FEATURE

Perception of Faculty Participation in Academy Governance in the Central Luzon Conference, Philippines

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Abstract: *This study explores faculty and administrators' views about faculty participation in school governance. Ten dimensions of teacher participation were considered for this study: goals, vision or mission, facilitating procedures and structures, curriculum and instruction, budgeting, staffing, staff development, operations, standards, and spiritual aspects of school operations. Administrators' perceptions of the actual level of faculty participation were higher than those of the faculty. The administrators and faculty desired that faculty should be more involved in the decision making procedures than is present practice in the schools. Recommendations include increasing faculty participation in school governance, and in particular, drawing the attention of school administrators and management boards to this need.*

Introduction

Participatory leadership in Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) educational institutions has been my concern and deep interest since serving in Bangladesh Union Mission (BAUM) as the education director. I am particularly interested in exploring ideas regarding faculty participation in school operation, school administration, administrative function and the decision making process. It is important to know about related research in the Southern Asia-Pacific region (in both Adventist and non-Adventist institutions) regarding perceived advantages, limitations of, support for, and barriers to faculty participation in school governance.

Participatory decision making is advocated by many experts both in the fields of education and business (Bauch & Goldring, 1998; Campbell, Kyriakides, Muijs & Robinson, 2004; Liontos & Lasway, 1996). There are many theories and concepts about school administrative leadership styles. Prominent among these theories are early trait theory, power and influence theory, behavioral theory, situational theory, transactional theory, and

transformational theory (Grint, 2003; Hoy & Miskel, 2002; Kreitner & Kinicki, 2001; Luthans, 2002). There is opportunity for faculty participation in several school administrative areas. According to Floyd (1985) these areas include curriculum design, faculty personnel status, selection and evaluation of administrators, strategic planning, budgeting and retrenchment and financial exigency. There is, however, no single method or model of administration that makes a leader absolutely prudent.

This study investigated the idea of faculty involvement in school administration as perceived by faculty and school administrators in selected SDA high schools on the island of Luzon in the Philippines. The goal is to determine the involvement of the faculty in school governance as perceived by both the school administrators and the faculty. Do faculty and administrators differ in their perceptions of actual and desired faculty participation in school governance? Do background variables such as gender and experience affect faculty and administrators' perceptions of actual and desired participation in school governance? This study may help school administrators and management boards to better understand the need for faculty participation in school operation and take the necessary steps to promote it in their schools in the future.

Related Literature

The concept of participation is discussed broadly in literature about people who are involved in group activities. The term "participation" is often synonymously used in business and educational organizations as shared decision making or shared governance (Bauch & Goldring, 1998; Campbell, Liontos & Lasway, 1996). This concept of decentralization of governance sometimes refers to transferring authority to the local units of the organization (Liontos & Lasway, 1996). Participation has been shown to have a positive effect on school organization. It is a process designed to allow faculty to share their thoughts, ideas and opinions about the operation of the school. It is a collaborative function of leadership which explains the idea of shared governance as a cooperative endeavor among colleagues, leaders and subordinates to set goals, objectives and reach them with corporate effort, talents, intelligence and individual dynamics (Tomlinson, Gunter & Smith, 1999).

Participation is defined as "the mental and emotional involvement of a person in the group situation that encourages that individual to contribute to the group goals and to share responsibilities for them" (Mohrman, Wohlsteeer, et al., 1994, p. 277). Active teacher participation in the decision making of schools refers to teacher involvement in solving issues and sharing insights in school administrative functions. This implies that teachers need to have proper representation in school administration to contribute in the decision making process of school operation (Campbell, et al., 2004).

Participation in organizational activities follows no universal pattern. Faculty participation in a school can be voluntary or involuntary. Sometimes superiors or coworkers can create undue influence. Some people tend to be more involved in participation than others. Participation can be formal or informal; direct or indirect (Floyd, 1985). These factors in participation have a significant effect on the functioning of a school. According to Floyd's (1985) observation, employees who willingly participate in decision making are also interested in their responsibilities as well as their personal advancement. When faculty participate in school decision making, it builds a sense of belonging and helps them identify more strongly with the organization (Ashby & Krug, 1998).

The research on participation and shared decision making in management and organizational leadership points to two styles of leadership. The first one is *hierarchical leadership*, in which decisions are commonly made at the top level of leadership and channeled down for implementation without question. The second style is *participative leadership*, in which leaders consult with colleagues as well as with subordinates and thoughtfully consider their opinions (Kuku, 2000; Masinda, 1997; Thang 1995).

Hierarchical leadership gives the impression of being traditional, autocratic or bureaucratic. This leadership style considers that the employees are satisfied with receiving financial benefits and job security from their work, and that subordinates are incapable of making a prolific contribution to the organization (Magau, 1999). However, research shows that employees' satisfaction is not limited only to external incentives. Some of them are capable participators in the leadership of the organization (Kuku, 2000).

Contrary to an autocratic style of leadership, participatory leadership is widely accepted in recent times in business enterprises as well as in educational organizations. Participatory leadership provides a sense of ownership and power (Hargreaves, 1995), and influences employees to make a greater investment in the organization. It also increases the commitment and self-esteem of participants. In accepting participatory leadership roles in the organization, employees accept more accountability when they participate in making decisions (Ashby & Krug, 1998). In education, this increases teachers' morale and commitment in service (Magau, 1999).

Dimensions of Faculty Participation

Many experts advocate participatory decision making. However, it is essential to identify the scope for faculty in which they can significantly participate in decision making and the areas where they should not participate. To identify the scope of teachers participation in schools, several researchers and practitioners (Floyd, 1985; Kuku, 2000; Masinda, 1997) have developed instruments which consider participation in school governance in several areas

of administrative functions. Sometimes these areas overlap with one another. Floyd's (1985) analysis identified six areas of administrative function in which faculty can participate in decision making: (a) curriculum design, (b) faculty personnel status, (c) selection and evaluation of administrators, (d) strategic planning, (e) budgeting, and (f) retrenchment and financial exigency. According to Masinda (1997), Russell recommended nine dimensions of decision making in the organization, and Masinda added a tenth for Adventist schools: (1) goals, vision and mission, (2) standards, (3) curriculum and instruction, (4) budgeting, (5) staffing, (6) operations, (7) facilitating procedures and structures, (8) staff development, (9) demographics, (10) spiritual aspects.

Barriers to Participation

While some factors exist that facilitate faculty participation in a school's operation, research on faculty participation also explains several barriers that inhibit teacher participation in decision making in schools. Some of the barriers are as follows:

1. According to Ellis (2000), three barriers to faculty participation are: (a) lack of promotion and tenure process, (b) lack of funds to pay for equipment needed in up-front development, and (c) lack of incentives for rewards for participants.

2. According to Kuku (2000), teacher contracts and legal rulings (policies) discourage the delegation of authority to faculty.

3. Inadequate resources may cause decision making to seem like merely a mental exercise lacking practical application (Kuku, 2000).

4. Participatory decisions are time consuming and can interrupt private time. After a long time of participation, when decisions of the meeting are not implemented as soon as expected, such results are discouraging and teachers are reluctant for new participation (Geraci, 1996).

5. Psychologically unprepared faculty is a hindrance to participate in the decision making process (Cheng & Cheung, 1999).

6. In schools where faculty may be psychologically prepared to participate in decision making, it is common to find restrictions on school creativity by the central office. This dilemma is aggravated by a lack of understanding about the participative process in decision making (Geraci, 1996).

7. Administrative lack of transparency and leadership skills prohibits faculty participation.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Faculty Participation

Studies on participation of faculty and employees in the operation of schools and organizations have found advantages to participation as well as

disadvantages.   Many authors and researchers recognize the advantages of faculty/employee participation in decision making. Some of these advantages are considered to be the following:

1. Opportunities to share the diversity of individual knowledge, experience, expertise and analytical skills which lead to better decisions (Masinda, 1997).

2. A greater understanding of the plans, goals and objectives (Campbell, et al., 2004; Floyd, 1985).

3. Improved cooperation, mutual understanding, teamwork. It aids the resolution of conflicts (Kuku, 2000; Magau 1999; Masinda, 1997).

4. A greater sense of ownership and stronger commitment to implementing decisions (Campbell, et al., 2004; Kuku, 2000; Liontos & Lashway, 1996).

5. Increased satisfaction, morale, and personal development of faculty (Dale & Cooper, 1992; Thang, 2003).

In spite of the many advantages of faculty participation in decision making, there may be questions about its universal validity.   Studies show that participatory decision making has limitations. According to Floyd (1985) some of these limitations are:

1. Broad participation is time consuming and not usable when an immediate decision is needed.

2. Decisions based on extremely broad participation may not give adequate weight to the primary applicable expertise.

3. Group decision making diffuses organizational responsibility, making it difficult to assign responsibility for success or blame for failure.

4. Providing for participation in some areas may lead to expectations for participation in a broader range of decisions than leaders may desire.

5. Extensive use of participation may result in leaders being viewed as weak.

6. Participative decisions require special leadership skills and may lead to poor results if the leader lacks those skills.

Adventist Perceptions on Faculty Participation

Ellen G. White is one of the founding leaders of the SDA Church. Adventists believe that God inspired her. She did not have much formal education yet she wrote many books and articles valued as scholarly writings and messages to the believers and leaders of church work. Adventists believe that the Holy Bible is the inspired message of God and it is the greater light, while White's writing is a lesser light (White, 1953). Her writings are based on sound Biblical principles.

White encouraged participatory leadership and working relationships in schools as well as in church administration in the following statements:

- "As laborers together with God, they should seek to be in harmony with one another. There should be frequent councils, and earnest, whole-hearted co-operation" (1909, p. 97).

- "In order for the work to be built up strong and symmetrical, there is need of varied gifts and different agencies, all under the Lord's direction; He will instruct the workers according to their several abilities. Co-operation and unity are essential to a harmonious whole, each laborer doing his God-given work, filling his appropriate position, and supplying the deficiency of another. One worker left to labor alone is in danger of thinking that his talent is sufficient to make a complete whole" (1970, p. 104).

These quotations clearly advocate cooperative relationships in schools. White (1962) advises that leaders should not choose to do the work and bear the responsibility alone. Through wise management, they will have the tact to recognize talent in others. They will use others who have talents to share their responsibilities to enhance the quality of their work.

In White's writings we find a rationale for cooperation or participation in the school and organization because one individual does not have all the talents or skills required for school operation. Upon this principle the SDA Church organizational working framework developed. To support the worldwide Adventist church work, a participatory working structure is developed as follows: General Conference, Divisions, Union Missions/Conferences, Missions/Conferences and local churches (see also General Conference Working Policy, 1998-99). A similar system of participatory organizational structure is encouraged in every SDA institution. The Southern Asia-Pacific Division Educational Policy Manual (Southern Asia-Pacific Division, 1998) provides guidelines for a school governance body, which is composed of administrators, faculty, and staff representatives rather then single person leadership. It suggests that "school administrators should delegate responsibilities and authority in addition to the prerogatives of discretionary and independent judgment" (p. 5,

47). Generally, Adventist institutions should function through board and committees for their governance.

Research on faculty participation in Adventist schools around the world confirms the importance and need for this practice in our schools. A study was done in India on the empowerment of teachers in selected SDA schools and found that teachers perceive themselves as moderately empowered, which encouraged them more to support school administration. It also revealed that the highest participation was found in the area of spirituality. The teachers who had been working for at least five years felt more empowered in their participation (Kurian, 1999).

Another study was done in Africa on faculty participation in school governance as perceived by educators and school leaders in SDA colleges and universities in Africa. The report tells that faculty were relatively satisfied in the area of curriculum, but they perceived very little participation in the areas of budgeting, staffing and other operations of the school (Masinda, 1997). It also showed that there was no difference between the levels of perception of school leaders and faculty. Both groups indicated that faculty should be involved in participative decision making in school governance. A study on servant leadership in SDA academy administrators in North Philippines showed that teachers desired to be more involved in decision making (Thang, 1995).

Research Design

The present study is a comparative and correlative regression survey designed to measure the background variables, administrators' perception about actual and desired faculty participation in school governance, and faculty perception about actual and desired faculty participation in school governance (see Figure 1).
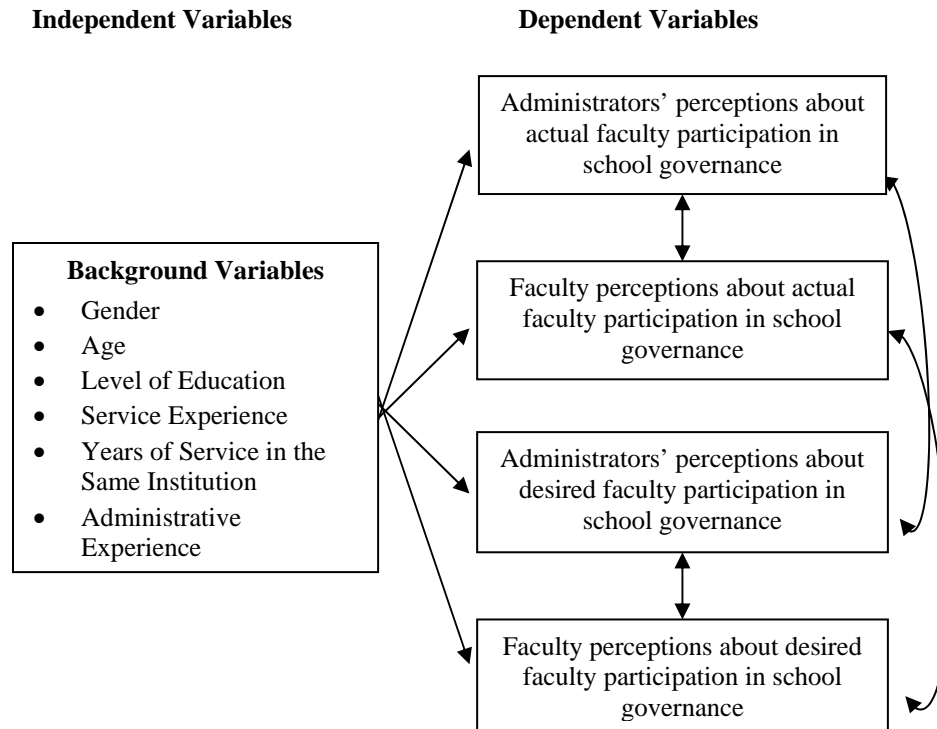
Independent Variables   **Dependent Variables**

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework.

The study also examined the relationship between administrative leadership style and administrators' perceptions about faculty participation in school governance; administrative leadership style and faculty participation in schools governance; administrators' background variables and perception about faculty participation in schools governance; administrators' background variables and their leadership styles. It further explored the correlation between the teachers' perceptions about desired and actual faculty participation in school governance; teachers' background variables and faculty participation.

The territory of Philippines is composed of several unions and conferences. In this study, it was not realistic to select all the schools in the country because of time and the logistics of data collection. The population of this study was the teachers and administrators of the Central Luzon Conference academies. The total population (teachers and administrators) of these academies was 66 and all were included in this study. The demographics of this population are expected to

differ on variables such as gender, age, education, service experiences, responsibilities and duration of service in the school.

For this study, *Administrators* were defined as employees of the academy, who carried any of the following titles: principal, vice-principal, treasurer, public relations officer, human resources director, student counselor, registrar, librarian, dormitory dean, chaplain, or head of academic or industrial departments. In cases where the academy was attached to a college or university, only the academy administrators were included. For inclusion, the person had to be available during the time of data collection and voluntarily consent to participate in the study.

Criteria for teacher selection were: (1) The teacher must be a probationary or a regular worker with at least one year of teaching experience and must be employed in an SDA academy. (2) The teacher must be a Seventh-day Adventist. (3) The teacher must voluntarily consent to participate in the study.

The survey instrument is taken from Masinda (1997). Small adaptations were made in the arrangement of the responses and demographics. The instrument had two scales: 'A' measures actual and 'B' measures desired perceptions of teachers and administrators about teachers' participation in school governance. This instrument contained 78 questions in ten dimensions of faculty participation in decision making. The number of questions in each dimension is indicated in Table 1.

Table 1
Distribution of Survey Questions

Goals, vision, and mission	9
Standards	6
Curriculum and instruction	10
Budgeting	6
Staffing	6
Operations	5
Facilitating procedures and structures	5
Staff development	5
Spiritual aspects	16
Demographics	7
Overall	3

The instrument in Masinda's study had a reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of .96 for both scale A and scale B. The instrument was made up of Likert-type questions with options of: *strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree.*

Data Analysis and Discussion

A total of 70 questionnaires were distributed and 63 participants answered and returned questionnaires, which translates into a 90% return rate. The information gathered on respondents included 6 demographic variables in two categories: (1) personal descriptions of administrators and faculty including their gender, age, highest education; (2) employment description of administrators and faculty regarding their current position, teaching experiences, administrative experiences and years spent in the same academy.

The data revealed that the respondents were 18 administrators and 45 faculty members. Among them, 24 were male and 39 were female. The age ranges of the respondents showed that 73% were 20-40 years old and 17% were above 40 years old. The academic qualifications variable showed that 61.9% respondents were bachelor's degree holders. A total of 33.3% held a Master's degree, and only 1.6% held a doctorate. Those who had not completed the bachelor's level were 3.2%. Teaching and administrative experience was determined in years. Concerning teaching experience demographic data showed that 66.6% teachers had less than 9 years teaching experience. Only 4.8% of teachers had more than 20 years' experience. These statistics reveal that the majority of teachers in the SDA academies in Luzon were young females with a bachelor's degree (see Table 2). It should be a concern to administrators that teachers are not retained in the system long enough for schools to benefit from their rich experience.

One of the research questions was "Do the administrators and faculty differ in their perception of actual and desired faculty participation in school governance?" To answer this question the mean of the total actual and desired scores of the participation dimensions are compared. A *t* test for dependent groups was used to determine if there were significant differences (p<.005).

The result shows that faculty and administrators' perception of desired level of faculty participations is significantly higher at p<.005. (faculty desired M= 3.69, actual M= 4.44, and administrators' desired M= 4.43, actual M = 3.66). This suggests that the faculty were not involved in school governance as they wanted to be. Similarly the administrators perceived that teachers were not involved in the school governance as they desired. This reveals that there is a gap between administrators' actions and beliefs (see Table 3). Similar results were found in North Philippines Academies before (Kuku, 2000).

Table 2
Academy Administrators and Faculty Demographic Data

	Categories	*f*	**%**
Current position	Administrators	18	28.6
	Faculty	45	71.4
	Total	63	100.0
Gender	Male	24	38.1
	Female	39	61.9
	Total	63	100.0
Age	20 – 30 years	23	36.5
	31-40 years	23	36.5
	41-50 years	9	14.3
	51 – 60 years	8	12.7
	Total	63	100.0
Highest degree	Below bachelor's	2	3.2
	Baccalaureate	39	61.9
	Master's	21	33.3
	Doctoral	1	1.6
	Total	63	100.0
Years of adm experience	1- 4 years	5	7.9
	5- 8 years	1	1.6
	13 – 16 years	1	1.6
	20 - above	2	3.2
	None	54	85.7
	Total	63	100.0
Years of tchg experience	1- 4 years	22	34.9
	5- 8 years	15	23.8
	9 – 12 years	7	11.1
	13 – 16 years	8	12.7
	17- 20 years	4	6.3
	20 - above	7	11.1
	Total	63	100.0
Years spent in the present school	1- 4 years	30	47.6
	5- 8 years	12	19.0
	9 – 12 years	6	9.5
	13 – 16 years	9	14.3
	17- 20 years	3	4.8
	20 - above	3	4.8
	Total	63	100.0

In search of the answer to the question "Do the administrators and faculty differ in their perception of actual faculty participation in school governance?" The mean of the total actual of administrators' perception scores are compared with the total actual of faculty participation scores. A *t* test for dependent groups was used to determine if there was significance (see Table 4).

The data show that there is a significant difference (p<.001) between administrators' and faculty's actual perception of faculty participation in school governance. Faculty actual perception is .03 higher than administrator's actual perception about faculty participation in school governance (actual M= 3.66, desired M=3.69; see Table 4). Masinda's similar study in Africa also revealed that the school leaders perceived that the faculty were frequently involved in decision making, although they desired more involvement (Masinda, 1997).

Table 3
Comparison of Actual and Desired Participation of Faculty and Administrators

	Comparison	Mean	*t* Test	df	Sig.
Faculty perception of faculty participation in school governance	Total of actual	3.69	-9.73	44	<.001
	Total of desired	4.44			
Administrators' perception of faculty participation in school governance	Total of actual	3.66	-11.29	17	<.001
	Total of desired	4.43			

Table 4
Comparison of Administrators and Faculty Perception of
Faculty Actual Participation in School Governance

	Position	N	Mean	*t*-Test	df	Sig.
Actual Participation	Administrators	18	3.66	60.95	62	<.001
	Faculty	45	3.69			

One of the research questions stated: "Do the administrators and faculty differ in their perception of desired faculty participation in school governance?" To answer this question the mean of the total desired of administrators'

perception scores were compared with the total desired faculty participation scores. A *t*-test for dependent groups was used to determine if there were significant differences. Data showing comparison of the mean for desired participation of the administrators and faculty are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5
Comparison of Administrators and Faculty Perception of
Faculty Desired Participation in School Governance

	Position	N	Mean	*t*-Test	df	Sig.
Desired participation	Administrators	18	4.43			
	Faculty	45	4.44	93.14	62	<.001

The faculty desired participation was .0141 higher than administrators which was statistically significant (p<.001). Similarly, studies in SDA colleges in Africa (Masinda, 1997) and in SDA academies in North Philippines (Kuku, 2000) showed that faculty perceived desire for participation in the school governance was higher than the administrators' desire for them to participate.

Concerning demography, the question was, "Do faculty differ by background variables (age, gender, highest degree completed, teaching experience, administrative experience and years spend in the same school) in their perceptions of actual faculty participation in school governance?" To answer this question an ANOVA was used to determine if there were significant differences according to the faculty background variables. Data comparing the mean for actual faculty participation according to their background variables showed that only highest degree was significant (F (3, 41) = 3.749, p = .018) (see Table 6). This means that participants' degree attained made a significant difference in the faculty's perception of their desired level of participation in school administration. Since there were only two levels of degrees (baccalaureate and graduate), a *t* test was performed. The statistics showed that faculty holding a bachelor's degree had higher levels of desired faculty participation in the school administration than the faculty members with a graduate degree (See Table 7). Could it be that faculty members desire to participate but are too seldom getting an opportunity to do so? Furthermore, could this be leading to the general lack of retention of experienced teachers?

Table 6

Comparison of Faculty Perception of Desired Faculty
Participation According to Their background Variables

Background Variables	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Age	3	.056	.302	.824
	41	.185		
Gender	1	.529	3.156	.083
	43	.168		
Highest degree	3	.555	3.749	.018*
	41	.148		
Years of teaching experience	5	288	1.787	
	39	.161		.138
Years of administrative experience	1	.132	.745	.393
	43	.177		
Years spent in the same school	6	.343	2.299	.054
	38	.149		

* $p < .05$

Table 7

Comparison of Faculty Perception of Desired Faculty
Participation According to Their Highest Degree

Degree	N	Mean
Bachelor's	29	4.52*
Graduate	16	4.29

* $p < .05$

Conclusions

The study showed that both the faculty and administrators perceived that there was a gap between actual and desired faculty participations in school governance. Their desired participation was greater than the actual. The teachers with bachelor's degrees had a significantly higher desire for participation than the faculty with graduate degrees. Both administrators and faculty perceived that faculty participation is important but it is lacking in the schools. This suggests that SDA schools in Luzon need to pay more attention to creating an environment which encourages greater teacher participation in school governance. Interpreting demographic data, it could be concluded that there is a need for retaining experienced teachers in the SDA schools in the Philippines because most of the teachers have less than 10 years of teaching experience.

Recommendations

The major findings and conclusions drawn from the study lead to some recommendations for improving faculty participation in school governance as well as suggestions for further research. It is recommended that:

1. School administrators assess their leadership style so as to understand their own reticence to involve faculty in school governance.

2. School administrators seek ways to incorporate and encourage greater faculty involvement in school governance.

3. The management boards of the academies evaluate and provide guidelines to academy administrators to improve their faculty participation in school governance.

Some areas for further research which stem from this study.

1. Factors that promote or hinder faculty participation in school governance of SDA or public institutions.

2. Factors that are leading to a relatively high turnover of teachers in Central Luzon Conference academies and consequently those factors that are likely to increase the retention of experienced faculty in these schools.

3. The impact of culture on participative management practice in schools.

4. Reasons administrators fail to involve teachers in school governance though they perceive its importance.

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