InFo
Vol. 5, No. 1
April 2002
*Pp.*19 - 46

Teacher Participating in Decision Making: A Comparative Study of School Leader and Teacher Perceptions in North Philippine Academies

Samson Mwanus Kuku & John Wesley Taylor V

ABSTRACT — Shared decision making (SDM) has been identified as an essential element in successful educational reform. This study compared the perceptions of school leaders and teachers regarding actual and preferred faculty participation in decision making across nine dimensions of school governance—goals/vision/mission, budgeting, staffing, operations, standards, curriculum/instruction, facilitating procedures and structures, staff development, and spiritual matters. Principal instrumentation included the Teacher Involvement and Participation Scale 2 (TIPS 2) developed by Russell, Cooper, and Greenblatt (1992), with a spiritual matters subscale added by Masinda (1997). Data were collected from 165 school leaders and teachers working in 11 Seventh-day Adventist secondary schools in north Philippines. Findings revealed that levels of faculty decision making preferred by teachers were significantly greater on all TIPS 2 dimensions than the levels they perceived currently existed, with greater effect sizes in the areas of staffing, budgeting, and staff development. School leaders reported corroborating data. Both teachers and school leaders supported the desirability of faculty participation in decision making in schools, agreeing that faculty participation in decision making is important for school improvement, better school morale, increased job satisfaction, and increased professionalism. Both groups also identified a domineering management style as the major impediment to faculty participation in decision making, followed by poor interpersonal relationships, insufficient resources, inadequate support, and poor communication. Commitment of teachers and frequent consultation by school leaders were cited as significant factors that can enhance faculty participation in SDM. Findings also revealed that teachers who had 11-20 years of teaching experience were more actively involved than their peers in decision-making related to staff development and to curriculum and instruction. Furthermore, educators in schools operating under the auspices of denominational conferences or missions were found to have greater autonomy over operational aspects of the institution than educators working in secondary schools operating under the umbrella of a tertiary institution.

Introduction

Effective schools do not come about magically. They are the result of careful planning and strategic decision making. Such decision making, in fact, pervades all administrative functions—from planning, organizing, and staffing, to directing, coordinating, and controlling (Lunenberg and Ornstein, 1991). Many organizations, however, have traditionally placed the major sources of decision making at the top of the organizational hierarchy, concurrently limiting the power and influence of decision making at lower levels. This approach was supported by early organizational and management theorists who believed that workers were motivated primarily by economic incentives and job security, and that efficient organizations developed rational rules and procedures to keep subordinates under control and protect the organization from human caprice. Involvement of subordinates in decision making was believed to be incompatible with organizational effectiveness (Schmuck & Runkel, 1985).

More recently, however, empirical evidence has begun to emerge supporting a shared approach to decision making. Transfer of decision-making authority from central government to institutional members, for example, was found in schools to yield greater productivity, greater teacher satisfaction, and enhanced student learning (Biziorek, 1999; Enderle, 1999; Horejs, 1996; Lagerweij & Voogt 1990; Leithwood & Jantzi,1990; and Weaver, 1997). Consequently, shared decision making (SDM), the involvement of faculty in deciding issues related to school governance, has been increasingly advocated as essential to bring about significant change in educational practice (Brown & Miller, 1998; Reitzug & Capper, 1996).

Current theorists maintain, for example, that teacher participation in decision making not only facilitates decision implementation, but leads teachers to feel respected and empowered. Further, such participation builds trust, helps teachers acquire new skills, increases school effectiveness, and strengthens staff morale, commitment, and teamwork (Lashway,1996; Liontos,1994; Martin & Kragler, 1999; Peterson-del Mar, 1994; Wall & Rinehart, 1998). Consequently, SDM has been identified as an important contributor to successful school management. Shapiro, Benjamin, Hunt, and Shapiro (1995), for example, maintain that SDM is "the heart of administrative process, crucial for any administrator's success in any organization" (p. 80). Similarly, Plunkett and Fournier (1991) view SDM as a "powerful antidote" against institutional complacency and failure (p. 7).

Others, however, contend that SDM, while useful under certain circumstances, may not be appropriate in others (e.g., Hoy & Miskel, 1987; Beckett, 1997). Taylor and Tashakkor (1997), and Reitzug and Capper (1996), for example, found mixed reactions among school leaders and faculty toward accepting SDM in school management. Some school leaders were hesitant to relinquish decision-making power they have held for many years, while others simply preferred the status quo, dreading change. Many school faculty members also shared a similar sentiment,

being reticent to challenge norms deeply rooted in the structure and culture of the schools. They felt that participation in decision making might intrude on the arena of responsibility pertaining to institutional leadership and could also create a strain on their free time. Consequently, some teachers preferred only limited participation in organizational SDM activities, while others were comfortable participating only in decision making tasks directly related to their roles.

In essence, while SDM seems destined to be one of the major reforms on the agenda of many schools, concerns have been raised as to the extent to which it is desired by school leaders and by the faculty themselves. Given that the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) church operates a worldwide educational system, including a number of academies in northern Philippines, it seemed appropriate to address the following question in this study: What are the existing and preferred patterns of faculty participation in decision making held by teachers and administrators of Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) academies in north Philippines on matters pertaining to school governance?

The major purpose guiding this study was thus to determine if there was a significant discrepancy between actual and preferred levels of faculty participation in administrative decision-making activities, as reported by school leaders and by the teachers themselves. A secondary purpose was to determine if there were significant differences between the perceptions of teachers and school leaders regarding decision-making practices.

Methodology

The population of this study was comprised of teachers and school leaders in the 11 SDA academies (secondary schools covering grades 7 to 10) located in the North Philippine Union Mission (NPUM), which comprises the islands of Luzon and Palawan in the Republic of the Philippines. Two of these schools were located in urban areas while the other nine were in rural settings. The schools varied in size from a six-teacher school to a school staffed by 25 teachers.

At the time of this study, a total of 175 full-time educators were employed in these schools. Of these, approximately one quarter were members of the administration as prescribed by the Southern Asia-Pacific Division Policy Manual. Teachers who had taught at least six months in the schools, and administrators who had served in their capacity for six months or more, were eligible for the study. A minimum of six months in the present post was deemed necessary so that the respondents could be relied upon to make a fair judgment pertaining to actual faculty SDM on tasks related to the governance of their schools. A total of 165 responses (32 from school leaders and 133 from teachers) were received and utilized in this study, representing a response rate of 94.3%. (See Figure 1 for participant demographics.)

Figure 1. **School Leader and Faculty Demographic Data (N = 165)**

Characteristics	School Leader		Faculty		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Gender						
Male	16	50.0	48	33.8	61	37.0
Female	16	50.0	88	66.2	104	63.0
Age						
≤ 29	1	3.1	38	28.6	39	23.6
30 – 39	10	31.3	49	36.8	59	35.8
40 – 49	9	28.1	27	20.3	36	21.8
50 +	12	37.5	19	14.3	31	18.8
Years of Teaching Experience						
≤ 5	5	15.6	49	36.8	54	32.7
6 – 10	8	25.0	37	27.8	45	27.3
11 – 20	8	25.0	31	23.3	39	23.6
21 +	11	34.4	16	12.1	27	16.4
Length of Service in Present School						
≤ 5	9	28.1	60	45.1	69	41.8
6 – 10	9	28.1	43	32.3	52	31.5
11 – 20	6	18.8	22	16.5	28	17.0
21 +	8	25.0	8	6.0	16	9.7
Academic Qualification						
Baccalaureate	26	81.2	114	85.7	140	84.8
Graduate degree	6	18.8	19	14.3	25	15.2

The principal research instrument utilized in this study was the *Teacher Involvement and Participation Scale, Version 2* (TIPS 2), developed by Russell et al. (1992). It consists of eight subscales: goals, vision, mission; standards; curriculum and instruction; budgeting; staffing; operations; facilitating procedures and structures; and staff development (see Figure 2 for subscale descriptions). Given that this study addressed decision-making practices important to the mission and objectives of Christian schools, a ninth subscale, developed by Masinda (1997), provided a Spiritual Matters dimension. On all subscales, participants responded to two dimensions, actual participation and preferred participation in school governance, utilizing a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Almost Never to Almost Always.

Figure 2: **TIPS 2 Subscale Definitions**
(Russell, Cooper, and Greenblatt, 1992; Masinda, 1997)

Budget Subscale. The degree to which teachers participate in matters related to designing and implementing the school budget.

Curriculum and Instruction Subscale. The degree to which teachers participate in determining the school program, curriculum goals, textbook selection, educational materials, and classroom pedagogy.

Facilitating Procedures and Structures Subscale. The degree to which teachers have adequate time, reducing teaching loads, waivers from contracts and regulations, and changed schedules to permit collegial work to occur.

Goals, Vision, and Mission Subscale. The degree to which teachers are involved in framing the goals and mission of the school.

Operations Subscale. The degree to which teachers are involved in managing the building (its use, improvement and maintenance).

Staff Development Subscale. The degree to which teachers can design and implement staff development activities that meet their own needs.

Staffing Subscale. The degree to which teachers are involved with the administration in making decisions such as recruiting, interviewing, hiring, and assigning staff.

Standard Subscale. The degree to which teachers share in setting standards for their own performance and for student performance and discipline.

Spiritual Matters Subscale. The degree to which teachers are involved in planning and organizing the spiritual programs of their schools. Such programs include Bible lessons, worships, spiritual emphasis week, and other activities that lead to faith maturity congruent with the beliefs and practices of the SDA Church.

TIPS 2 developers (Russell et al., 1992) reported an overall Cronbach's alpha

of .96, with reliability coefficients ranging from a low of .71 for the Standards subscale to over .90 on the Goals/Vision/Mission, Curriculum and Instruction, and Staffing subscales. Masinda (1997), in turn, reported coefficients of .84 for the actual participation dimension and .89 for the desired participation dimension of the Spiritual Matters subscale.

In the present study, Actual Participation reliability coefficients ranged from .83 for the Standards subscale to .90 for the Spiritual Matters subscale. For the Preferred Participation dimension, alpha coefficients ranged from .82 for the Standards subsclae to .92 for the Goals/Vision/Mission subscale. (Internal reliability for the nine subscales by dimension is presented in Figure 3.)

Figure 3. **Reliability Data for TIPS 2 Subscales (N = 165)**

Subscales	Number of Items	Actual Participation	Preferred Participation
Goals, Vision and Mission	9	.87	.92
Curriculum and Instruction	10	.87	.89
Standards	6	.83	.82
Budgeting	6	.86	.87
Staffing	6	.87	.92
Staff Development	5	.85	.86
Operations	4	.89	.89
Facilitating Procedures and Structure	5	.86	.89
Spiritual Matters	10	.90	.87
Total Scales	62	.97	.97

Five Likert-scale items measuring overall respondent impressions regarding SDM practices and participation were included as a complement to the TIPS 2 instrumentation. Participants also responded to three open-ended questions. The first open-ended question solicited responses for additional areas of SDM not covered in the study. The second solicited factors respondents perceived to contribute to faculty participation in SDM in their schools, while the third solicited responses regarding (a) perceived SDM barriers and (b) ways that could enhance faculty participation in SDM. These responses were subjected to content analysis and provide a qualitative dimension to the findings in this study. It should be noted,

however, that 42% of the participants did not respond to the open-ended questions, thus potentially limiting the diversity of input provided.

Participants were advised that it would take approximately 30 minutes to complete the self-administered instrument. The primary researcher personally administered the questionnaires in eight of the schools. A packet of instrumentation was sent to three remote schools by mail. In all cases, teachers were instructed to seal completed forms in an envelope provided in order to enhance information security and confidentiality.

The significance level for hypothesis testing was set at .05, with a Bonferroni alpha adjustment utilized to compensate for multiple testing.

Report of Findings

Findings Based on TIPS 2 Data

In order to answer the question "To what extent do teachers of SDA secondary schools in the NPUM perceive actual faculty participation in decision making different from the extent they preferred to be involved?", the mean score of each of the nine subscales on the Actual Participation dimension was compared with the corresponding mean score on the Preferred Participation dimension.

For teachers, all nine subscales showed important differences (see Figure 4). Overall, the mean for each subscale on the Preferred Participation dimension was consistently and significantly higher than the corresponding mean on the Actual Participation dimension. These differences represented quite large effect sizes (Cohen, 1977), ranging from .74 for the Standards and Goals/Vision/Mission subscales to 1.33 for the Staffing subscale.

For the school leaders, all nine subscales again revealed significant differences between the Actual and Preferred Participation of teachers in decision making (see Figure 5). As was the case with teacher perceptions, the mean for each subscale on the Preferred Participation dimension was consistently and significantly higher than the corresponding mean on the Actual Participation dimension. These differences again represented quite large effect sizes (Cohen, 1977), ranging from .73 for the Standards subscale to 1.14 for the Budgeting subscale.

Figure 4. **Comparison of Teacher Actual and Preferred Participation by Teacher (N = 133)**

Subscale	Actual M	Actual SD	Preferred M	Preferred SD	Mean Diff.	Effect Size**	t	p
Staffing	2.41	.97	3.71	1.04	-1.29	1.33	-13.30	<.001*
Budgeting	2.81	.94	3.91	.85	-1.09	1.16	-12.17	<.001*
Staff Development	3.28	.88	4.19	.71	- .91	1.03	-11.51	<.001*
Curriculum & Instruction	3.55	.72	4.21	.63	- .65	0.90	-10.81	<.001*
Operations	3.19	1.02	4.09	.84	- .89	0.87	-10.45	<.001*
Procedures & Structure	3.35	.95	4.15	.81	- .80	0.84	-10.05	<.001*
Spiritual Matters	3.92	.80	4.58	.48	- .63	0.79	-10.43	<.001*
Goals, Vision, & Mission	3.83	.81	4.43	.59	- .60	0.74	- 8.47	<.001*
Standards	3.92	.70	4.44	.57	- .52	0.74	- 9.12	<.001*

* Significant at the Bonferroni adjusted probability .0055 (adjusted alpha = .05/9)

** Rank ordered from highest to lowest

Figure 5. **Comparison of Teacher Actual and Preferred Participation by Administrators (N = 32)**

Subscale	Actual		Preferred		Mean Diff.	Effect Size**	t	p
	M	SD	M	SD				
Staffing	2.89	.95	3.97	.74	-1.08	1.14	-6.84	<.001*
Budgeting	2.65	.92	3.68	.92	-1.03	1.12	-7.29	<.001*
Staff Development	3.45	.72	4.25	.71	- .79	1.10	-6.85	<.001*
Curriculum and Instruction	3.95	.75	4.61	.50	- .66	1.06	-5.29	<.001*
Operations	4.07	.56	4.65	.44	- .58	1.03	-6.23	<.001*
Procedures and Structure	3.63	.61	4.25	.62	- .62	1.02	-6.02	<.001*
Spiritual Matters	3.41	.92	4.05	.72	- .65	0.88	-5.22	<.001*
Goals, Vision, and Mission	3.75	.72	4.34	.61	- .59	0.82	-5.86	<.001*
Standards	4.09	.61	4.54	.42	- .45	0.73	-4.99	<.001*

* Significant at the Bonferroni adjusted probability .0055 (adjusted alpha = .05/9)

** Rank ordered from highest to lowest

A secondary research question examined whether there were significant differences between perceptions of teachers and school leaders regarding actual faculty participation in decision-making. To answer this research question, the mean score of teacher respondents was compared to the corresponding mean score of school leaders on each subscale of both the Actual and Preferred Participation dimensions. In the case of all subscales on each dimension, differences between the perceptions of teachers and school leaders were not statistically significant. In essence, both groups agreed that faculty participated frequently in decisions regarding goals/vision/mission, standards, spiritual matters, and curriculum and instruction, and sometimes in decisions regarding operations, staffing, staff development, and budgeting. Furthermore, both groups preferred faculty to participate "almost always" in decision making pertaining to spiritual matters and "frequently" in other areas.

The study examined whether certain demographic variables (namely, teacher age, gender, academic qualification, teaching experience, and years of service in present school) were associated with perceived levels of Actual and Preferred Participation in school governance. In the case of Actual Participation, no statistically significant findings emerged for teacher age, gender, and years of service in the present institution. For teacher academic qualification, a significant difference ($p = .003$) was found for the Operation subscale, with educators holding only baccalaureate degrees perceiving greater participation in school operational decisions than those holding a graduate degree. For years of teaching experience, significant differences were found for the Curriculum and Instruction ($p = .003$) and the Staff Development ($p = .002$) subscales. Educators with 11-20 years of teaching experience perceived greater participation in SDM in matters related to curriculum and instruction than those educators with 6-10 years of teaching experience. Similarly, educators with 11-20 years of teaching experience perceived greater participation in decisions regarding staff development than those with more or with less teaching experience. In the case of Preferred Participation, no statistically significant associations were found for any of the demographic variables.

School type was considered in reference to SDM. In terms of the urban or rural nature of the school, no significant differences were found on either the Actual or Preferred Participation dimensions. In terms of external management, 80 educators served in academies administered by colleges while the remaining 86 were from academies administered by a denominational conference or mission. On the Actual Participation dimension, a significant difference ($p < .001$) was found on the Facilitating Procedures and Structure subscale. Faculty in academies located in schools administered by conferences or missions had more autonomy over decisions related to Facilitating Procedures and Structure than their counterparts in academies that were under the administration of colleges. No significant differences, however, were found on the Preferred Participation dimension.

Findings Related to Items of Overall Impressions

The first three questions pertaining to overall SDM impressions were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). For the purposes of this study, means in the 2.500 - 3.499 range were considered in moderate agreement with the statement, while those from 3.50 and above were considered in high agreement. Means of less than 2.500 were considered to indicate low agreement with the statement. A mean difference between school leaders and teachers of .30 or more was considered to be of practical importance.

The first question stated: "I think that teachers are accountable for decisions made through a shared decision-making process." Findings indicated a moderate agreement with the statement, with no practical difference between administrators and teachers (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. **Distribution of Responses Regarding SDM Teacher Accountability**

	SD	DA	NU	AG	SA	Mean	SD
School Leaders	-	2	3	14	13	4.19	.86
(n = 32)	-	3%	9.4%	43.8%	40.6%		
Faculty	1	3	12	57	59	4.28	.79
(n = 133)	0.8%	2.3%	9.1%	43.2%	44.7%		
Combined	1	5	15	71	72	4.27	.80
(n = 165)	0.6%	3%	9.1%	43.4%	43.9%		

The second question dealt with the importance of teacher participation in decision making, and was divided into four sections. Section A stated: "I think teachers' participation in decision making is important for increased professionalism." Responses indicated a high agreement with the statement, with no practical difference between administrators and teachers (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. Distribution of Responses Regarding SDM Importance to Professionalism

	SD	DA	NU	AG	SA	Mean	SD
School Leaders	-	1	1	10	20	4.53	.72
(n = 32)	-	3.1%	3.1%	31.2%	62.5%		
Faculty	1	-	12	36	84	4.52	.72
(n = 133)	0.7%	-	9.1%	27.5%	64.1%		
Combined	1	1	13	46	104	4.52	.72
(n = 165)	0.6%	0.6%	7.9%	27.9%	63%		

Section B stated: "I think teachers' participation in decision making is important for school improvement." Responses again indicated a high agreement with the statement, with no practical difference between administrators and teachers (see Figure 8).

Figure 8. Distribution of Responses Regarding SDM Importance to School Improvement

	SD	DA	NU	AG	SA	Mean	SD
School Leaders	-	-	-	15	17	4.53	.51
(n = 32)	-	-	-	46.9%	53.1%		
Faculty	-	3	7	30	93	4.60	.69
(n = 133)	-	2.2%	5.2%	22.5%	69.9%		
Combined	-	3	7	45	110	4.59	.66
(n = 165)	-	1.8%	4.2%	27.3%	66.7%		

Section C stated: "I think teachers' participation in decision making is important for better school morale." Respondents tended to agree highly with this statement, with no practical difference between administrators and teachers (see Figure 9).

Figure 9. **Distribution of Responses Regarding SDM Importance to School Morale**

	SD	DA	NU	AG	SA	Mean	SD
School Leaders	-	-	-	7	25	4.78	.42
(n = 32)	-	-	-	21.9%	78.1%		
Faculty	-	-	6	30	96	4.68	.56
(n = 133)	-	-	45%	22.7%	72.7%		
Combined	-	-	6	37	121	4.70	.53
(n = 165)	-	-	3.7%	22.6%	73.8%		

Section D stated: "I think teachers' participation in decision making is important for increased job satisfaction." Respondents again tended to highly agree with this statement, with no practical difference between administrators and teachers (see Figure 10).

Figure 10. **Distribution of Responses Regarding SDM Importance to Job Satisfaction**

	SD	DA	NU	AG	SA	Mean	SD
School Leaders	-	-	-	9	23	4.72	.46
(n = 32)	-	-	-	28.1%	71.8%		
Faculty	1	2	7	29	9.2	4.59	.73
(n = 133)	0.7%	1.5%	5.3%	22.1%	70.2%		
Combined	1	2	7	38	115	4.62	.69
(n = 165)	0.6%	1.2%	4.3%	23.3%	70.6%		

The third question pertaining to SDM impressions stated: "Overall, I think participation in decision making in my school is working well." Results indicated an important difference between school administrators and teachers. Whereas 47% of the school leaders strongly agreed with this statement, only 29% of the teachers believed likewise (see Figure 11).

Figure 11. **Distribution of Responses Regarding SDM Functionality**

	SD	DA	NU	AG	SA	Mean	SD
School Leaders	-	2	3	12	15	4.25	.88
(n = 32)	-	6.3%	9.4%	37.5%	46.8%		
Faculty	3	15	29	47	39	3.78	1.06
(n = 133)	2.3%	11.3%	21.8%	35.3%	29.3%		
Combined	3	17	32	59	54	3.87	1.04
(n = 165)	1.8%	10.3%	19.4	35.8	32.7		

The last two general perceptions items were rated on a 3-point Likert scale, from very little participation (1) to very much participation (3). The fourth question stated: "To what extent do teachers in general participate in decision making at your school?" There was an important disparity between the perceptions of school leaders and faculty, with school leaders viewing faculty participation more optimistically than the teachers themselves (see Figure 12).

Figure 12. **Distribution of Responses Regarding General Teacher Participation in SDM**

	Very Little	Somewhat	Very Much	Mean	SD
School Leaders	2	12	17	2.48	.63
(n = 32)	6.5%	38.7%	54.8%		
Faculty	30	58	45	2.11	.74
(n = 133)	22.5%	43.6%	33.8%		
Combined	32	70	62	2.18	.73
(n = 165)	19.5%	42.7%	37.8%		

The final overall impressions question stated: "To what extent do you personally participate in decision making at your school?" Given the responses to the previous question, there was an expected disparity between the perceptions of school leaders and teachers (see Figure 13).

Figure 13. **Distribution of Responses Regarding Personal Teacher Participation in SDM**

	Very Little	Somewhat	Very Much	Mean	SD
School Leaders	3	6	23	2.62	.66
(n = 32)	9.4%	18.7%	71.9%		
Faculty	40	55	38	1.99	.77
(n = 133)	30%	41.4%	28.6%		
Combined	43	61	61	2.11	.79
(n = 165)	26%	37%	37%		

In essence, over 90% of school leaders and teachers agreed that faculty participation in SDM activities was important for increased professionalism, school improvement, better school morale, and increased job satisfaction. Only about half of school leaders, however, and approximately one-third of teachers perceived that faculty were "very much" involved in decision making.

Findings Related to Open-Ended Questions

Responses to the three open-ended questions gave teachers and school leaders opportunity to share in prose form ideas and impressions related to SDM practices. Four principal areas were explored: (1) ways and means faculty can be involved in SDM, (2) factors believed to have contributed to SDM practices, (3) barriers to SDM practices, and (4) factors that can further enhance SDM practices.

Ways and means considered by many school leaders to be essential to SDM included institutional planning, teacher empowerment, and matters related to students. Ways and means less frequently mentioned related to leadership style, policies, faculty loading, and relationships. Teachers also recognized teacher empowerment and student matters as important decision-making activities in which faculty could be involved. The teachers, however, also emphasized the importance of policy making, but listed less frequently activities involving institutional planning (see Figure 14).

Figure 14. **Ways and Means Faculty Can Be Involved in SDM**

	Number of Responses and Percentage		
Number of Responses and Percentages for:	**School Leaders**	**Faculty**	**Total**
Teacher Empowerment: Increased participation in student discipline, consultation, involvement in planning, membership of committees, making decisions on housing and industries, reviewing school objectives, training	7 27%	19 33%	26 31%
Student matters: Discipline of students, formulation of rules and regulations, formulation of guidelines for student admission, classroom management, student scholarship, student suspension	5 19%	13 23%	18 22%
Policy Making: Formulating rules and regulations, terms of administration and faculty, hiring and firing of workers, formulating guidelines for school security and industries, rent of houses	1 4%	12 21%	13 15%
Institutional Planning: Involvement in planning, involvement in decision on construction of school facilities, curriculum, campus beautification, school calendar	8 31%	2 4%	10 12%
Relationships: Alumni, community work, relationship both within the schools and with the community, group counseling outreach programs	2 8%	6 10%	8 10%
Faculty Loading: Teaching load, determination of academic and extra-curricular loading	2 8%	2 4%	4 5%
Leadership Style: Faculty consensus, transparency	1 4%	3 5%	4 5%

In considering factors which may have contributed to SDM, school leaders frequently cited frequent consultation, leadership style, and relationship. Teachers,

while recognizing frequent consultation and leadership style as important contributing factors, most frequently identified teacher commitment as a catalyst for SDM (see Figure 15).

Figure 15. **Factors Currently Contributing to SDM**

	Number of Responses and Percentage		
Number of Responses and Percentages for:	**School Leaders**	**Faculty**	**Total**
Commitment of Teachers: Teachers are cooperative and teachable, supportive administrators who know job well	2 12%	18 29%	20 26%
Frequent Consultation: Regular meetings, involvement of teachers, awareness of objectives, communication relayed to teachers, teachers fairly represented on committees, teachers help plan, administrators accept and value suggestions from teachers	5 31%	11 18%	16 21%
Leadership Style: Good administrative management, supportive, considerate, transparent, open-minded, and fatherly type administrators	3 19%	11 18%	14 18%
Relationship: Good relationship among staff, cooperation and unity among staff, consideration for others, environment conducive to build healthy relationships	3 19%	8 13%	11 14%
Spirituality: Regular devotions, God's work, relationship with God, healthy spiritual life	1 6%	8 13%	9 11%
Communication: Open horizontal and vertical communication acceptance and valuation of teachers opinions and suggestions, clarity of goals and work assignments	2 12%	5 8%	7 9%

Both school leaders and teachers cited most frequently leadership and management style as major barriers to SDM practices. These were followed in

frequency by the area of relationships. School leaders also cited lack of support, while teachers indicated lack of resources as an important barrier (see Figure 16).

Figure 16. **Perceived Barriers to SDM**

	Number of Responses and Percentage		
Number of Responses and Percentages for:	**School Leaders**	**Faculty**	**Total**
Leadership Management Style: Leaders do not value suggestion and ideas from faculty, weak leadership, nepotism, favoritism, lack of compassion, limited freedom of expression, personality conflict, tight control from central office, autocratic leadership, complacency	7 35%	35 54%	42 49%
Relationship: Insecurity, ethnic discrimination, gossip, inferior feelings, aggressiveness, fear to express personal feeling	6 30%	11 17%	17 20%
Lack of Resources: Financial constraints prevent planned endeavors being implemented, insufficient personnel	- -	8 12%	8 9%
Communication: Limited information on duties and roles of teachers, lack of goal orientation, lack of clarification of background to decisions made	1 5%	6 9%	7 8%
Lack of Support: Lack of support from other teachers and from leadership, lack of initiative, diverse groups cause complication.	4 20%	2 3%	6 7%
Lack of Time and Overload: Lack of time due to hectic schedule and staff overload with extra duties	2 10%	3 5%	5 6%

Empowerment of teachers and leadership style were areas perceived by participants to have potential for significantly enhancing SDM. Faculty also noted relationship components, while school leaders identified communication factors as

important potential contributors to SDM. Mentioned less frequently were factors related to lack of resources, improvement in the physical environment, and spiritual matters (see Figure 17).

Figure 17: **Factors Which May Enhance SDM**

	Number of Responses and Percentage		
Number of Responses and Percentages for:	**School Leaders**	**Faculty**	**Total**
Empowerment: Proper distribution of workload, respect for teachers, supportive administrators, adequate consultation, staff development, hands-on experiences	3 33%	20 36%	23 34%
Leadership Style: Consistent, transparent, acceptance of suggestions from teachers, fairness, avoid, "politicking"	5 38%	10 18%	15 22%
Relationship: Unity of staff, strong positive relationships among staff and students, trust, caring attitude, cooperation encouragement, friendly atmosphere	- -	10 14.7%	10 15%
Communication: Clear communication, open door policy, open communication, openness to suggestions	2 15%	3 5%	5 7%
Meeting: Active participation, goal-oriented teachers, conduct faculty meeting at right time	- -	5 9%	5 7%
Staff Development: Upgrade faculty	1 8%	3 5%	4 6%
Development of Common Goals: Planning and implementation of school goals	1 8%	2 4%	3 4%
Improved Physical Environment: Beautification of school campus	- -	1 2%	1 2%
Increased Resources: Enhanced funding, increase worker benefits	- -	1 2%	1 2%
Healthy Spirituality: Christ centeredness	1 8%	- -	1 2%

Discussion

Demographics

Demographic data indicated that the relative proportion of teachers with higher years of teaching experience drops quite noticeably. This could indicate that the educational system is growing, with a corresponding influx of new teachers; that many teachers leave the system after teaching a few years; and/or that quite a number of teachers become leaders after some years of teaching. The fact that the trend was reversed for school leaders seems to lend support to this latter concept, namely that a significant number of teachers become school leaders as a part of their career path.

Demographics also indicated that school leaders in SDA academies in north Philippines were typically individuals over 40 years of age, with 11 or more years of educational work experience. This finding is supported by Hwangbo (1996), whose study reported a strong relationship between posting of individuals to leadership posts and the number of years of service in the teaching profession. Rusch and Perry (1999), however, cautioned that while experience can be a vital requisite to leadership positions, individuals with longer service records can become very structured, inflexible, and at times reluctant to share power for fear of taking risks, of losing power, and of changing roles and responsibilities

Although most school leaders in this study held only baccalaureate degrees, there was a fairly balanced distribution by gender. These findings contrast with those obtained by Kurian (1999) who studied leadership positions in SDA high schools in South India. In that setting, almost all school leaders were male and held master's degrees. Kurian noted that "women may be reluctant to accept authority positions due to such factors as family concerns, traditions, or customs" (p. 155). Perhaps the Filipino culture, historically a matriarchal society, allows for greater female participation in leadership roles (Steinberg, 1994).

Levels of Actual and Preferred Faculty Participation in SDM

Teachers preferred greater participation in school decision making than the levels currently experienced. This finding was congruent with early studies by Renegar (1974) and Vanderwilt (1974), as well as with more recent studies by Ferrari (1992), Zjobrowski and Newman (1993), Gainey (1997), and Masinda (1997), which found that teachers desired to be more involved in decisions related to school governance and would have done so if given the opportunity.

While significant discrepancies were found between the actual and preferred participation of faculty in all school governance areas examined, the greatest gaps were found in the areas of staffing and budgeting. This finding was similar to those reported in prior studies. Inabinet (1997) and Livingston, Slate & Gibbs (1999), for example, found that teachers perceived frequent involvement in decisions related to

goals, standards, staff development, and curriculum and instructions, sometimes involved in operations, budget, and facilitating structures, and seldom involvement in decision involving staffing. Similarly, Burns (1995) and Sabo et al. (1996) found the greatest sense of deprivation by teachers in the managerial domain to be in the high impact areas of budgeting and the hiring of teachers. Perhaps a reason for this situation can be found in Touchton's (1996) observation that faculty were more involved by their leaders in technical decisions than in the larger managerial decisions.

Part of this stance may be philosophical in nature. In delineating guidelines for the management of SDA schools, Brown (1980) advised, "Where finances are concerned, the school board should never relinquish its responsibility" (p. 105). Minder (1983) stated a similar stand of the SDA church on matters related to the hiring of staff for educational institutions. Given these historic perspectives for SDA schools and the findings of this study, leaders may need to find creative ways to increase faculty participation in these crucial areas, while at the same time recognizing that "radical decentralization, as its opposite--radical centralization--is a swift path to confusion and non-productivity" (Rock, 1990, p. 75).

School leaders and teachers in this study agreed remarkably in their perceptions of actual or preferred faculty participation in decisions on matters related to school governance. The finding is similar to that encountered by Masinda (1997) in his study of school leaders and teachers in selected SDA colleges and universities in Africa, suggesting that the results of the present study are quite stable across multiple perspectives and settings.

In the present study, there was no evidence that the variables age, gender, and years of service in same school were significantly associated with perceptions of the actual level of faculty participation in SDM. These findings are generally supported by prior studies. Masinda (1997) and Taylor & Tashakkor (997), for example, found no age differences among teachers empowered, disenfranchised, involved, or disengaged in relation to school-wide decision making. Trotter (1996), however, reported that younger teachers (ages 20-29) perceived themselves to be more involved in the areas of budget, operations, and facilitative procedures and structures while veteran teachers indicated the highest involvement in the areas of standards, and curriculum and instruction. Perhaps there are differences by population studied.

In terms of gender, studies by Brown (1996), Calabrese et al. (1996), and Shapiro et al. (1995) found no support for male/female differences regarding decision making, in line with the findings of this study. Similarly, regarding years of service in the same school, Trotter (1996) found teachers with fewer years of service (1-5 years) in the same school showed no higher level of involvement than their colleagues who have been in the school for 6 years or more. Other studies by Deller (1996) and Rusch and Perry (1999) reported similar results.

In this study, there were certain differences in the perceptions of actual faculty participation in SDM by academic qualifications and by years of teaching experience. A finding, for example, suggested that participants with baccalaureate degrees had greater involvement in decisions related to operations of schools than their more highly qualified colleagues with master's degrees. This result is a bit of an anomaly and runs contrary to results of studies by Taylor & Tashakkor (1997) and Calabrese et al. (1996), which seem to indicate that higher academic qualifications empower teachers to be more involved on matters related to school governance than their lesser-qualified colleagues. Perhaps in this study, those educators with a graduate degree perceive more intensely that their decision-making role is less than what it might be. This is in line with the results of a study (Hwangbo, 1996) of 121 teachers in 29 early childhood centers in Pennsylvania, which found that teachers with higher educational qualifications desired more participation in SDM than their colleagues with lower qualifications.

In the present study, educators who had been in the teaching profession for 11-20 years were more actively involved on matters regarding curriculum and instruction than their colleagues with less years of teaching experiences, and also, more involved in decisions related to staff development than their colleagues who had less or more years of teaching experience. Perhaps these are the "golden years" for professional influence, or perhaps many teachers are given administrative roles after this period and those who are not feel sidelined.

The study indicated that faculty in schools operated under the administration of a conference or mission participated more in SDM on matters related to facilitating procedures and structures than their colleagues in schools administered under the management of a college. This might be due to the fact that schools operated by conferences or missions were frequently located some distance away from central office management and appear to have been given greater autonomy. In this decentralized structure, faculty were expected to make more frequent decisions regarding time, teaching loads, and school regulations compared to their colleagues in academies operated under college management, who needed to perhaps comply more frequently with the programs and regulations of the college.

Overall Impressions Regarding SDM

Data from this study indicated that both school leaders and teachers believed almost unanimously that SDM was an important and beneficial activity for schools. They maintained that SDM increases faculty professionalism (90%), fosters school improvement (94%), enhances school morale (96%), and increases job satisfaction (94%). SDM thus seems to be a significant educational reform, at least in the eyes of the educators themselves.

Overall, 68% of the participants indicated that teachers in general participated in decision making at schools. However, when asked the extent to which the participants perceived themselves to be personally involved in SDM on areas

related to school governance, only 37% of the participants indicated they were "very much" involved, while 37% indicated they were "somewhat" involved and another 26% indicated they were "very little" involved. Although not limited to this population (e.g., Fejgin & Hanegby, 1999; Thaxter & Graham, 1999), there does seem to be an important discrepancy between the recognition of important benefits perceived to be inherent in SDM and the actual implementation of faculty participation in SDM in north Philippine academies. This, in turn, suggests that ways must be sought to increase faculty participation in SDM on an individual level.

Stimuli and Barriers to Faculty Participation in SDM

Commitment of teachers and frequent consultation of school leaders with faculty were perceived to be some of the most important contributing factors to successful SDM in schools. School leaders thus need to seek ways to encourage commitment and consultation. Commitment, for example, is only realized by teachers when they believe that the organization is providing quality services for which it is worth their while to be a member. Other important contributing factors included leadership style, healthy interpersonal relationships, spiritual activities, and adequate communication. Participants also cited the small size of schools as a vital factor allowing increased participation by faculty in SDM, a condition also noted by Kessler (1992).

The participants believed that SDM could be further enhanced in their schools. The following were frequently mentioned by the participants to be factors that may contribute to SDM: faculty empowerment, democratic leadership style, good relationships, frequent meetings, clear communication, staff development, development of common goals, conducive physical environment, adequate resources, and a healthy spiritual atmosphere. Overall, it appears that faculty preferred a shift toward a flattened hierarchy and collaborative work patterns under approachable leadership.

Autocratic leadership and poor management style were frequently cited by both school leaders and teachers to be the major threats to SDM, along with poor interpersonal relationships, inadequate resources (including personnel), inadequate support from leaders and other staff members, poor communication systems, and lack of time, aggravated by an excessive work load. These factors have been noted previously in the literature, and suggest that the situation in the Philippines may not be all that different from that which is encountered in other parts of the world. Boschee & Baron (1993), for example found lack of trust, hesitancy to take risks, and inadequate resources as major obstacles perceived by school board presidents and school administrators in South Dakota school districts. Similarly, lack of teacher time was identified by Beckett (1996) to be a major barrier to SDM. Consequently, in order to overcome these barriers, it seems that schools need to build trust and support; to be clear about procedures, roles and expectations; to

restructure faculty loads to allow time for SDM; and to open opportunities for everyone a chance to get involved in the decision-making process.

A Final Remark

So what does this study imply? At least in SDA secondary schools in North Philippines, and perhaps in other settings and educational systems as well, it appears imperative that school leaders initiate, implement, and facilitate greater participation of faculty in school decision making through a self-assessment of their leadership style, provision of non-threatening conditions, and training of both leaders and teachers in group process and decision-making skills. Particularly, school leaders and their governing boards should seek ways to encourage and sustain greater faculty participation in those areas identified in this study to have the larger discrepancies between preference and practice.

About the authors: Samson Mwanus Kuku, Ph.D., is president of Sonoma Adventist College, Papua New Guinea. John Wesley Taylor V, Ph.D., serves as Director of the Division of Online Learning, Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIIAS), Philippines. Correspondence may be directed to the second author at taylor@aiias.edu.

Reference List

Beckett, J. A. M. (1996). Shared decision-making in South Carolina's associate/partner school program at the middle level schools. Abstract from: ProQuest File: Dissertation Abstracts Item: 9703420.

Biziorek, M. K. (1999). School-based decision-making: The relationship between teachers' decision involvement and their job satisfaction. Dissertation Abstracts International, Section A: Humanities & Social Sciences, 60(3-A), 0654.

Boschee, F., and Baron, M. A. (1993). Barriers to site-based management and shared decision making as perceived by school board presidents and school administrators. *ERS Spectrum*, 11(1), 2-26.

Brown, C. L., and Miller, M. T. (1998). Diversity in decision making: Minority faculty involvement in governance. *College Student Affairs Journal*, 18:1, 25-32.

Brown, D. W. (1996). Principals' perceptions of community and staff Involvement in shared decision making. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, 12(1),17-24.

Brown, W. A. (1980). *A handbook for SDA school administrators*. Washington, DC: General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists, Department of Education.

Burns, M. L. (1995). *Values based planning for quality education*. Lancaster, PA: Technomic Publishing.

Calabrese, R. S.; Zepeda, S. J.; and Shoho, A. R. (1996). Decision making: A comparison of group and individual decision making differences. *Journal of School Leadership*, 6(5), 555-572.

Cohen, J. (1977). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (rev. ed.). NY: Academic Press.

Deller, G. (1996). The nature of secondary school organization and site structuring. *International Journal of Educational Reform*, 5(4), 463-471.

Enderle, M. D. (1999). Decision-making involvement and job satisfaction of accelerated schools' elementary teachers. Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities & Social Sciences, 59(7-A), 2264.

Fejgin, N., and Hanegby, R. (1999). Physical educators' participation in decision-making processes in dynamic schools. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 18(2), 141-158.

Ferrari, F. J. (1992). Empowerment for effective schools: A study of middle principals and levels of teacher participation in organizational decision making. Abstract from: ProQuest File: Dissertation Abstracts Item: 9214156.

Gainey, K. O. (1997). The extent of teacher involvement in school decision making. Abstract from: ProQuest File: Dissertation Abstracts Item: 97-21605.

Horejs, J. M. (1996). Perceptions and perspective of elementary school teachers. Abstract from: ProQuest File: Dissertation Abstracts Item: 9720326.

Hoy, W. K., and Miskel, C. G. (1987). *Educational administration theory, research, and practice* (3rd ed.). NY: Randon House.

Hwangbo, Y. (1995). Relationships between organizational and psychological factors and teachers' participation in decision-making processes in early childhood settings. Abstract from: ProQuest File: Dissertation Abstracts Item: 9600194.

Inabinet, R. C. (1997). Teacher and administrator perceptions of teacher involvement in site-based management (shared decision-making). Abstract from: ProQuest File: Dissertation Abstracts Item: 9711694.

Kessler, R. (1992). Shared decision making works! *Educational Leadership*, 50(1), 36-38.

Kurian, R. (1999). Principal's leadership styles and teacher empowerment as perceived by teachers in SDA high schools in South India. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, Silang, Cavite, Philippines.

Lagerweij,N. A. J., and Voogt, J. C. (1990). Policy making at the school level: Some issues for the 90's. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 1(2), 98-120.

Lashway, L. (1996) .The limits of shared decision-making. ERIC Digest, No. 108. Abstract from: ERIC File: ERIC Production Item: ED397467.

Leithwood, K., and Jantzi, D. (1990). Transformational leadership; How principals can help reform school cultures. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 1(4), 249-280.

Liontos, L. B. (1994). Shared decision making. ERIC Digest, No. 87. Abstract from: ERIC File: ERIC Production Item: ED368034.

Livingston, M. J.; Slate, J.; and Gibbs, A. (1999). Shared decision-making: Beliefs and practices of rural school principals. *Rural Educator*, 21:1, 20-26.

Lunenburg, F. C., and Orsntein, A. C. (1991). *Educational administration concepts and practices*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Martin, L., and Kragler, S. (1999). Creating a culture for teachers' professional growth. *Journal of School Leadership*, 9:4, 311-20.

Masinda, J. I. (1997). Faculty participation in school governance as perceived by school leaders and faculty in selected Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities in Africa. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, Cavite, Philippines.

Minder, W. E. (1983). School board authority in the SDA K-12 school system. *Journal of Adventist Education*, 45(2), 7-9,32.

Peterson-del Mar, D. (1994). School-site councils. Abstract from: ERIC File: ERIC Product: ED369154.

Plunkett, L. C., and Fournier, R. (1991). *Participative management implementing empowerment*. NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Reitzug, U. C., and Capper, C. A. (1996). Deconstructing site-based management: Possibilities for emancipation and alternative means of control. *International Journal of Educational Reform*, 4(1), 56-69.

Renegar, W. R. (1974). A comparison of views as expressed by faculty and administrators pertaining to faculty participation in decision making in Tennessee Community Colleges (Doctoral dissertation, Auburn University, 1975). Dissertation Abstract International, 35(9), 75-5177.

Rock, C. B. (1990). *Church leadership, A call to virtue*. Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association.

Rusch, E., & Perry, E. (1999). Resistance to change: An alternative story. *International Journal of Educational Reform*, 8(3), 285-300.

Russell, J. J., Cooper, B. S., and Greenblatt, R. B. (1992). T.I.P.S. 2 Teacher involvement and participation scale (Version 2). NY: RBG Associates.

Sabo D. J.; Barnes, K.; and Hoy, W. K. (1996). Organizational health and decision participation: An empirical analysis of health interpersonal dynamics and teacher participation. *Journal of School Leadership*, 6(6), 576-599.

Schmuck, R. A., and Runkel, P. J. (1985). *The handbook of organization development in schools* (3rd ed.). Prospect Height, IL: Waveland Press, Inc.

Shapiro, A. S., Benjamin, W. F., Hunt, J. J., & Shapiro, S. (1995). Facilitating administrative decision making and organizational change via a decision-making process as a social enterprise. In P. V. Bredeson, & J. P. Scribner. *The professoriate: Challenges and promises* (pp. 80-92). Lancaster, PA: Technomic Publishing.

Steinberg, D. J. (1994). *The Philippines: A singular and a plural place*. Quezon City, Philippines: Kalayaan Press.

Taylor, D. L., & Tashakkor, A. (1997). Toward an understanding of teachers' desire for participation in decision making. *Journal of Educational Leadership*, 7(6), 609-629.

Thaxter, L. P., and Graham, S. W. (1999). Community college faculty involvement in decision-making. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 23:7, 655-674.

Touchton, D. B. (1996). Looking through the lenses of teacher professional development: An exploratory study of elementary school decision making. Abstract from: ProQuest File: Dissertation Abstracts Item: 97 10815.

Trotter, J. L. (1996). Comparison of perceptions of principals and teachers concerning shared decision making at the elementary level. Abstract from: ProQuest File: Dissertation Abstracts Item: 9626616.

Vanderwilt, D. J. (1974). Faculty participation in decision making as perceived by Iowa area school board of director members and faculty association officers (Doctoral dissertation, University of Iowa, 1974). Dissertation Abstracts International, 35(12), 75-13, 841.

Wall, R., and Rinehart, J. R. (1998). School-based decision making and the empowerment of secondary school teachers. *Journal of School Leadership*, 8:1, 49-64.

Weaver, E. H. (1997). The self-managing school: A case study of school-based decision-making with regard to curriculum, power, and human resources. Abstract from: ProQuest File: Dissertation Abstracts Item: 9724522.

Zjobrowski, E. M., & Newman, D. I. (1993). Teacher perceptions of program evaluation. Opportunities in shared decision making. Abstract from: ERIC File: Research Report Item: ED362976