A SURVEY OF TEACHER'S PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING PROCESS IN BATU PAHAT DISTRICT SCHOOLS

By

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To my late father,

who always encouraged me to seek knowledge and share it.
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to identify the current and desired levels of participation in decision making in five categories of decisional situations, which are curriculum and instructions, student-related issues, managing colleagues, school policy and planning and school fund, of primary and secondary school teachers and also teachers with different years of experience in Batu Pahat district schools in Johore. The study is also to identify the conditions of deprivations, saturation or equilibrium in the context of decision making and to compare and contrast the attitude of teachers regarding participative decision making. A questionnaire survey method, the Multiple Evaluative Dimensionally Approach, is used for the study which consisted of 120 teachers from four primary and four secondary schools in the district of Batu Pahat, Johore. The findings of this study show that the current participation of primary school teachers is greater than the secondary school teachers in all the five decisional situations studied. The primary school teachers desire more participation than secondary school teachers in four decisional situations except in deciding school fund. Both primary and secondary school teachers experience deprivation in all the decisional situations, but only primary school teachers experience saturation on issues resolving problems among pupils and equilibrium in deciding school goals. In terms of patterns of participation, primary school teachers experience a small degree of difference between current and desired participation in all decisional situations except in deciding school policy and planning where they experience medium degree of difference whereas secondary school teachers experience a medium degree of difference in all decisional situations except in student-related issues, they experience a small degree of difference. Teachers with more than 10 years experience has the highest current participation in curriculum and instructions, managing colleagues and school fund. Teachers with less than 1 year experience has the highest current participation in student-related issues and school policy and planning. Teachers with less than 1 year experience desire the highest participation in student-related issues and school policy and planning. Teachers with 5 – 9 years experience has the highest desire for curriculum and instructions and school fund whereas teachers with more than 10 years experience has the highest desire in managing colleagues. Conditions of deprivation exist for teachers with less than 1 year experience in all the decisional situations except in student-related issues where they experience equilibrium. The teachers with 1 – 4 years experience are deprived in all decisional situations except in staff development planning where they undergo saturation whereas teachers with 5 – 9 years and more than 10 years experience are deprived in all the decisional situations. In terms of patterns of participation, teachers with less than 1 year experience has a small degree of difference in student-related issues and school fund whereas medium degree of difference in curriculum and instructions, managing colleagues and school policy and planning. Teachers with 1 – 4 years experience has a small degree of difference in school policy and planning and medium degree in rest of the areas. The teachers with 5 – 9 years and more than 10 years of experience have medium degree of difference in all the decisional situations. This study also shows that primary and secondary and also teachers with different years of teaching experience are keen to get involved in school decision making process and are motivated to contribute to school improvement. They show full support for participatory decision making and prefer a collegial approach to decision making.

ABSTRAK
bahawa guru-guru sekolah rendah dan menengah serta guru-guru dengan pengalaman mengajar yang berbeza bersedia untuk melibatkan diri dalam proses membuat keputusan dan hermotivasi untuk memberi sumbangan ke arah kemajuan sekolah. Mereka menunjukkan sokongan pemih ke atas pembuatan keputusan bersama dan menginginkan pendekatan 'collegial' dalam membuat keputusan.
“Decision-making processes represent the brain and nervous system of the organisation.”

- Richard L. Daft

1.0 Background

Education has increasingly become a more salient institution in many countries and it has also been affected by economic, political, social and technological changes. Schools now are less isolated from the communities in which they operate than in the past. School boundaries have become more permeable as interest groups question what schools do. There is heightened pressure for accountability and expectation of increased effectiveness and efficiency. As a result, schools can no longer see themselves as consisting of small educational unproblematic management patterns.

It is widely accepted that managing a school has become a much more demanding job than it was. Good school management is of vital importance if resources are deployed to maximum effect to achieve quality and excellence in the teaching and learning process. It seems less likely that the principal and senior teachers alone can successfully manage such diffuse and diverse educational demands without the help of the other teachers. It should be borne in mind that senior teachers might not necessarily be experts in all aspects relating to successful school management. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that senior teachers still have classroom responsibilities. In order to cope with the dynamic changes that characterise the management practice in schools, the task might be enhanced if senior management and other teachers work closely together, thereby making the running of schools less daunting and perhaps even more interesting.

The theme of participatory decision-making has continued to emerge at various times since the turn of the century because of claims to professionalism among teachers. According to Hoyle (1986) a growing body of literature on school improvement and effectiveness almost universally reports the beneficial effects of collaboration. Theoretical arguments for participation of teachers in decision-making abound. There are also a number of research studies which indicate that some teachers want to participate in decision-making (Conway, 1976). According to Bacharach, Bamberger, Conlery and Bauer (1990) numerous recent reports have urged giving teachers a ‘real voice in decision-making’ and for increasing participation in ‘school-site management’. These reports have increased awareness of the role of teacher participation in enhancing the level of school effectiveness.

The frequency of teacher opportunities to take part in decision making and the types and number of decisions in which teachers actually participate vary greatly from school to school. The range and number of decisions made at a given school are limited by the extent to which decision making is viewed as a central office prerogative and, to a lesser degree, by the amount of staff interest in innovation and the availability of discretionary resources. However, even when these factors are held constant, the teachers’ role can still vary greatly.
With the weight of national reforms hitting schools over the past years, the involvement of staff in collaborative decision-making as a strategy for coping with the rapid pace of change has been irresistible for many school leaders. The trend towards whole-staff involvement has highlighted the need for teachers to act corporately. In this connection, Campbell and Southworth (1992) cited in Hayes (1996) insisted that true collegiality can only be achieved by staff working together in a school where the culture is cohesive and educational, and social beliefs are shared.

Imber and Neidt (1990) cited in Rice and Schneider (1994) argued that greater participation in schools was in tune with a democratic society and led to enhanced commitment, improved performance and better productivity in the school system. Gaziel and Weiss (1990) cited in Hayes (1996) claimed that participation that included teachers’ establishing a strong voice in decisions and policies was characteristic of ‘professional orientation’ and fostered better relations among members. Furthermore, Bottery (1992) cited in Hayes (1996) insisted that teachers should be involved, not so much because of their expert knowledge, autonomy or involvement in a caring profession, but because education is itself an interactive process; thus ‘teachers are human beings and deserve to be treated as such’.

1.1 Statement of the problem
Participation in organisational decision-making has emerged as a central concern for teachers because shared decision-making and staff consultations are among those process factors that have been repeatedly identified as correlating with positive school outcomes in studies of school effectiveness (Hargreaves, 1991). If earlier educational reform reports since the end of World War I had emphasised on adding courses, changing requirements and rethinking curriculum and instruction in schools (Lieberman, 1988), current educational reform raises issues of fundamental change in the way teachers are trained, inducted into teaching and involved in leadership and decision-making at school level. In fact, the concept of decision-making in schools is now being realised through other parallel concepts such as ‘empowerment’ and aspects of collegiality. The Malaysian educational arena is no exception to this, as the Ministry of Education encourages empowerment and delegation of authority to all educational establishments. Many studies have commented favourably on school management that incorporates effective participation of teachers in decision-making. A study conducted by Nagalingam (1997) on selected primary and secondary schools in the State of Johore showed that teachers reported high levels of participation and desire greater participation in issues related to curriculum and instruction than other school-related issues. His study also showed that headmasters/principals and teachers were supportive of participation in decision making. Ong (1997) who studied the perception of residential and non-residential school teachers in Kuala Lumpur towards empowerment of teachers found that only very low percentage of teachers had high level of perception for empowerment. According to him, teachers should be given more opportunity to participate in decision making. They need more autonomy and less intervention from various departments in Ministry of Education. Bureaucracies should by all means be reduced. Decision making should be decentralized. Some of the advantages often associated with participatory decision-making advocated by research are: the probability that change will be accepted and at the same time overall effectiveness of the change will increase, advancement of professionalism and commitment to the decisions that emerge, teacher career
satisfaction, improved quality of the decisions made and promoting co-operation among teachers (Hoy & Tarter, 1993).

A basic assumption has been that lasting school improvement will occur when teachers become involved in professional decision-making at the school site (Schneider, 1984). Teacher participation in decision-making gives the administration access to critical information closest to the source of many problems of schooling. Increased access to and use of this information is thought to improve the quality of decisions. In addition, because teachers have an opportunity to become involved in and to exert influence on the decision-making processes, their participation is thought to promote commitment to the decisions that are made and to increase motivation to carry them out. However, effective involvement of teachers in school decision-making poses many questions such as when, to what extent and what issues teachers should be involved in and what roles principals should play in schools that promote participatory decision-making. These are real issues in decision-making particularly in countries such as Malaysia where there is a well-defined hierarchical structure in the management of public education. Only few studies have attempted to identify empirically the distinct domains of participation in decision-making in educational organisations (Bacharach et al, 1990).

The majority of recent case studies have found teachers participating in a variety of ways. However, these findings cannot be generalised because there are very few studies and the schools selected for case studies of decision-making tend to have innovative governance structures. Some results suggest the possibility that teachers play a larger role in school decision making than most critics suspect. Only broad-based surveys and case studies of randomly selected schools can reveal the extent of teacher participation in the various categories and phases of decision making, the relative proportion of teacher involvement compared with teacher influence, and the extent of teacher satisfaction with their role.

Although participation in decision-making has been studied for many decades as a determinant of organisational outcomes, a coherent theory of participatory decision-making is still lacking and research findings are often inconsistent, inconclusive or incomplete (Conley, 1991). Moreover, the conceptualisation and operationalisation of the construct of participation itself has not been studied in detail until recently (Bacharach et al., 1990).

Current research reveals that prior attempts to study teacher participation in shared decision-making has been weak descriptively, conceptually, and operationally (Conley, 1991). When discussing about teacher participation in decision making, there are still differences between actual and desired levels of participation by teachers in decision-making (Belasco and Alutto, 1975). Moreover, few research findings are available to indicate teachers' attitude towards participative decision making in schools. As a result, the question related to participatory decision-making has generated practical and research concerns.

1.2 Purpose of the study
At the school level, staff meetings and informal discussions between teachers and principals provide the opportunity for teachers to participate both formally and informally in decision-making processes. In addition to the centrally decided policies, schools have their own means in deciding how certain issues are to be handled.
With this in mind, the first purpose of this study is to identify and describe decisional situations in which teachers currently participate and desire to participate in decision making in Batu Pahat district schools. As a follow-up to the first purpose, a comparison is made on the current and desired participation among teachers in primary and secondary schools and among teachers with different number of years of teaching experience.

The second purpose of this study is to identify and describe conditions of deprivations, saturation or equilibrium in the context of decision making experienced by the school teachers in Batu Pahat. The questionnaire used in this survey allows for the computation of deviation scores which would help in identifying the above conditions (Alutto and Belasco, 1972; Conway, 1976).

As relatively few studies have been conducted in the area of participatory decision-making in Malaysia, the third purpose of this study is to compare and contrast the attitude of teachers regarding participation in decision making in schools. This is important because participation in decision making is seen as a process factor in school improvement programs and a further understanding of this will provide some feedback to the top management leaders in educational establishments in Malaysia.

1.3 Research questions
There are ten research questions for this study:

1.3.1 To what extent do primary and secondary school teachers currently participate in the specified decisional situations?
1.3.2 To what extent do primary and secondary school teachers desire participation in the specified decisional situations?
1.3.3 Are there conditions of decisional deprivation, equilibrium and saturation as identified by Alutto and Belasco (1972) among primary and secondary teachers?
1.3.4 What patterns of current and desired participation exist for primary and secondary school teachers?
1.3.5 To what extent do teachers with different years of teaching experience currently participate in the specified decisional situations?
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1.3.7 Are there conditions of decisional deprivation, equilibrium and saturation as identified by Alutto and Belasco (1972) among teachers with different years of teaching experience?
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1.3.9 Is there any significance difference in attitude between primary and secondary school teachers towards participative decision making?
1.3.10 Is there any difference in attitude among teachers with different years of teaching experience towards participative decision making?
1.4 Research framework of the study
The research framework for this study is illustrated in figure 1.1 below. The independent variables in this study are demographic factors such as work place and years of teaching experience whereas the dependent variables are the current level of participation in decision making, desired level of participation in decision making in 5 areas identified as curriculum and instructions, student-related issues, managing colleagues, school policy and planning and school fund and also the attitude of these teachers towards participative decision making.

1.5 Research background
1.5.1 Malaysian educational structure and school system
Malaysia is a young nation in the heart of South East Asia and is one of the world's fastest growing economic regions. Harmoniously multiethnic, Malaysia's cosmopolitan population through political stability is striving to assert its distinctiveness in the global scenario. By the year 2020, this nation intends to become a fully developed nation with a mature-democratic society that is moral and ethical, strong in religious and spiritual values, liberal and tolerant, scientific and progressive and innovative and forward looking (Malaysian Web Yellow Page, 1999). Thus it can be seen that Malaysia's education system must pursue many purposes to support Vision 2020. This goal is embodied in the mission statement of the Ministry of Education: to develop a world class quality education system which will realise the full potential of the individuals and fulfill the aspirations of the nation in line with the National Philosophy of Education (Ministry of Education Web site, 2000).

The system of education in Malaysia rests on the firm foundation of the national ideology or the 'Rukunegara'. In its effort to transform the educational system into one that would support the nation's drive to fulfill Vision 2020, the Ministry of Education in Malaysia has embarked on the SMART school program which has been implemented in 90 schools in 1999. Under this program, among the many aspects, administrative and educational decisions, are to be made at the lowest level, preferably by the teachers and students directly affected by this massive transformation (Education Technology Division, 1996). On the administrative side, concepts such as empowerment, participative management, shared decision-making and group dynamics are emerging elements of SMART schools in Malaysia. Therefore it can be seen that this research is undertaken at an important period in the career of teachers in Malaysia.

Currently, the formal school system in Malaysia provides education beginning from pre-school to post secondary. The primary level covers a period of six years. Education at this level aims to provide the overall development of the child with a firm foundation in the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic as well as the inculcation of thinking skills and values across the curriculum. The lower secondary level covers a period of three years, followed by two years at the upper secondary level and another two years at the sixth form level or post secondary level. Education at the upper secondary level is offered in academic, technical and vocational schools. Based on students' performance in the Lower Secondary Assessment, pupils are channelled into either one of these schools. Education at the post-secondary level
1. Current level of participation in decision making in 5 situations:
   - curriculum and instructions
   - student-related issues
   - managing colleagues
   - school policy and planning
   - school fund

2. Desired level of participation in decision making in 5 situations:
   - curriculum and instructions
   - student-related issues
   - managing colleagues
   - school policy and planning
   - school fund

3. Attitude towards participative decision making

Figure 1.1: The research framework of the study.
prepares students for entry into local and foreign universities and other institutions of higher learning. In Malaysia, higher education aims to produce professionals to meet the nation’s demand for human resources and provides facilities for research and consultancy services. In keeping with Vision 2020, the seventh Malaysia plan projects the expansion of post-graduate programs in the field of science, technology and applied arts (Ministry of Education Web site, 2000).

In the state of Johore, Malaysia where this research is carried out, there are 537 primary schools with 12,838 teachers and 158 secondary schools with a teacher population of 11,442 (Ministry of Education Web site, 2000). This research was conducted only in 8 selected schools in the district of Batu Pahat. Most teachers in the primary schools hold a recognised teaching certificate from teacher training colleges while teachers in the secondary schools either hold a teaching certificate or basic/masters degree.

1.5.2 Educational administration in Malaysia
Malaysia has a centralized system of educational administration. Its administrative structure is organized at four hierarchical levels, namely national, state, district/division/residency and school. The organization and management of education is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education.

Decision-making at the ministry is through a system of committees which facilitate inter-department and inter-division cooperation and cohesion. The Educational Planning Committee, chaired by the Minister, is the highest decision-making body at the federal level. The implementation of policies and plans at school level is via the State Education Department and the District Education Office (Ministry of Education Web site, 2000).

1.5.3 Teacher participation in decision-making in Malaysian schools
Participation in decision-making varies from school to school and there is no policy yet from higher authorities governing teacher participation in decision making. However, the experience of the researcher in secondary schools indicates that staff meetings, informal discussions and subject meetings are some of the existing avenues for teachers to be involved in decision-making. At other times, decisions are made by higher authorities and teachers have been entrusted to implement these decisions. The probability that teachers are involved in decision making issues may be related to their experience in the service and may also be related to positions held by teachers such as senior assistants, subject heads or sports secretary.

1.6 Operational definitions
Participation in decision making is defined (Lipham, 1974) as a process in which awareness of a problematic state of a system, influenced by information and values are reduced to competitive alternatives among which a choice is made based on perceived outcomes states of the system.

- Current participation
  The level of actual participation in decision making at present as perceived by the teachers.

- Desired participation
  The level of participation desired by the teachers in decision making in the future.
Decisional situations are represented by 25 items on education-related decision areas (Conway, 1976) categorised into 5 main areas as found in part A of the questionnaire. The aspects covered in each of these areas are as follows:

- **Curriculum and instructions**
  Deciding on teaching content and activities of the subject taught, teaching methods and strategies, homework policy, marking policy of students' work, formal test/examination policy, methods of reporting students' work, planning curriculum options or new subjects, textbooks and other supporting instruction materials, strategies for evaluating and improving learning effectiveness and class streaming policy.

- **Student-related issues**
  Deciding on student discipline policy, policy for extra-curricular activities, resolving problems among pupils and resolving problems between pupils and teachers.

- **Managing colleagues**
  Deciding staff development programs, staff performance appraisal, assigning teachers to various committees and resolving grievances among teachers.

- **School policy and planning**
  Deciding on annual school goals, annual school calendar, long term school development plan and agenda for the staff meetings.

- **School fund**
  Deciding on overall school budget, overall expenditure priorities and running fund-raising campaigns.

**Differential scores** reflect the difference between mean scores for actual participation subtracted from mean scores for desired participation on each of the 25 items in part A of the questionnaire (Conway, 1976 and Bacharach et al., 1990). The range of values for this differential score is -3 to +3 based on a four-point Likert scale used in the questionnaire.

**Decisional deprivation** is the condition in which the extent of current teacher participation is less than desired (Alutto & Belasco, 1972 and Conway, 1976). Positive values of deviation scores denote decisional deprivation and the range of values for this condition is +1 to +3.

**Decisional saturation** is the condition in which the extent of current teacher participation is more than desired (Alutto & Belasco, 1972 and Conway, 1976). Negative values of deviation scores denote decisional saturation and the range of values for this condition is -3 to -1.

**Decisional equilibrium** is the condition in which the extent of current teacher participation is as much as desired (Alutto & Belasco, 1972 and Conway, 1976). A zero value of deviation score will indicate condition of decisional equilibrium.

**Category A or B secondary schools** are differentiated based on certain criteria set by Ministry of Education. All category A schools have senior classes of form 4 and 5 and / or form 6. It must fulfill a certain minimum number of students enrolment (usually more than 1000), location of the schools and boarding facilities (if any).
Category B schools often do not have senior classes and in terms of students enrolment, they do not meet minimum requirement for upgrading to category A schools.

**Category A or B primary schools** are differentiated based on the criteria set by Ministry of Education depending on pupil enrolment, location of the schools and boarding facilities (if any).

**Attitude** is a learned predisposition to respond positively or negatively to a specific object, situation, institution, or person. As such, it consists of cognitive (knowledge or intellective), affective (emotional and motivational), and performance (behavioral or action) components (Aiken, 2000).

### 1.7 Significance of the study

Headmasters/principals face substantial challenge in their work of managing schools. They operate as leaders of teams and to be successful in their role, they have to harness the varied and disparate skills and talents of the teachers. Running a school is no longer a question of just maintaining existing structures and procedures. There will be a need for initiating new systems and this will require the calibre of staff who will be able to determine who does what, how, when and with which resources in order to obtain maximum output. The findings of this research will create a deeper understanding with respect to the processes of decision-making in schools as educational organisations. It will also provide some indication as to the areas in which teachers want to participate in decision making, the extent to which they are prepared to be involved in participative decision making processes in their schools. This study will also indicate teachers' attitude towards participative decision making in schools. An understanding of this is vital for the development of the school as a whole and in furthering teachers' professional development.

### 1.8 Limitations of the study

One possible limitation to the present study arises from the fact that schools and teachers were not chosen in a systematic manner as illustrated by the small sample size of teachers with less than 1 year teaching experience. Therefore, generalisations made based on the data collected through the questionnaire survey can only be extended to the schools in the district of Batu Pahat where the research was undertaken. Another limitation noted in this study is that the questionnaire employed is not able to penetrate deeply into identifying specific decisional issues. Interviews, if employed, could complement the findings driven from using the questionnaire.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction
In this chapter, related literature on participative decision-making is reviewed with respect to definitions of what participation in decision-making is, theory on participative decision-making and research studies conducted on teacher participation in decision-making.

2.1 Participation in decision-making
The central issue in decision making is whether teachers should or should not be involved in decision making. If they are to involve themselves, how far should they be involved, do they have the expertise and interests in making decisions and are they committed in making decisions?

Much of decision making revolves around issues of participation in solving problems and making decisions. Participation is defined as the mental and emotional involvement of a person in a group situation that encourages the individual to contribute to group goals and share responsibility for them (Davis, 1972).

Decision-making is a complex phenomenon because human beings with different preferences, interests, expertise and need-dispositions are involved in making of decisions. Lipham (1974) defines decision-making as a process in which 'awareness of a problematic state of a system, influenced by information and values are reduced to competitive alternatives among which a choice is made based on perceived outcomes states of the system'. Participation in decision-making involves three stages: how a decision is made, what a decision deals with and who participates in making a decision.

Imber and Duke (1984) asserted that it is useful to distinguish two forms of participation in decision-making: involvement and influence. Involvement means overt or active participation in one or more phases of decision making such as attending a meeting, providing or gathering of information or expressing a preference over alternative options. Influence refers to the quality of having an effect on the decision made. Influence due to its nature, is more difficult to identify than involvement because according to Bacharach and Lawler (1980), influence is the form of power which stems from the capacity to shape decisions by informal or non-authoritative means. A direct reason for this is that headmasters cannot embody all the professional expertise which a school needs and thus teachers with specific expertise in various aspects of curriculum and pedagogy will be in a position to exercise considerable influence on the decision making process in the school (Hoyle, 1986).

Decision-making is involved in almost all levels of an organisation and in almost all aspects of management such as leadership, communication and organizational change and in administrative aspects as planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating and controlling (Lunenberg & Ornstein, 1991). Participation in organizational decision-making has emerged as a central concern of teachers too (Alutto and Belasco, 1975). It is becoming increasingly ‘fashionable’ as school site management becomes more popular.

It should not be hypothesized that a teacher’s desire to participate will lead, if occasions present themselves, to actual, sustained participation, or the utilization of avenues for participation. According to Riley (1984), while teachers do want greater
participation, the use of identified avenues for participation is selective and this is supported by Walker (1975) cited in Dyson, Savery and Sourtar (1992) who found that workers have a greater preference to participate in some areas of the decision-making process than others. It seems that a worker’s propensity to participate depends on the ability and the interest of the operative. This is supported by Inkpen et al. (1975) cited in Davies (1983) that teachers desired greater participation in some areas than others. On some occasions teachers did not choose to be involved in decision-making because the issue lay outside their interest zone – an area referred to by Barnard (1976) cited in Rice and Schneider (1994) as a ‘zone of indifference’ so that any directive was accepted without question and with little obvious interest. Knoop and O’Reilly (1975) cited in Davies (1983) found that teachers did not want absolute control but favored a more collaborative role.

The use of participative decision making in schools has two major potential benefits: (1) arriving at better decisions and (2) enhancing the growth and development of the organization’s participants (for example, greater sharing of goals, improved motivation, improved communication, better-developed group-process skills). This is supported by Kessler (1992) who found that collegial decision making has not always been a smooth process but positive results had been obtained reinforcing the commitment of the staff. Thus, this study is to identify the areas that teachers currently participate and desire to participate and also whether or not they prefer a collaborative role in decision making.

One major factor influencing participatory decision-making in schools is the leadership style exhibited by the principals or headmasters. Based on this, Tannenbaum and Schmidt (1958) constructed a hierarchy of participatory behaviors as follow:
1. Leader makes decision and announces it.
2. Leader ‘sells’ decision.
3. Leader presents the ideas for the decision, then invites question to clarify.
4. Leader proposes tentative decisions which is subject to group modification.
5. Leader indicates precipitating problem, set alternatives from group, then selects and alters for a decision.
6. Leader defines the limits for the decision within these limits from the group.
7. Leader permits subordinates to function in a decision-making capacity within the limits mutually defined by superior and group.

Based on the hierarchy of participatory behaviors, Stine (1993) cited in Liontos and Balster (1994) describes the principal’s new role as an organizer, advisor, and consensus builder, who takes advantage of the group’s thinking in shared decision making. The principal helps a school become ready for shared decision making by promoting a noncompetitive, trusting climate, creating opportunities for staff to express ideas, and placing a priority on professional development. The findings from this study would denote the role of principals or headmasters in participative decision making in schools.

2.2 Theory on participative decision making
Decision making – rational, deliberate, purposeful action, beginning with the development of a decision strategy and moving through implementation and appraisal of results – occurs in all organizations. The process is the same in schools even if the content is different. Deciding is a sine qua non of educational administration because the school is basically a decision-making structure (Hoy & Miskel, 1991).
There is no single best way to organize, to teach, to do research, or to make decisions. However, some approaches are more effective than others. The 'best approach' is the one that fits the circumstances (Hoy and Miskel, 1991). Shared decision making has taken on added importance as reformers advocate teacher involvement in decision making. Participation in decision making can improve the quality of decisions and promote co-operation if the right strategy is linked to the right situation, that is, the decision of subordinate involvement is best made using a contingency model (Hoy and Tarter, 1993). A contingency model is the best approach that matches the circumstances. Participation in decision making is becoming increasingly 'fashionable' as school site management becomes more popular.

Bridges (1967) cited in Hoy and Tarter (1993) was the first to develop a model of shared decision making using the zone to guide the extent of subordinate participation. Although his formulation was developed for use by school principals to involve teachers in the decision-making process, it is useful to extend participation in decision making to educational administration in general. He advanced two propositions:

1. As subordinates are involved in making decisions located in their zone of acceptance, participation will be less effective. The zone of acceptance refers to decisions which employees simply accept because they are indifferent to them – orders are accepted without conscious questioning of their authority.
2. As subordinates are involved in making decisions clearly outside of their zone of acceptance, participation will be more effective.

2.2.1 Hoy – Tarter Model of shared decision making
Hoy and Tarter (1993) developed a normative theory of shared decision making. This model suggests the conditions under which subordinates should be involved in decision making and the frequency, nature, purpose and structure of their involvement. Three decision rules have been developed as guidelines to decision making, that are:

- The relevance rule: Do subordinates have a personal stake in the decision outcome?
- The expertise rule: Do subordinates have expertise to contribute to the decision?
- The commitment rule: Are subordinates committed to the organizational goals?

Collaborative decision making is called for when the teachers have expertise, a personal stake, and commitment. In fact, the only issue here is whether the decision should be a product of total consensus (a consensual situation) or a simple majority (a majoritarian situation). However desirable, consensus is not usually realistic. When the decision requires total acceptance (by law or for successful implementation), an administrator must hold out for unanimity. These situations are rare. More commonly, teachers and administrators seek a democratic solution.

According to Hoy and Miskel (1996), teachers are not always committed to the aims of the school. Sometimes, their personal agendas may be different from the school’s goals. In these conflictual situations, unrestricted participation is counter productive. Still, effective decision making requires using teacher expertise while allaying their anxieties about the consequences of the decision.

When teachers have a personal stake in the outcome, but no expertise to contribute, we have a marginal situation called the stakeholder situation. Whether or not teachers are committed to the aims of the school, unrestricted participation is dangerous because it may lead to frustration as teachers are asked to do a job for which they are ill-prepared (Hoy & Tarter, 1995).
When teachers have expertise to contribute to problems in which they have no interest, we have a marginal situation called the expert situation. Regardless of their commitment to the school, teachers involved in these instrumental decisions may feel that they are merely being used by their superiors (Hoy & Tarter, 1995).

When teachers have no expertise and no personal stake in the outcome, we have a non-collaborative situation. They have neither the inclination nor the skill to aid in the process (Hoy & Tarter, 1995).

According to them, participation is not simply a yes or no decision; it varies along a continuum from extensive to limited. Extensive participation in decision making means involving individuals in the process as early and as long as possible. The decision-making process has been conceived as a six-stage cycle:
1. Define the problem.
2. Specify reasonable alternatives.
3. Examine the consequences for each alternative.
4. Select a strategy for action.
5. Implement the plan.
6. Monitor and evaluate the plan.

To maximize involvement, teachers or other administrators are brought into the process as early as possible. Extensive collaboration occurs when subordinates share in the definition and elaboration of the problem and then are involved in each successive step of the cycle. Participation is limited when people are involved in the later steps of the process. In practical terms, the steps in the decision-making process in which teachers or administrators are involved, as well as whether they recommend or actually select a strategy for action, depend on the subordinates’ zone of acceptance and the area of freedom granted to the administrator by the district. It is important to make clear to teachers the boundaries of their authority and the area of freedom to decide.

Once the administrator has determined that subordinates should be involved in deciding, Hoy and Tarter (1995) suggested five decision-making structures on how the process should proceed. These structures are the appropriate matching between administrative delegation and actual teacher involvement. Administrative delegation is the extent to which administrators give teachers the authority to make decisions. Teacher involvement is the degree to which teachers actually participate in decision making. Group consensus is the most extensive involvement and delegation possible within an organization, while unilateral decision making marks the least. There should be a congruence between teacher involvement and administrative delegation. The structures of the decision-making arrangements arrayed along the following continuum:
1. Group consensus: The administrator involves participants in the decision making, then the group decides. All group members share equally as they generate and evaluate a decision. Total consensus is required before a decision can be made.
2. Group decision: The administrator involves participants in the decision making, then the group decides, using parliamentary procedures. All group members share equally as they generate, evaluate and attempt consensus. Ultimately, though, a decision is usually made by the majority.
3. Group advisory: The administrator solicits the opinion of the entire group, discusses the implications of group suggestions, then makes a decision that may or may not reflect subordinates’ desires.