does not lead to effective implementation of the curriculum as it misses the brilliant knowledge and skills in teachers which are of benefit to learners. Intervention activities that ensure participatory decision making by teachers are needed for improved instructional

performance by teachers. A shift is needed where school heads adopt leadership styles that allow teamwork and empowerment of workers (Muindi, 2011) [28]. The emphasis today is on participatory decision making. This is emphasised by Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) [29] who point out that when leadership activities are distributed to teachers, they positively influence teacher effectiveness and learner performance. Democratic school leaders share leadership functions with teachers and form part of the group. Bhatti et al., (2011) [26] advocates that, democratic heads invite teachers to contribute to the decision-making process. Teachers also participate in determining policy and implementing systems and procedures. This has a positive effect of increased job satisfaction. Authority is decentralised (Harris and Muijs, 2005) [30] and there is consultation between the school heads and teachers. Under such leadership teachers are encouraged to proffer ideas on how to solve school problems. Under such leadership participatory practices are widely used. The participation of teachers in decision-making is regarded by (Cheng Chi Keung, 2008) [31] as a crucial characteristic of an effective school. Begley & Zaretsky, (2004) [32] regards democratic leadership as the ideal leadership for effective schools considering the culture diversity in societies, the world of technology and the aspects of globalisation. A head's leadership style acts as an important intervention measure that sees teachers either participating or not participating in decision making. The extent to which they allow or not allow teacher participatory decision making significantly impacts on schools. Silins & Mulford (2002b) [33] believe that learner performance improves when teachers are empowered in areas of importance to them. Empowering teachers through staff development increases school effectiveness and achievement of school objectives (Fanira & Loveth, 2016) [34]. Onuka (2006) [35] argues that school effectiveness and success depend on teachers who are an important resource in schools. It therefore means not including them in school participatory decision-making activities would affect the success of schools. Empowering teachers through staff development, equips them with the knowledge and skills to know what is and is not functional for schools. Thus, enabling teachers to participate in decision making at school leads to their improved performance in schools. Maier et al. (2017) [36] believe that many challenges schools face today can be made easy through collective decision-making at school. The professional development of teachers is fundamental in sustaining and augmenting the quality of instructional activities in schools (Tuli, 2017) [37]. Sarafidon and Chatziioannidis, (2012) [38] posits that empowering teachers through staff development enhances teacher morale and motivation, increases job satisfaction and there is commitment to school effectiveness and improvement.

5.0 Methodology

Researchers used the quantitative research approach to conduct this study to cover respondents' perceptions of the studied phenomenon in ten selected primary schools of Mbare - Hatfield District in Harare. A survey research design was used in this study that sought to analyse intervention measures related to school participatory decision making by teachers. Creswell (2012, p.2) [39] defines survey research designs as "... procedures in

quantitative research in which you administer a survey or questionnaire to a small group of people (called the sample) to identify trends in attitudes, opinions, behaviours, or characteristics of a large group of people (called the population)". The survey design was adopted as it allowed for the selection of a small group (sample) to which questionnaires were delivered in the case of teachers and face to face interviews conducted with school heads. The choice of this design also made it possible to generalise findings from samples to the population as it was expensive to study the whole population.

5.1 Population and sample

The population of this study was comprised thirty-one primary schools in the Mbare - Hatfield District in Harare. The population was made up of 50 teachers and 10 school heads in the Mbare - Hatfield education district. From these, a simple random sampling method was used to come up with ten primary schools. From each of the ten schools a simple random sampling method was used to come up with five teachers from each school. A total of 50 sampled primary school teachers was obtained. All the sampled schools are urban day schools which share the same curriculum from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. The responses and views of the participants were assumed to be characteristic of the prevailing situation in the schools in the district. Data were collected from the sampled 50 teachers and 10 school heads. Five teachers came from each of the ten schools and the respective heads were the participants in the interviews conducted.

5.2 Data collection and presentation procedures

The researchers sought permission to conduct the study from the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Harare/Chitungwiza Provincial Education Director, and the Mbare-Hatfield District Schools Inspector. They then approached the selected schools to seek permission school heads to administer structured closed-ended questionnaires to 50 teachers and interview 10 school heads. The interviews were carried out at the times that were set by the school heads. Researchers' biodata and actual research findings were presented using tables and figures. Researchers' bio-data presentations showed research characteristics of respondents in terms of their sex, age, highest educational qualification, teaching experience, grade taught, and professional status. The same information was presented for the selected school heads. Research data and biodata of the respondents were analysed using descriptive statistics because the sample was too small to cater for the use of inferential statistics.

5.3 Research instruments

To collect data two instruments were self-administered closed ended questionnaires and closed ended interviews. These two basic forms of instruments are often used by survey researchers to collect data. Creswell (2012, p. 382) [39] defined a questionnaire as "... a form used in a survey design that participants in a study complete and return to the researcher." Questionnaires used in this survey research contained closed ended questions where respondents chose the most applicable answer from those given. Teachers were the respondents to questionnaires

which were hand delivered to them. In addition to questionnaires the researcher also made use of face-to-face interviews to gather data from school heads. When conducting interviews, the researcher asked questions from an interview guide and recorded responses from participants. Ten school heads were interviewed. An advantage of face-to-face interviews is that they usually have a high response rate. In this study, structured questions were used. O’Hara et al. (2011, p. 155) [40] advocate that, structured interviews are “... the second most commonly used data collection methods in quantitative research.” They are mostly used in the context of survey research (Bryman, 2008) [41].

6.0 Findings

Fifty questionnaires were distributed to teachers and the response rate was 100%. Data were also gathered through interviews with school heads. The section below presents the data in tables and figures. To begin with is figure 1 displaying information on teachers’ gender.

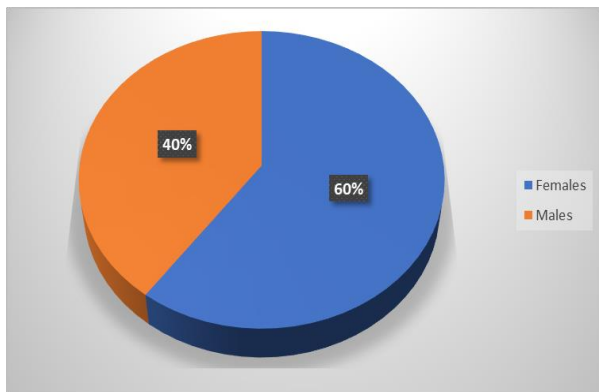


Figure 1: Teachers by gender (N=60)

Figure 1 shows that the sample comprised of 60% females and 40% males. These percentages reflect the existing ratios of males to female teachers in Zimbabwean urban schools. As for the school heads there were three (30%) female school heads and seven (70%) male school heads.

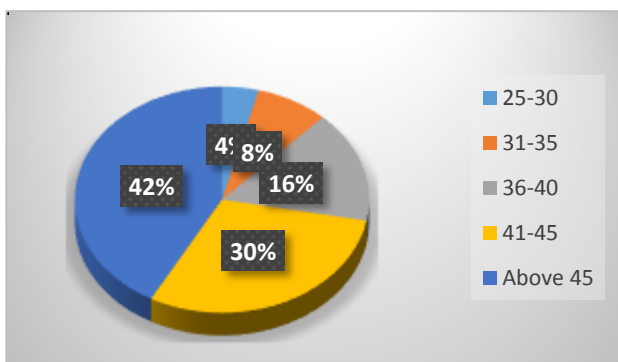


Figure 2: Teachers by age (N=50)

Many of the teachers were above thirty-five years old. Those in the 36-40 age group were 16%, a 41-45 age group were 30% and those above 45 were 42%. This showed a sample of mature people. As for the school heads the table below indicates their age groups.

Table1: The age groups of school heads (N=10)

Ages	Number of Heads	%
41-45	1	10
46-50	3	30
51 and above	6	60
Total	10	100

The ages of the school heads suggest maturity. This is an expected characteristic of school heads in Zimbabwe. To be appointed to a school head position one would have risen through the ranks from being a teacher, a deputy head and then a school head. It thus reasons why the school heads were mature people.

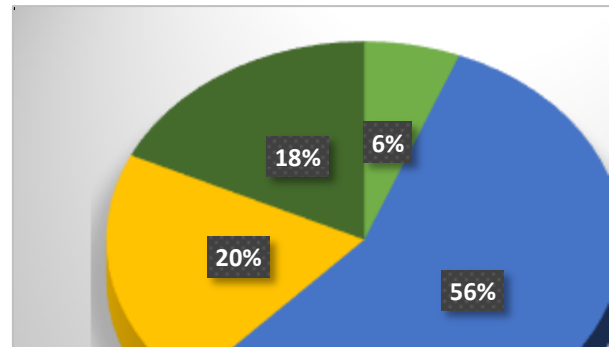


Figure 3: Teachers’ qualifications (N=50)

All the teachers were qualified to teach at primary school. The least qualified were the certificate (6%) and diploma holders (20%). The highest qualified teachers had degrees, a total of 62% had degrees that is 56% had first degrees and 6% had master’s degrees. It showed that the teachers were quite educated for their jobs to know the interventions that could make schools effective. As for school heads the table below shows their qualifications.

Table 2: The qualifications of school heads (N=10)

Qualification	Number of Heads	%
Master’s degree	6	60
First degree	4	40
Total	10	100

Most of the school heads had master’s degrees (60%) and 40% had first degrees. This implied that the school heads had considerable knowledge on what interventions to use to enhance decision making activities by teachers for improved school performance.

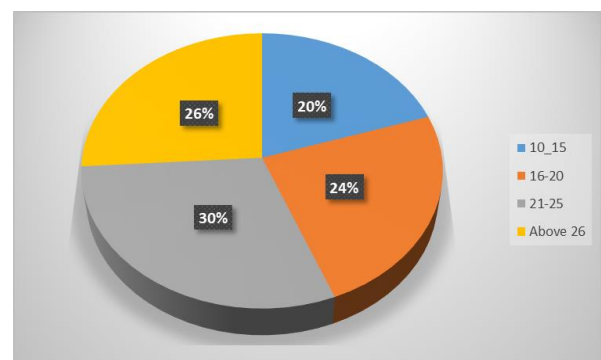


Fig 4: Teachers’ experience in years (N=50)

The teachers were all experienced people at their work. The least experienced teachers had 10 to 15 years in the service and these were 20%. Those with 16 to 20 years' experience were 24%, while those in the 21 to 25 years of experience were 30% and those above 26 years of experience were 26%. This therefore shows that teachers knew the importance of getting involved in school decision making activities.

Table 3: School heads experience in headship positions (N=10)

Number of years	Number of Heads	%
10 to 15	4	40
16 to 20	5	50
21 to 25	1	10
Total	10	100

All the school heads were experienced people who had considerable number of years as school heads. Most of the school heads were in the 16 to 21 years of experience (50%). This suggests that their qualifications coupled with their experience they were able to know what interventions in schools improved teacher effectiveness

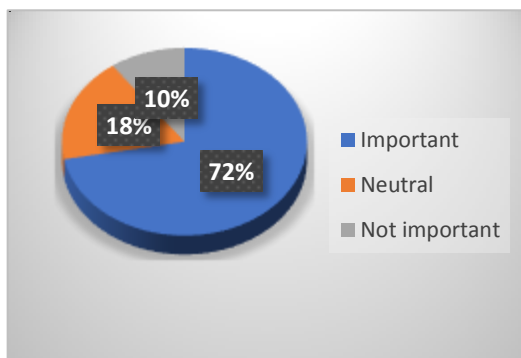


Figure 5: Teamwork and an important aspect in decision making in schools (N=50)

On the aspect of teamwork, 72% of teachers indicated that teamwork was an important intervention measure that ensured participatory decision making among staff members, 10% did not regard teamwork as important and 18% were neutral in their responses on the importance of teamwork. Whereas teacher regarded teamwork as very important in schools since it increases the sharing of ideas and information among teachers resulting in improved academic performance by learners.

Table 4: Encouraging teamwork by school heads (N=10)

Responses	Number of Heads	%
Encouraged teamwork	3	30
Not Important	7	70
Total	10	100

The responses of the heads (30%) indicated that they encouraged teamwork among their teachers in their schools, whereas 70% indicated that they encouraged individual efforts among their teachers. The data indicates that the school heads wanted individual teachers to concentrate on their work as individuals rather than rely on teamwork. Teamwork is not something new to schools

so much that heads should understand its benefits. Despite this, most of the heads promoted individual efforts.

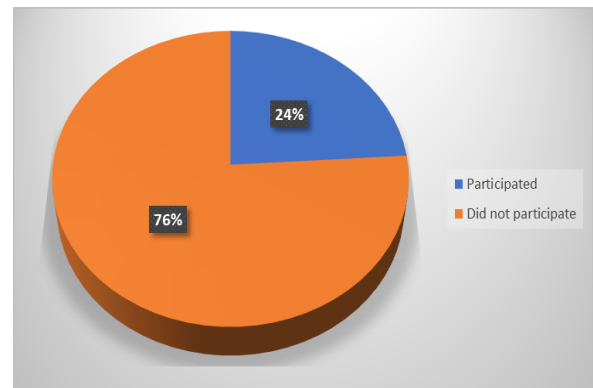


Figure 6: Teacher involvement in the formulation of policies (N=50)

In the formulation of school policies 24% of the teachers indicated that they took part while 76% did not take part. This indicated that school heads formulate school policies without the involvement of teachers. Teachers need to be involved in school decision making activities and involving them in formulating school policies can lead to improved teacher performance and ultimately high learner academic outcomes.

Table 5: Formulation of policies (N=10)

Responses	Number of Heads	%
Involved teachers	2	20
Worked with administration team only	3	30
School head crafted the policies	5	50
Total	10	100

When school heads were asked on whether they involved teachers in the formulation of school policies, 20% indicated that they involved teachers, 30% indicated that they worked with the administration team to craft policies and 50% indicated that the school head crafted the policies. The type of leadership employed by school heads determine the working environment in schools and the extent of participation by teachers in crucial matters.

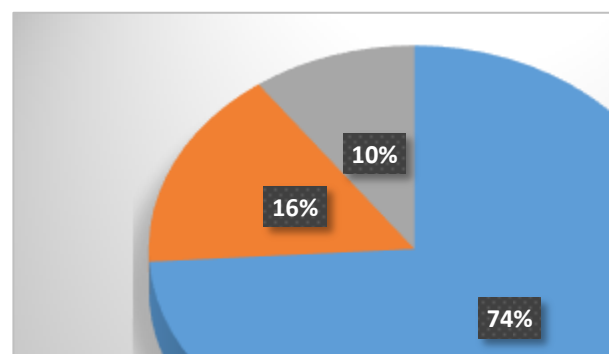


Figure 7: Leadership preferences affected school climate (N=50)

When it came to leadership preferences affecting the climate of the school, 74% of the teachers agreed that

school heads' leadership impacted on the climate of schools. The other respondents, 16% did not agree and 10% were not sure. Since school head's leadership preferences affect school climates it that reasons to say it also affect teachers' performance since the environment that teachers work in determines how effective they can be. Involving teachers in school decision-making processes thus has a positive impact on school performance.

Table 6: Leadership styles affected school climate (N=10)

Responses	Number of Heads	%
Agreed	6	60
Disagreed	4	40
Total	10	100

When heads were asked on whether leadership styles determine the climate of the school, 60% of the heads agreed and 40% disagreed. On what leadership styles they found effective at their schools, 60% of the heads indicated that it was the democratic style coupled with the autocratic style while 40% indicated that it was the democratic style.

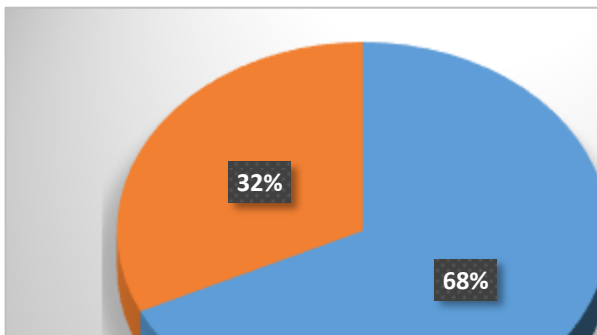


Figure 8: Staff development of teachers is important (N=50)

The staff development of teachers in schools cannot be ignored if the schools expect high instructional performance from teachers. Most of the teachers in the research indicated that staff development was an important aspect in schools. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of the teachers indicated that staff development was an important intervention measure that led to teachers willingly and meaningfully participating in decision making. Thirty-two percent (32%) percent of the respondents did not agree.

Table 7: Staff development is important in schools (N=10)

Responses	Number of Heads	%
Agreed	5	50
Disagreed	5	50
Total	10	100

In their responses to importance of staff development 50% of the school heads indicated that staff development programmes were crucial to their teachers while the other 50% were sceptical of the benefits of staff development programmes in their schools.

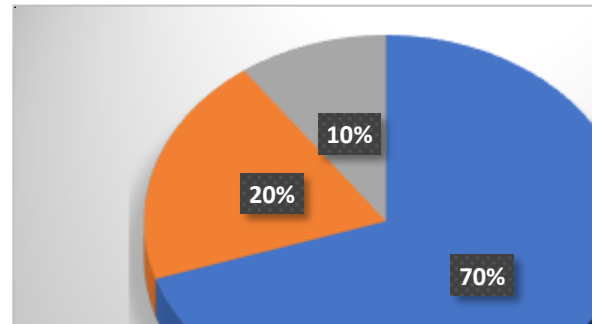


Figure 9: Intervention measures increase teacher positive effect on learners (N=50)

Having in place intervention measures that allow teacher participation in decision making is crucial to teachers. On whether teacher involvement had any impact on learner academic outcomes, 70% of the teachers agreed while 20% disagreed and 10% were not sure. The responses by teachers portray their perceptions in terms of their influence on learners.

Table 8: Teacher involvement in decision making impacts on learners' performance (N=10)

Responses	Number of Heads	%
Agreed	4	40
Disagreed	6	60
Total	10	100

When school heads were asked whether involving teachers in school decision making had any impact on learners, a few heads (40%) indicated that teacher involvement in decision making in school activities impacted on learner performance whereas most of the heads (60%) disagreed. This indicated that school heads did not consider teacher involvement in decision making in major school activities had any impact on them and on learners.

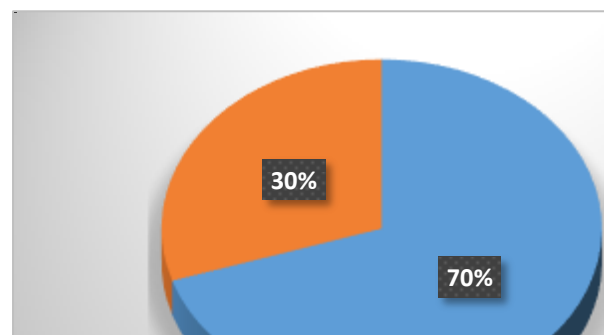


Figure 10: Being praised for high performance is motivating (N=50)

To be praised for having done good is motivating. This was indicated by 70% of the teachers who indicated that they valued school heads' acknowledgment of their work. Thirty percent (30%) indicated that they were unmoved by whether school heads acknowledged their contributions or not. From the majority response, it was evident that praising teachers for their efforts was of great importance.

Table 9: Praising teachers improved their school performance (N=10)

Responses	Number of Heads	%
Agreed	5	50
Disagreed	5	50
Total	10	100

There was an equal number of school heads (50%) who agreed that positive acknowledgement of teacher contributions motivated teachers to improve their performance at school and another (50%) disagreed and did not regard it highly.

5.1 Discussion

The researcher conducted this study to analyse the intervention measures that ensured teacher participatory decision making in Zimbabwean primary schools. From the findings it is evident that teamwork is an important intervention measure that could be used in schools to increase teacher participation in decision making. Schools can have teams in the form of committees with a chairperson. Such teams can allow discussions of inputs from teachers and if effectively supported can help in the running of schools. The responses suggest that teamwork was not a new idea among teachers, however it was given little attention because of the supervisory practices by school heads that encouraged individual achievements. School heads placed little or no value on teamwork thereby suggesting that the school heads placed more value on individual performance. Working in teams ensures teacher participation and their voices to be heard in the teams and if supported by school administrators can be heard in the school. Such a base contributes to positive decision making by teachers. Cultivating teamwork in teachers increases the motivation levels and capabilities of workers (Pitsoe & Isingoma, 2014) [20] leading to increased teacher effectiveness in decision making. The formulation of school policies is done by school heads in most of the schools. Few teachers were involved in crafting policies in their schools. The small percentage of teachers who participated in crafting policies were in tangent to the response rate by school heads who indicated that they involved teachers in crafting school policies in their schools. The responses suggest that the crafting of school policies is the school head's prerogative. The responses on the formulation of policies indicate the types of leadership that exist in schools, elements of autocracy can be noted. Such schools with such leadership hardly have measures that allow teacher school participatory decision making. Many schools do not have in place measures that allow teachers to participate in decision making. Such environments where school heads are the brains behind all school activities can be equated to autocratic leadership. This type of leadership negatively impacts on teachers resulting in low pass rates. The leadership preferences by school heads play a significant role in determining whether teachers have opportunities to partake in decision making activities at school. Of importance in leadership preferences is a leadership style that offers opportunities for teachers to take part in school decision making. Bhatti et al. (2011) [26] argues that leadership styles impact on job satisfaction and that

people cherish working in free environments where they share and exchange views. It is critical that the leadership style adopted by school heads enable teachers to exercise free participation in school activities. This motivates teachers and in turn it improves their school performance resulting in high pass rates. The participation of teachers in school decision-making processes has a positive and lasting impact on school performance. School climate is an important determinant of teacher participation in decision making. Coupled with the heads' viewpoints, the school atmosphere impacts on teachers' likelihoods of participating in decision making in schools. Alam and Ahmad (2017, p. 385) [42] say, "Principal's leadership influences school environment and instructional organisation, which correlates with the achievement of the students." On leadership styles found in schools, Subba (2010, p. 363) [43] advocates that, "--- a successful leader is one who can accurately assess the forces that determine what behaviours would be most appropriate in any given situation and is able to be flexible enough to adopt the most functional leadership style." This shows the importance of employing the most effective leadership style by school heads. Teachers need to be staff developed and they regard this as an important intervention measure that aids teacher participatory decision making since it develops their instructional, curricular, administrative and leadership competencies, knowledge, and skills. It also develops teachers understanding of school activities thus resulting in knowledgeable staff who can proffer constructive ideas that assist in the day-to-day function of schools. Staff development is crucial in schools as it enables informed decision making by teachers. It is a way of capacitating teachers with knowledge and skills to make informed decisions and improve classroom performance. Croft et al. (2010) [1] argue that when staff development is supported by the school head and well implemented, this creates a powerful lever that increases learner performance. Enlightened teachers are likely to make decisions that help schools develop and improve learner academic outputs, outcomes, and societal, national, and global impact. In that regard, staff developing teachers is an important intervention measure to their decision making. Creating work enabling environments is crucial in schools. It benefits schools to tap the knowledge and skills in teachers. Leaving them out in crucial decisional areas leads to teacher resistance, resentment, apathy, disengagement, and a feeling of not want to associate themselves with 'the so-called imposed decisions' when it comes to the implementation phase (Tuli, 2017). [37] Teachers' responses showed that it is motivating to work in an environment that allows for teacher involvement in decision making. Motivating teachers through positively acknowledging their contributions make them work hard and stay long at their schools (Bateman & Snell, 2002) [44]. Active involvement of teachers in the school decision-making processes benefits teachers in terms of increased job satisfaction, improved school, and student academic performance. Ndaipa (2016) [45] believes that teacher participation in crucial school matters has an impact on their performance thus signalling the importance of measures that involve teachers in participatory decision making.

6.0 Conclusions

The following conclusions have been made from the study: First, the idea of teamwork is not new to schools but is not given value by school heads as an intervention measure that boosts teacher participation in decision making. Heads promote individual achievements at the expense of team efforts. Second, the choice of a leadership style by school heads is a determining factor on how teachers participate in crucial school decision making activities. Teachers get affected by the leadership styles. Leadership styles used in schools have been noted as autocratic as they discriminated teachers from making decisions. Such leadership styles do not create opportunities for teacher participation in decision making and is thus detrimental to job satisfaction and improved school pass rates. Third, there is very little if any staff development activities in schools. This is because of the difference in value placed on them by teachers and school heads. Teachers highly value them, whereas heads do not place much value on them. Fourth, teachers are motivated by praise, especially when recognised for outstanding performance and decisions. There is little practice on this by school heads. Fifth, positive school environments pave way to teacher participatory decision making in crucial school programmes. In such environments school heads engage teachers in the development of their schools. By so doing, they empower teachers.

6.1 Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

First, school heads should be trained by mentors from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Schools or other expert external agents on the importance and benefits of teamwork in schools.

Second, school heads should adopt leadership styles that are forward looking, participatory and progressive in nature and practise that in schools.

Third, teacher participation needs to be active, recognised, meaningful, and effectively improve their skills and abilities, so that they in turn benefit learners. This can be made possible when school heads create positive working environments at school.

Fourth, school heads need to create conducive teaching and learning environments that enable teachers to participate in school decision making willingly and voluntarily.

Fifth, there is need to clearly define the parameters for staff development in schools by candidly identifying individual training needs so that teachers are staff developed in areas relevant to their jobs. Planning staff development programmes as a single individual leads to a good training programme being attended by the wrong people.

Sixth, further research needs to be carried out by other researchers from similar and different settings within and without Zimbabwe to examine how teacher participation in decision making is enacted at secondary school level.

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Researchers' Biodata



John Tenha

John Tenha is a lecturer in the Faculty of Education at the Zimbabwe Open University in the department of teacher development. He is a holder of a Master of Education in Educational Management degree from Midlands State University (2017); a Masters in Business Administration degree and a Bachelor of Education, Educational Administration Planning and Policy Studies degree from Zimbabwe Open University (2008 and 2003 respectively). He also holds a Higher Diploma in Human Resources Management and a Diploma in Labour Relations from the Institute of People Management of Zimbabwe (2002 and 1997 respectively), a Certificate in Practical Project Planning and Management (2014), an Advanced Diploma in Education (2003), and a Certificate in Education (Primary) (1989) from the university of Zimbabwe). He joined the Faculty of Education in 2018.



Professor Tichaona Mapolisa

Professor Tichaona Mapolisa is a full Professor of Education in Educational Management. He holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Management, a Master of Education in Educational Administration, Planning and Policy Studies (MEd. EAPPS), a Bachelor of Education in Educational Administration, Planning and Policy Studies (BEd. EAPPS), a Certificate in Education (Primary), and a Certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language. He has teaching experience in the primary school, secondary school, teachers' college and university levels of education. He has published more than 90 articles in refereed journals, 5 occasional papers, two textbooks, one book chapter, six modules, and three newspaper articles on curriculum review. Professor Mapolisa has presented more than 40 papers at various international and local conferences, symposia, and research workshops. He is PhD external supervisor and examiner for the University of Zambia, Women's University in Africa, and Midlands State University. In addition, he is a PhD external examiner for the University of Fort Hare, University of Free State and University of Zululand. Above all, he is an internal supervisor and examiner for MPhil and DPhil candidates at the Zimbabwe Open University where he is currently a Director of Research, Innovation and Technology Transfer. His ResearchGate citations are 188 in number and has 254 400 reads, while his Google Scholar citations 390 in number and has 11 h-index and 13 i-index, and he has 245 Academia.edu mentions. He is an editor, associate editor, chief editor, and peer reviewer for various refereed journals. Professor Mapolisa can be contacted by email: mapolisat@zou.ac.zw and tichmap@gmail.com ;and by cell phone numbers:+263785306351/ 733608577/ 718452595, as well as business direct line: +263242251890