CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a summary of the study and conclusions derived from the analysis of data. The chapter concludes with recommendations.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to design and test an instrument to measure elementary teachers' satisfaction with their involvement in school decision making. As an assistant principal of an elementary school, the researcher recognized the need to know how much, and in what area teachers wanted to be involved in school decision making.

A review of related literature on school/site-based management, shared decision making, participatory management, teacher empowerment, and prior instruments used to assess teachers' involvement in school decision making, led to the development of the SATISFACTION WITH PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING QUESTIONNAIRE (SPDMQ). Based upon research, and the administration of three draft instruments to teachers, doctoral students, and other educators, four domains and 40 items related to teacher satisfaction with participation in school decision making were identified. The items were phrased using a discrepancy model to identify teachers' desired and perceived actual levels of involvement in school decision making. Therefore, there were 20 questions. A five-point Likert-scale was used to indicate the level of teachers'

involvement.   Also, there was a demographic area that focused on: age, race, sex, years of experience, highest degree earned, assignment, and current level of involvement. A final version of the instrument was administered to 168 elementary school teachers in two approved school districts in the Hampton Roads area.   The target population included all teachers in five schools. Two of the schools (81 teachers) were implementing site-based management programs, and the other three schools (87 teachers) were implementing little or no site-based management.

Conclusions

Eight research questions were developed to validate the SPDMQ. The results of the questions revealed the following data:

Research Question 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?

The analyses of the teachers' responses to this question indicate that site-based management teachers are more satisfied with their involvement in the operation of the school than were teachers in non site-based management schools. However, the difference was not found to be statistically significant at $p \leq .05$. Therefore, based upon the results of the survey, this different could have been due to chance.

Some educators have indicated to the researcher that the difference may have been noticed because schools implementing site-based management programs may have

more teachers involved in procedures related to the operation of the school, such as, planning the use of the school facilities, having input on establishing the budget and spending the school discretionary funds. Based upon research, schools implementing site-based management generally have more opportunities to participate in this area of decision making. Research also indicates that in many cases, only a few of the teachers may be involved, or interested in being involved in the operation of the school. Teachers frequently view this domain area as one that is of little importance to them. Some view this area as one that is and should be handled by building administrators, or central administrators.

Research Question 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?

The analyses of the teachers' responses to this question indicate that teachers in site-based management schools are statistically more satisfied at $p \leq .05$, with their involvement in establishing curriculum and instructional techniques than are teachers in non site-based management schools. Based upon the experience of the researcher as a classroom teacher and as a building administrator, these results were of no surprise. This has always been an area where teachers want a significant amount of involvement. They view curriculum and instruction as areas of their expertise. Furthermore, based upon experience and research, this domain area of decision making is the main one that teachers

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feel they know best. Research and teachers' comments have suggested that decisions concerning curriculum and instruction are frequently decided by those who have never taught, or by educators who have not taught for a long period of time. Also, research has indicated that those individuals working closest to the children know what is best for them, and that they should be allowed to make decisions that affect their learning.   Based on the results of this question, the researcher would strongly suggest that administrators focus on this area of concern and make adjustments by allowing teachers to have more involvement in decisions related to curriculum and instruction.

Research Question 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?

The analyses of the teachers' responses to this questions indicate that teachers in site-based management schools have more satisfaction with their involvement in teacher development, evaluation, and work allocation than do teachers in non site-based management schools. However, this difference was very small and not statistically significant at $p \leq .05$. This difference could have been due to chance.

Research suggests that teachers would like to have more involvement in this domain area. Seldom are teachers involved in the development of evaluation tools used to assess them or their peers. Also, research suggests that teachers want input in selecting the in service training they receive. Many teachers want to be allowed to participate in

selecting the school in which they teach, as well as what they teach. The results of the survey can be interpreted as teachers' not being satisfied with their involvement in these areas.

The researcher suggests that building administrators should consider having teachers participate in selecting staff development training. Most teachers have the vision of knowing what they need most. Also, when teachers have input in selecting the subjects and grade levels they teach, many times they are dedicated to their selection and work hard to fulfill the selected assignment. The researcher believes that teachers are very capable of selecting and developing evaluation instruments, because they have the knowledge and expertise of knowing what is needed to perform the job of an effective teacher.

Research Question 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?

The analyses of the teachers' responses to this question indicate that teachers in non site-based management schools have more satisfaction with their involvement in student/teacher relationships than the teachers in site-based management schools. This difference was not statistically significant at $p \leq .05$. Therefore, this slight difference may have been due to chance.

Research suggests that many teachers want to be involved in establishing the

grading policies that affect their students. They also want to be involved in establishing

the discipline codes for their students. Furthermore, they want to be allowed to remove

disruptive children from their classroom especially when these individuals cause

disruption to the learning process. Just last year, a bill was passed by the General

Assembly giving teachers the right to remove disruptive students, as well as participating

in the decision process to decide if and when the child can return to the classroom. This

bill will become a law on July 1, 1998 (Chesapeake Education Association, 1998).

Teachers also want to know when children have specific problems that may need special

attention. Many teachers believe that having knowledge of special problems, be it

discipline of health related, allows them the opportunity to better serve these students.

Individuals with special problems must frequently be taught in a different manner.

Research Question 5: Is there a significant difference between 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?

The analyses of the teachers' responses to this question indicate that teachers

working in site-based management schools have a statistically significant difference at

 $p \leq .05$, based upon their desire to have involvement in school decision making. The

difference reveals that teachers in site-based management schools have a

higher desire to have involvement in school decision making than do teachers in non site-

based management schools.

The results of the t-test indicated that site-based management teachers want more

involvement in school decision making. Research supports the findings for this question.

Generally, the more teachers are allowed to be involved in school decision making, the

more they want to be involved. Research states that frequently principals are afraid of

teachers having too much say in the decision making process of the school. There are

times that administrators feel that teachers are infringing on their power and want to make

decisions they feel they should be making. Sometimes teachers team up against the

administrator causing power struggles. Other researchers have shared that good

administrators are not threatened by the involvement that their teachers have and want.

These administrators view teachers' involvement as a very positive practice with many

rewarding outcomes, such as, higher student achievement, higher staff moral and better

job satisfaction. As a school administrator, the researcher believes that teachers possess

many strengths and abilities that can be used for the betterment of the school. Teachers'

input is vital. The sharing of knowledge and skills by all educators is a key ingredient that

is essential if we are truly dedicated to educating all the children of all the people. Also,

when teachers are allowed to have involvement in decision making, they feel more

empowered and have a vested interest in the outcome, which generally relates to higher

student achievement.

Research Question 6: Is there a significant difference between 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?

The analyses of the teachers' responses to this question based on the results of the

t-test, reveal that there is a statistically significant difference at $p \leq .05$ of teachers total actual involvement in school decision making based upon their participating in a site-based management program, or a non site-based management program. Site-based management teachers have more total actual involvement than do teachers at non site-based management schools.

The researcher was not surprised at the results. Schools implementing SBM programs usually have more teachers participating in school decision making, for teachers' involvement is the main goal of the program. Although, there is more actual involvement, this may not be a wanted situation. It could be a forced situation. Often when schools participate in site-based management programs, all school personnel are involved in the decision making process whether they want to be or not. This forced participation can cause low staff moral, reduced job productivity and poor job satisfaction.

Research Question 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?

The analyses of the teachers' responses to this question indicate that teachers in site-based management schools have more total satisfaction with participation in school decision making, than teachers in non site-based management schools. However, this difference is not statistically significant at $p \leq .05$. This difference may be due to chance.

The researcher expected the results to turn out the way they did. As stated earlier,

teachers in SBM schools may have more total actual involvement, but they may not

necessarily want all of the involvement they have. However, teachers in NSBM schools

would probably want to have more involvement in school decision making. Therefore, the

results may have turned out this way because of these reasons.

Research Question 8: Is satisfaction of teachers' total involvement affected by

their age, race, and years of experience?

The analyses of the teachers' responses to this question indicate the following

information based upon the results of the t-test application. The results indicate that there

is not a statistically significant difference at $p \leq .05$ based upon the age of the teacher.

However, the results did indicate that younger teachers have more satisfaction with their

total involvement in school decision making than older teachers. Based on research, as

well as, the opinion of the researcher, the difference shown could be attributed to the fact

that when teachers are new, they want to be a team player, and they desire involvement.

Many times they have just completed their college preparation for becoming a teacher and

they are highly motivated. Many believe that they are knowledgeable of the total teaching

profession. Some believe that it is that right to be involved in the decision making process

of the school. Sometimes, administrators select younger teachers to participate with

hopes that they will view themselves as needed and wanted. On the other hand, the older

teachers may not appear to be as satisfied with their total involvement in school decision

making because some of them believe that their input is not valued. Others feel tired and

worn out. Many have had the opportunity to be involved for years. Now they think it is

time for someone else to step in. Often, involvement in school decision making means extra work for teachers, with no additional time allowed, and no extra compensation.

In terms of race, the analyses of the teachers' responses indicate that there is a statistically significant difference at the $p \leq .05$ between teachers satisfaction with their total involvement. Based upon the results, White teachers are statistically more satisfied with their total involvement in school decision making than are African American teachers. As an African American educator, the researcher did not expect these results, nor did she find other research to support the findings. The researcher recognized that there was a small percentage of African American teachers employed in the schools surveyed. Therefore, the results may have been different it the target population had been more racially equal.

The analyses of the teachers' responses in terms of years of experience indicate that there is not a statistically significant difference at $p \leq .05$ regarding teachers' satisfaction with their total involvement in school decision making. However, the results did indicate that older teachers have more satisfaction with their total involvement than younger teachers. Based upon the experience of the researcher, this difference could be attributed to the fact that administrators sometimes call upon their experienced teachers to assist in areas of school decision making because they are more familiar with these individuals job performance and, therefore, welcome and respect their input. The difference shown from the responses' of the teachers could have been due to chance. The researcher noticed that there were far more younger teachers in the population surveyed

(108) than older teachers (60). The results may be different if the population had been more equal. Based upon research, and on the results related to age in this study, the researcher did not expect the results of this question to turn out the way it did. Research suggests that younger teachers want and have more involvement in school decision making. However, no related research was found regarding younger teaching satisfaction with their total involvement in school decision making.

Cronbach's Alpha: The analyses of the teachers responses were subjected to Cronbach's Alpha as an opportunity to assess the reliability of the Satisfaction with Participation in Decision Making Questionnaire. The first step of this procedure addressed the reliability associated with the average correlation of desired involvement and actual involvement items and the average of the total desired involvement, and total actual involvement. There are eight items from the SPDMQ that have been used to acquire an average correlation for desired and actual items. There are four sets of items that assess teachers satisfaction with various aspects of the school. These are the four domains: 1. Satisfaction with Involvement in the Operation of the School (SATO), 2. Satisfaction with Involvement in Establishing Curriculum and Instructional Techniques (SATCU), 3. Satisfaction with Involvement in Teacher Development, Evaluation, and Work Allocation (SATEV), 4. Satisfaction with Involvement in Establishing Student/Teacher Relationships (SATREL).

Based on the results of Cronbach's alphas, relationships among desired involvement, and total desired involvement, actual involvement, and total actual

involvement resulted in similar alphas. Overall, the computations of Cronbach's alpha for the various items in the SPDMQ indicate a moderately strong reliability.

Recommendations

Based on the experience of the researcher and findings of the study, it is recommended that:

1. The Satisfaction with Participation in Decision Making Questionnaire (SPDMQ) be tested with larger and more varied populations to further substantiate its usefulness.

2. Principals be encouraged to use the SPDMQ as a needs assessment to find out how much and in what areas teachers would like to be involved.

3. Refine the SPDMQ to more accurately measure teachers' satisfaction with their involvement in school decision making.

4. Phrase all questions on SPDMQ with language that would not mislead the respondents (ex: I am involved...).

5. A study be made of the correlation between the amount of teachers' involvement and teachers' satisfaction with the involvement in school decision making.