CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

Teacher empowerment through school-based management has been one of the expected and desired outcomes of the educational reform and restructuring movement of the 1980s and 1990s (Clark, Hong, & Schoeppach, 1996). The expectation is that teachers who participated in decision-making in their schools would have greater job satisfaction and higher morale (Clark, Hong, & Schoeppach, 1996). Further, it is postulated that high job satisfaction and high morale were related to high academic achievement of children.

The 1980s and 1990s may be characterized as a time of reform with schools and teachers as primary targets (Glickman, 1984; Lieberman, 1988; Bacharach, 1990). This was evident in the report issued by the National Commission of Excellence in Education (1983). The findings of the report were alarming. They included strong recommendations to improve education throughout the country. Soon thereafter, states began to address the cry for reform. One remedy directed efforts toward attracting, retaining, and motivating better teachers. As a result, higher salaries, 11-month contracts, career ladders, grants, and loans were some of the incentives offered as solutions.

The 1980s will also be remembered for the beginning of a sweeping reassessment of the basis of the nation's economic strength and an outpouring of concern for the quality

of American education (Carnegie, 1986). The nationwide effort to improve our schools

and student achievement, in a characteristically American way, was initiated and seized

upon by state political leaders, local officials, citizens, parents, higher education leaders,

professional educators, and business groups. Each group pursued the cause for a widely

perceived decline in the quality of American education while making determined efforts to

redress the balance (Carnegie, 1986).

The nationwide effort to improve our schools and student achievement through a

rebuilding of our educational system has not come without controversy. Course

requirements for students were stiffened, teachers' salaries raised, and new standards

established in many states.

Significance of the Study

Teachers today have varied levels of involvement ranging from a low level of

participation, to a high level of participation in school decision making. The purpose of

this study was to develop and test an instrument to measure elementary teachers'

satisfaction with their involvement in school decision making.

This instrument was designed to provide a tool for principals to use as a needs

assessment to determine how much, and in what areas, teachers want to be involved in

school decision making. With the many changes occurring in education today, it is

important that principals recognize the desires of their teachers in order that they will have

job satisfaction.

Statement of the Problem

As a result of school-based management, elementary school teachers in today's schools have varying levels of involvement in school decision making. The degree to which this involvement results in a sense of empowerment for teachers has not been established. Research on teachers' opinions about their involvement in decision making in their school is limited. A critical step missing in the research is understanding teachers' desired and actual levels of involvement. Instruments to assess teachers' perceptions of their actual involvement and their desired involvement were not found.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to design and test an instrument to measure elementary teachers' satisfaction with their involvement in school decision making.

Research Questions

The research questions addressed were:

1.   What is the discrepancy of teachers' desired and actual levels of involvement in the operation of the school based upon their participation in a site-based management program, or a non site-based management program?

2.   What is the discrepancy of teachers' desired and actual levels of involvement in establishing curriculum and instructional techniques based upon their

participation in a site-based management program, or a non site-based management program?

3. What is the discrepancy of teachers' desired and actual levels of involvement in teacher development, evaluation, and work allocation based upon their participation in a site-based management program, or a non site-based management program?

4. What is the discrepancy of teachers' desired and actual levels of involvement in establishing student/teacher relationships based upon their participation in a site-based management program, or a non site-based management program?

5. Is there a significant difference in teachers' total desired involvement in school decision making based upon their participation in a site-based management program, or a non site-based management program?

6. Is there a significant difference in teachers' total actual involvement in school decision making based upon their participation in a site-based management program, or a non site-based management program?

7. Is there a significant difference of teachers' total satisfaction with their involvement in school decision making based upon their participation in a site-based management program, or a non site-based management program?

8. Is satisfaction of teachers' total involvement affected by age, race, and years of experience?

Limitations of the Study

       This study was limited to all full time classroom teachers in five elementary schools from two selected school divisions in the Hampton Roads area. As a result, conclusions cannot be generalized beyond the target population.

Assumptions of the Study

       The basic assumption of this study was that the responses of the teachers who were surveyed would accurately reflect their desired and actual levels of involvement in school decision making. Furthermore, the results of the survey would indicate what areas of involvement teachers would like to participate in, and the level of involvement they would like in each area.

Organization of the Study

       This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one contains the introduction, significance of the study, statement of the problem, purpose, research questions, limitations of the study, assumptions of the study, and organization of the study. Chapter two contains a review of the related literature on school-based management, shared decision making, participatory management, teacher empowerment, and instruments used to measure teachers' involvement and satisfaction with school decision making. Chapter three consists of the methodology, population and sample, description of the instrument, development of the instrument, scoring procedures, and procedures for

establishing validity and reliability. Chapter four provides an analysis of data and the

findings for the research questions. Chapter five presents the summary, conclusions, and

recommendations for further study.