TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL DECISION-MAKING IN GHANAIAN BASIC SCHOOLS: LOOKING BACK AND MOVING FORWARD, WHAT STAKEHOLDERS SAY?

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A B S T R A C T

The study explored the current levels, views, and expectations of stakeholders with regards to teacher participation in school decision-making in the Cape Coast Metropolitan area and Mfantseman Municipality in the Central Region of Ghana. The study employed the explanatory sequential mixed method design involving semi-structured interviews with 11 teachers, 4 head-teachers and 4 circuit supervisors. Close-ended questionnaires were administered to 209 teachers, 26 head teachers and 11 circuit supervisors. In a micro-ethnographic study, teachers and head teachers from 2 schools that recorded the highest and lowest teacher participation in school decision-making were subsequently observed during staff and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings. In addition, their documents such as staff and PTA minutes books were also scrutinized. Classroom, committee/group and school emerged as the levels of teacher participation in school decision-making. However, few teachers were found participating at the school level, while the majority participated at the classroom level, with some at the committee/group level. Nevertheless, almost all the teachers, head teachers and circuit supervisors (stakeholders) agreed that there should be regular training for head teachers with regard to the tenets of school decision-making and leadership to enable them fully involve teachers in all issues concerning the school.

Keywords: school leadership, decision-making, parent teacher association, teacher participation.

INTRODUCTION

Since 1987 to date, Ghana has gone through a number of educational reforms. The main issues addressed in these reforms have been a reduction in a number of years spent in formal education from 17 to 12 years, increase access to basic education, improving the quality of teaching and learning and most significantly the introduction of Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE). The FCUBE programme was meant to ensure that all school going-age children receive free and compulsory quality basic education by 2005. This policy helped to create motivation for a coordinated sector programme providing donor support to education and a drive for educational decentralisation with greater recognition of the important role of community and other stakeholders' participation in school management for school improvement. The FCUBE was developed on

the basis of three main objectives namely improving;
- the quality of teaching and learning
- efficiency in management and
- access and participation in basic education

Despite the numerous efforts made by past governments to revamp stakeholders and community participation in issues concerning school improvement, there are still persistent problems affecting the policy of decentralisation of decision-making in schools due to the bureaucratic and archaic educational systems and policies still practised in Ghana (Oduro, 2007; Afful-Broni and Dampson, 2008; Dampson, 2010).

There is no doubt that as per the FCUBE objective 3, stakeholders (teachers, headteachers, circuit supervisors and parents) and community participation in decision-making (PDM) has become one of the key issues on Ghana's education development agenda. Over the years, in pursuit of improving the standards of education, successive Governments of Ghana have made various efforts with the view to ensuring that education

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rendered to Ghanaians meets both social and economic expectations and individual aspirations. However, challenges such as lack of teacher participation, motivation, leadership styles, conflicts, and logistics had made it impossible to achieve such expectation (MOE, 1999; Oduro, 2009; Afful-Broni and Dampson, 2008).

Notwithstanding these challenges, current studies show that involving teachers in the decision-making process offers a variety of potential benefits which can generate the social capacity necessary for excellent schools (World Bank, 2010; Dampson, 2010; Wadesango, 2011). Research shows that such benefits range from improving the quality of the decisions made (Harris, 2012; Somech, 2010), and enhancing teacher motivation (Akyeampong, 2004). In addition, decision-making serves as an important conflict resolution tool, allowing the members of the school environment to resolve their differences before the educational process is hampered and student learning diminished (Nye and Capelluti, 2003). Although often difficult, participation in decision-making can be of assistance in reconciling individual needs and organisational goals (Hoy and Miskel, 1991).

As well as stressing the central role of decision-making in an organisation, Owens (2008) also claims that organisational leaders are directly responsible for the quality and efficiency of the decision-making process. As a result, this authority rests, to a substantial degree, with the head teacher or school-based administrator who may choose to make a decision or delegate the power to others within the school (Barth, 2000).

Indeed, while scholars stress the importance of involving staff members and teachers in a shared decision-making process (e.g., Hoy and Tarter, 2010; Harris, 2012; Somech, 2010), head teachers ultimately control decision-making by initiating the process and ensuring the implementation of the resulting conclusion(s) (Lunenburg and Ornstein, 2000). Who should be involved in the decision-making process, how an administrator or committee arrives at a solution, and when or how that solution is put into place are, according to O'Sullivan (2011), all under the direct control of the school head. As a consequence of the head teachers' position within the educational institution and because of the organisational authority granted to them, they make decisions on an almost continuous basis (Hallinger and Heck, 2010). To assist in this task, head teachers may use a variety of decision-making types/models and involve a number of different stakeholders (Johnson and Kruse, 2009).

Despite these benefits, studies in Ghana have shown that the majority of Ghanaian basic school teachers who are the implementers of educational policies are still not participating fully in school decision-making (Kwegyir-Aggrey and Yelkpieri, 2012; Dampson, 2010; Bloomer, 1991).

Regardless of the benefits and importance of teacher participation in school decision-making, Bloomer's (1991, p.249) assertion made over two decades ago that, "in developing countries like Ghana, little is done about teacher PDM which is crucial for school improvement" is still relevant despite the implementation of various educational policies which calls for teachers, stakeholders and community participation in all school-related issues. The paucity of research and related literature regarding teacher PDM in the Ghanaian context which has created a gap in present understanding of teachers, stakeholders and community participation in school decision-making calls for the justification of this study. It is based on Blommer's assumption that the researchers adopted Somech (2002 & 2010) framework of participation shown in figure1 to guide and answer the following research questions:

1. What are the current levels of Teacher Participation in School Decision-making (TPSDM) in the Cape Coast metropolitan area and the Mfantseman municipality?
2. What views and expectations are held by stakeholders with regard to TPSDM?

Research Design: The sequential explanatory mixed method design adopted for the study enabled the researchers to shed light on the complex educational structures in Ghana where decision-making is crucial for school development. The design further enabled the researchers to develop qualitative instruments (semi-structured interview, participants' observation, document analysis) to support the quantitative findings of the study (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011).

The researchers adopted the participant selection model where quantitative information was needed to identify and purposefully select participants for a follow-up, in-depth, qualitative study. The emphasis, according to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) is usually on the second qualitative phase of the study.

Sample and Sampling Procedure: The population for the study comprised all teachers, head teachers and circuit supervisors in Cape Coast metropolis and Mfantseman municipality.
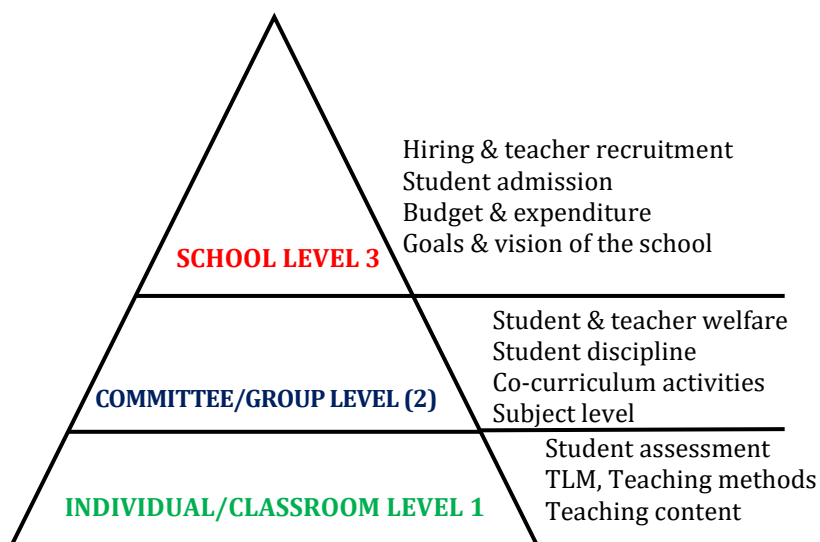
Figure 1. Current levels of teacher participation in school decision-making.   Adopted from Somech (2002 & 2012).

The Cape Coast metropolis has a population of 1161 teachers of which 978 are professionally trained and 183 untrained (Metro education office records, 2012). The Mfantseman municipality, on the other hand, has a population of 608 teachers of which 495 are professionally trained and 113 untrained (Municipal education office records, 2012). Basic schools in the Cape Coast metropolis are grouped under 6 circuits, while the Mfantseman municipality has 8.

Cohen *et al.,* (2011) noted that the quality of a piece of research not only stands or falls by the appropriateness of methodology and instrumentation but also by the suitability of the sampling strategy that has been adopted. They further argue that a correct sample size depends on the purpose of the study and the nature of the population under scrutiny. However, they suggested that if a researcher plans to use some form of statistical analysis in data, the minimum required is 30 respondents. It is on this basis that the sample was drawn.

In this study, the researchers adopted the multi-stage sampling to select the location, the schools and the participants. This included three stages:

- Geographical areas/metropolis and municipals (primary units)
- Schools from each circuit (secondary units)
- Participants (tertiary units)

First, a sample of 1 metropolis and 1 municipality was conveniently drawn from a total of 1 metropolis, 6 municipalities and 10 district assemblies from the Central Region of Ghana based on geographical location, access to schools, time and funds, and duration of the study.

At the second stage, 12 schools were randomly drawn from Cape Coast metropolis and 11 schools from Mfantseman municipality. Two schools were purposively sampled based on high and low teacher participation in school decision-making.

During the third stage, a criterion-based selection was drawn to access participants who fit in the following criterion:

- Teachers must have taught in present school for one or more academic years
- The teacher must be a full time/permanent
- Head-teacher and circuit supervisors must have been at the present school for one or more academic years

Upon having access to all respondents who fit into the above criterion, the researchers randomly sampled a minimum of 10 teachers each from the 23 schools (235) and questionnaires were subsequently distributed, however, in some schools more than 10 teachers were sampled to make up for unforeseen circumstances.

Gall, Gall, and Borg (2003) recommend that a researcher who wishes to study the experience of different schools from different locations should adopt the maximum variation sampling technique. This sampling technique according to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2003) involves selecting cases that illustrate a range of variation in the

phenomena to be studied. For example, the researchers conducted the study from two study sites (Cape Coast Metro and Mfantseman Municipal). The maximum variation sampling technique served two purposes: it enabled the researchers to have equal participation levels among respondents from the two study sites, and also enabled the researchers to determine whether common themes, patterns, and outcomes cut across. In using the maximum variation sampling strategy the researchers created a "pool of participants" (Seidman, 2006) from the two sites during the retrieval of the questionnaire survey. The 'pool of participants' verbally agreed to be interviewed and their details were taken.

The researchers randomly sampled from the pool of participants 6 teachers, 2 head teachers and 2 circuit supervisors each of whom were interviewed from the Cape Coast metropolitan area (Site 1) and 5 teachers, 2 head teachers and 2 circuit supervisors who were also interviewed from Mfantseman municipality (Site 2) due to time, location, and availability of respondents (Merriam, 2009). In all 11 teachers, 4 head teachers and 4 circuit supervisors were interviewed from the two study sites.

Instrumentation, Data Collection and Analysis: The study adopted a closed-ended questionnaire survey as the first instrument to collect data from three groups of respondents namely; head teachers, teachers and circuit supervisors from the two sites of the study. The questionnaire survey for the study was adopted from Rice and Schneider (1994) Decision Involvement Analysis (DIA) and OECD Teaching & Learning International Survey (2001) which has been tested in 21 countries and has proved consistent and reliable. These questionnaires were adopted and modifications were made to fit the Ghanaian educational culture and context. The data were correlated using the SPSS version 20 and were analysed and presented in tables and charts using simple percentages and frequency distributions.

The researchers employed a schedule of questions for conducting detailed semi-structured interviews with the teachers, head teachers and circuit supervisors. The semi-structured interview guide for the three respondents was grouped into three sections: levels of participation, views and expectations on decision-making.

In the last stage of the study, the researchers collected data through participant's observation (micro-ethnography) where observation guide was developed from the themes which emerged from the interview. The NVIVO software version 10 was used to code both

interviews and observation into thematic categories and sub-themes.

FINDINGS

The findings of the study are presented according to the research questions raised.

Research Question 1: *What are the current levels of TPSDM in the Cape Coast metropolitan area and the Mfantseman municipality?* Out of the 235 questionnaires given to teachers, 209 were retrieved and were used for data analysis. Research question 1 sought to find out the levels of teacher participation in school decision-making. It was evident from the data analysed that basic school teachers in the study area were participating at levels namely: Individual/ Classroom, committee, group, and school levels.

Individual/Classroom Level of Participation: The current levels of teacher participation in this study can be explained by using Somech's (2002 & 2010) three levels (individual/classroom level, committee/ group level and school level) of participation framework.

At the individual/classroom level of participation, the finding of the study established that teacher participation in school decision-making relates to individual teachers' performance within the classroom, such as the choice of teaching materials, teaching schedule and student assessment (teaching and learning) as shown in figure 2. Data from the questionnaire survey indicated a mean of means of 86.37% for both Cape Coast and Mfantseman. The findings of the study further established that majority (91.25%) of the teachers in Cape Coast were much more involved in decision-making at the classroom level than teachers in Mfantseman (81.50%). Notwithstanding these differences, both study sites recorded their highest participation in student assessment. The data from figure 1 evidently indicate that majority of the teachers in the study area are participating at the classroom level. According to available literature (Harris, 2012; Johnson and Kruse, 2009; Wadesango, 2011) in situations where teachers feel satisfied and motivated to take part in decision-making at the classroom level, the school eventually improve because it is believed that teachers will be able to associate themselves with the school and work towards maximizing output.

Committee\Group Level of Participation: According to Somech's framework, the second level of participation in school decision making is the committee/group level. School committees according to the findings of this

study, are groups of individual teachers who are either appointed by the head teacher or by virtue of a teacher's

interest and expertise come together to form a group within the school to help solve school-related problems.

Mean % = 80.47   Mean % = 77.42

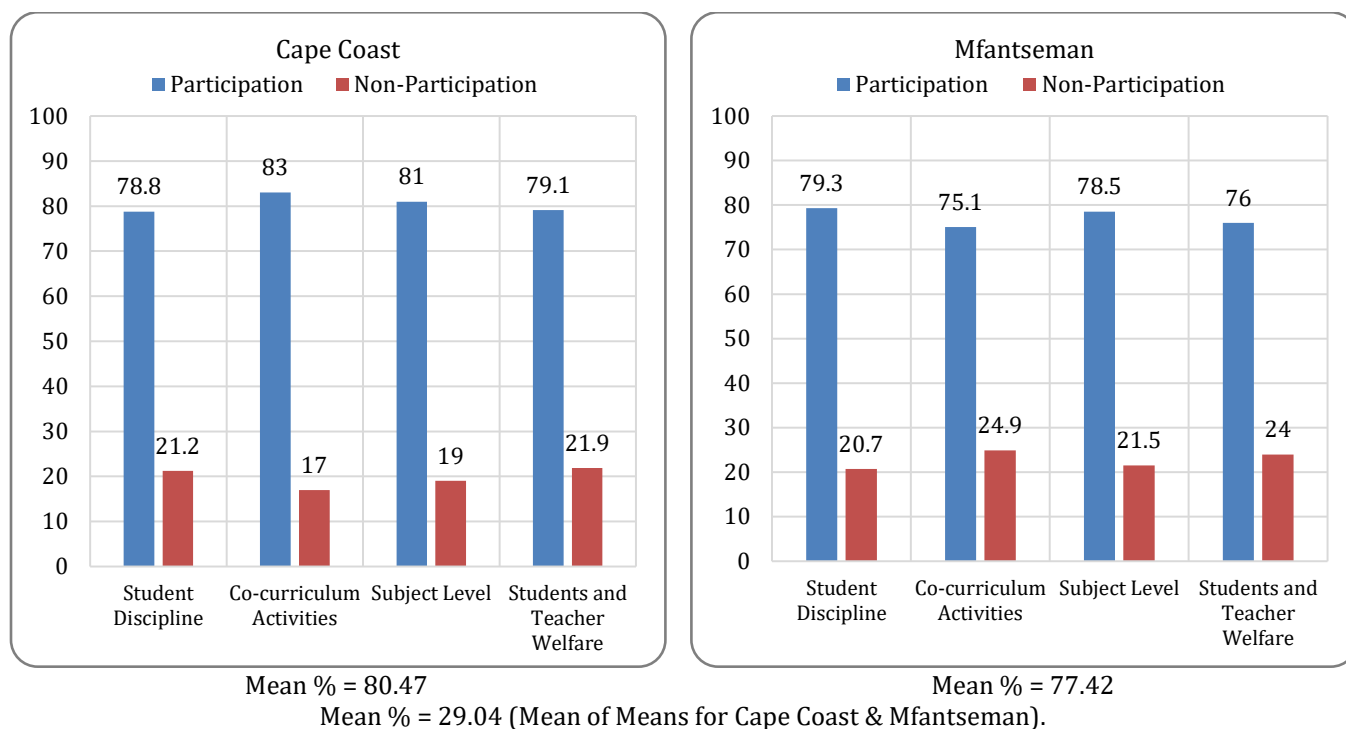Mean % = 29.04 (Mean of Means for Cape Coast & Mfantseman).

Figure 2. Individual/ Classroom Level of Participation.

The finding of the study further established that almost all the schools in the study area had the following committees: disciplinary, sports, academic/exam, welfare, sanitary and health, fundraising/finance and School Management Committee (SMC). Among all these committees the most common ones were discipline, welfare and academic/exam committees.

In this study, participation at this level revealed that the majority (78.85%) of the teachers in both the Cape Coast and Mfantseman were involved in school decision-making at the committee/group level. Although there were slight differences in participation between the two sites, it was evident that each of them recorded high participation at the committee/group level.

On the other hand, an inquiry into why some teachers were not participating revealed that some teachers prefer not to be on school committees because of further studies, child caring and other personal reasons and lack of implementation of decisions. Regardless, of these reasons by teachers, Wadesango (2011) claims that committees are a way to formally drawing together people of relevant expertise from the whole staff, which otherwise would not have a good way to share

information and coordinate actions. Steyn (2001) states that using teams makes it possible to involve a large number of people in decision-making. Regardless of the importance of committee participation, it emerged from the interview and observation that most of the committees were ineffective because they lacked the required resources to function, while few seem existent only on paper. The researchers, therefore, argue that perhaps the ineffectiveness and non-existence of school committees might partly be a problem of insufficient funds and head teachers' leadership style.

School Level of Participation: As illustrated in figure 4 the highest level of decision-making is the school level. At the school level, the findings from the questionnaire survey revealed a mean of means of (29.04%) participation level. A quick glance at figure 4 shows a low participation in both Cape Coast (28.55%) and Mfantseman (29.52%). Although Mfansteman recorded a slightly higher participation than Cape Coast, their high levels of participation were recorded against budget and expenditure and student admission.

Data from the interview revealed that one of the reasons why majority of the teachers are not involved

in school decision-making at the school level is that head teachers fear teacher participation at the school level will expose their incompetence, while other head teachers claim that teachers do not possess the knowledge, skills and expertise to be involved at such levels of school decision-making.
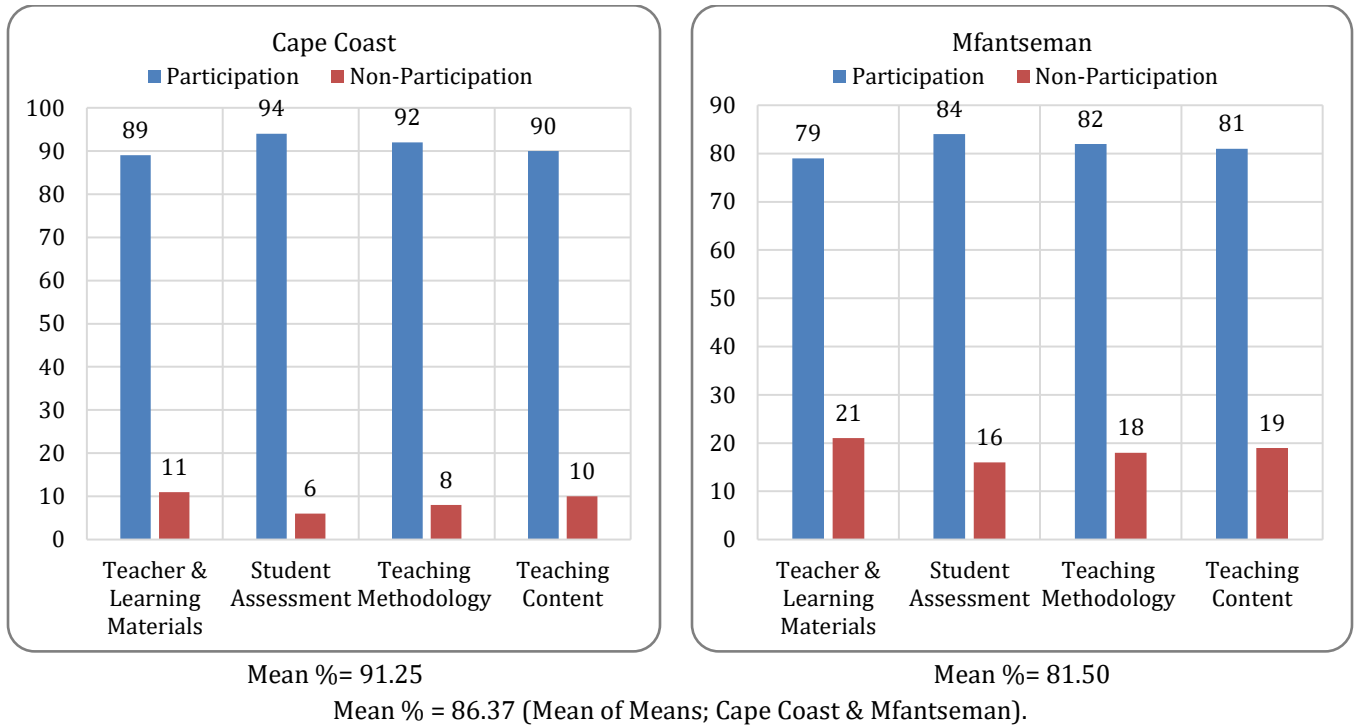

Mean %= 91.25

Mean %= 81.50

Mean % = 86.37 (Mean of Means; Cape Coast & Mfantseman).

Figure 3. Committee/ Group Level of Participation.

Mean % = 28.55

Mean % = 29.52

Mean % = 29.04 (Mean of Means for Cape Coast & Mfantseman).
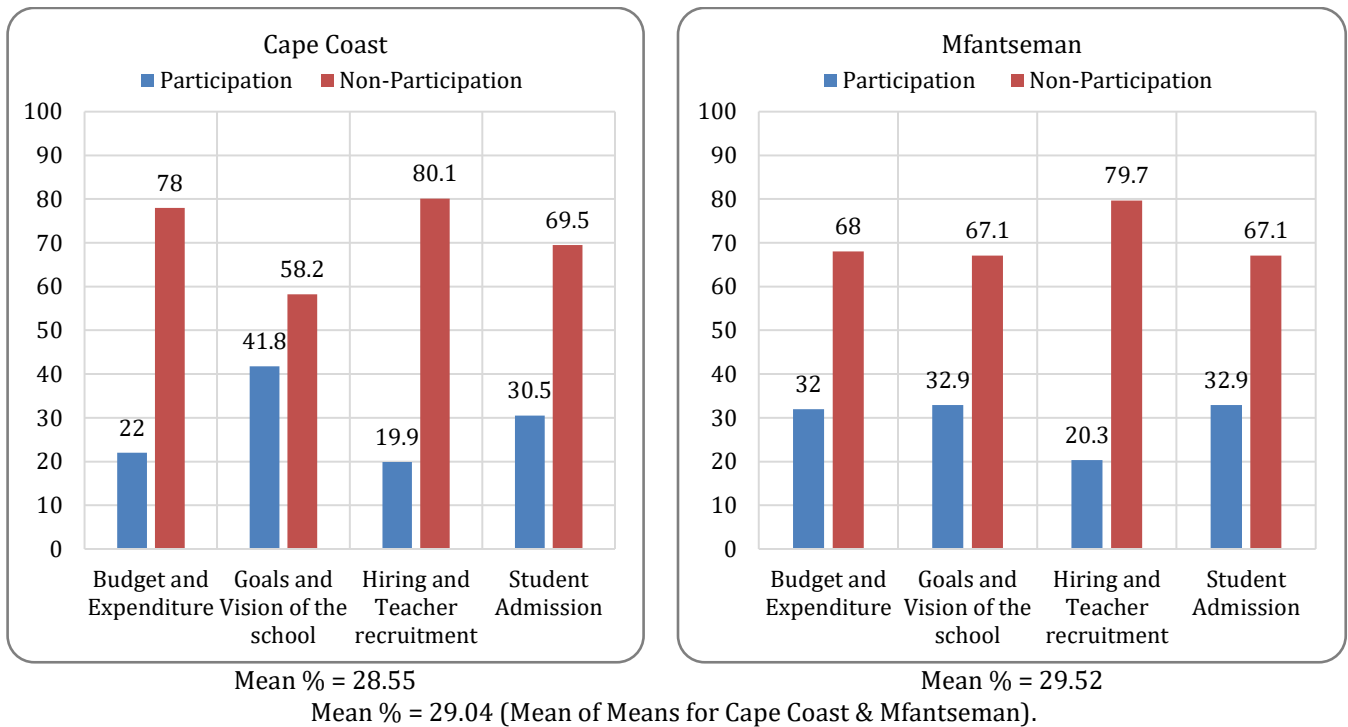
Fig 4. School Level of Participation.

This finding that only a few (29.04%) of the teachers in the study participates at the school level supports studies by Abahunmna (2010) and Mokoena (2011) who found that the majority of the teachers in Nigeria, Ghana and South Africa were deprived of participating at the school level of decision-making. On the other hand, the study's finding disagrees with those of Olorusola and Olayemi (2011) who revealed high teacher participation in school management in some selected secondary schools in Nigeria. The researchers, therefore, argue that the differences in findings perhaps emanate from the availability of structures, funds and good leadership skills that exist in a particular school at a particular time. The review of related literature in school decision-making suggests that failure to involve teachers in school decision-making is a plan to fail (Harris, 2012; Somech, 2010; Johnson and Kruse, 2009). The finding of this study shows that among the basic schools in the study, staff meetings are generally considered as the medium for involving the entire staff in school decision-making. However, the study revealed that while school teachers consider staff meeting as an ideal way of sharing their views and participating in school decision-making, some head teachers used these meetings as 'smoke screens' where-in the name of participation, school head teachers meet with teachers and make unilateral decisions which are passed to staff for implementation. This situation mirrors the major problems of how-who and when to involve teachers in school decision-making by basic head teachers in the study.

Research question 2: *What views and expectations are held by stakeholders with regard to TPSDM?*
Harris (2012) reminds us that in schools where teachers' views and expectations fall within the goals, vision and mission of the school, there have always been elements of school improvement. In this regard, teachers who are the stakeholders' in school decisions need not only to participate but also their views and expectations about the decision need to be considered. Three common themes that emerged from the interview representing the views and expectations of stakeholders include; motivation, trust and transparency, training and workshops.

Teacher Motivation: Snowman, Mcown and Biehler (2008) define motivation as the forces that lead to the arousal, selection, direction, and continuation of behaviour. In their view, teacher motivation is a concept that assists us in understanding why teachers behave the way they do.

The finding of the study revealed that almost all the teachers interviewed (10 out of 11) shared the view and expectation of teacher motivation. These teachers wanted to be motivated by their head teachers to become full participants in the decision-making process. This finding from the study is consistent with Mokoena (2011) who found that principals in South Africa considered the need for encouragement, motivation and skill development for teachers to be able to take on their enhanced roles in the decision-making process in light of the fact that their participation had been only minimal in the past. In addition, the EdQual policy brief in 2010 reported that some head teachers in Ghana had recognised the need for school improvement through motivation and enthusiasm. Furthermore, Salifu and Agbenyea (2013) also claim that in Ghana, good working conditions such as good environment, classroom space, furniture, school building and teachers' ability to participate in all school decision-making serves as a motivative factor.

Consequently, it is evident that teachers in the study yearned to be motivated. The common views and expressions shared by respondents from this study affirmed how teachers are willing and ready to participate in all the levels of school decision-making regardless of the daunting challenges they might encounter.

When teachers were asked the type of motivation they needed, the following were the common views expressed by them:

A female teacher (3) from Cape Coast added:

"Teachers should be motivated and the head teachers should accept the views of the teachers, while teachers desist from their lukewarm attitude to meetings [sic]. I mean better allowance and incentives, training etc"

A male teacher (10) from Mfantseman explained:

"You know motivation is also very important, so be it cash or kind as a head you need to motivate, encourage your teachers and you must also trust them"

Clearly, these excerpts and observations made by the researchers indicate and confirm the desire of teachers to be motivated by head teachers in order to fully participate at all levels of school decision-making. In the same vein head teachers and circuit supervisors share

teachers' views on motivation. Intrinsically, teachers wanted their views taken into consideration and implemented. Extrinsically, teachers wanted a good working environment and remuneration for work done. These two types of motivation were also expressed by a female circuit supervisor (3) from Mfantseman when she said:

> *"First teachers need to be motivated and encouraged not necessarily financial. This can be done at their normal speech and prize giving-day. It's also good to refresh them during and after meetings only if the funds are available"*

A male head teacher (2) from Cape Coast also added:

> *"You see, people always want to see action, not words. We as head teachers must be able to implement whatever decision being taken or agreed on; by so doing we are encouraging them.*

From these quotes and observations made during staff and PTA meetings, it is clear that stakeholders from both sides of the study view teacher motivation as a key instrument to full participation. However, whatever the kind of motivation and encouragement teachers need, it is important that school head teachers work hand-in-hand with teachers while finding the appropriate encouragement and motivational tools to ignite their desire to fully participate in school decision-making for basic schools to improve.

Trust and Transparency: The available literature indicates that trust is a phenomenon developed through harmonious behaviour based on mutual respect and courtesy, and is realized over time (Taylor, 1989). Giddens (1996) noted that trust is conceived in two categories: trust among individuals, and trust in abstract systems.

In their final report for Transparency International, Bogaert *et al.,* (2012) established that some head teachers in some basic schools in Ghana are not transparent with regard to financial issues. Additionally, results from studies in Ghana and other African countries show that the majority of the school leaders do not trust and are not transparent to their teachers because they believe they do not possess such skills and knowledge in financial management (Dampson, 2010; Abahunmna, 2010; Wadesango, 2011). These findings are consistent with this study's that head teachers regard the majority of the teachers as not possessing the required skills to participate in school decision-making.

A male teacher (10) from Mfantseman said: "*I think the*

head teacher does not trust some of us because maybe he thinks we are not qualified to handle finances in the school".

Consequently, from this and other quotes from teachers, it seems that majority of the basic school head teachers are not transparent because they do not trust that teachers have the required skills and knowledge to be involved in some of the school's decision-making. Perhaps, the assumption held by the researchers that head teachers themselves are not well trained and qualified to manage basic schools still holds.

The study further revealed that there is another group of teachers who are close allies to the head teacher and tend to support every decision whether good or bad. These teachers, according to the findings of this study, tend to intimidate other teachers who oppose any decision made by the head teachers as expressed by some teachers from Mfantseman. According to some of the teachers, the intimidations by other teachers make them feel uncomfortable to participate in school decision-making. They prefer to be quiet at all meetings because they fear they might be victimised.

This was captured by a female teacher (4) from Cape Coast who noted:

> *"We should see ourselves as equals with common vision and mission. Teachers should be allowed to talk and shouldn't be victimized or sabotaged by the leader with transfer and to be looked as those who don't' like the head teacher"*

In addition, a female circuit supervisor (3) from Mfantseman affirmed the above views by stressing that lack of trust, unity and transparency among head teachers, teachers and higher authorities has created tension, fear, and panic within the Ghana Education Service (GES). She attributed the current situation to the 'old fashioned' leadership style adopted by some of the basic school head teachers and the bureaucratic system that exist within the Ghana educational system. She confirmed that majority of the teachers are afraid to share their views during meetings because they fear they will be victimised and transferred to a remote village school as a punishment.

The common views expressed by the participants clearly show the views and expectations held about their leaders with regard to school decision-making. It is worthy to note, however, that majority of the teachers expect their head teachers to trust them, be transparent and be able to unify staff members with regard to school

decision-making. It is unfortunate that in this 21st century where collaboration, delegation and shared decision-making are tools used to improve schools (Jull, Swaffield, MacBeath, 2014) the same tools are used in negative ways by some school head teachers to create tension and conflict among teachers in some basic schools in the study area.

Training and Workshops: Workshops and in-service training emerged as one of the recommendations shared by all the participants during the interviews and observed by the researchers as a key to full participation. Evidence from available literature also indicates that the Government of Ghana and the Ministry of Education in collaboration with Ghana Education Service and Non-Governmental Organisation have been organising various workshops, in-service training and conferences on different themes to update its members including head teachers, circuit supervisors and teachers (Ghana Education Service, 2011). However, Dampson (2015) argues that these workshops are usually not relevant but regular.

In Ghana, evidence from literature (Jull *et al.*, 2012 & 2014) recommend regular in-service training and workshops for head teachers and circuit supervisors to keep them abreast with current tents of school leadership. This implies that perhaps a considerable proportion of head teachers and circuit supervisors in Ghana are not sufficiently competent, qualified, trained or have the required skills and knowledge to lead schools without regular in-service training and workshops in school leadership and management. Nonetheless, the demographic data obtained from the questionnaire survey shows that none of the head teachers from the study had a master's degree in leadership, Administration and Management or its equivalent. Furthermore, it was established from the questionnaire survey data that none of the school head teachers and circuit supervisors had had the training or any related workshop in school decision-making. This finding was captured in the following excerpt.

Male Circuit supervisor (1) from Cape Coast noted:
  "No, I haven't attended any workshop or in-service training on decision-making as long as I can remember"

Another female head teacher (1) from Cape Coast added:
"It is very necessary that teachers and head teachers become aware of how decisions are made by providing insert or workshops for teachers, head teachers and all

stakeholders to update them in their day-to-day administration of the school"

The findings show that, perhaps, without the quality and regular workshops or in-service training for head teachers and teachers, it will be difficult for teachers who are overworked and seen as unqualified by head teachers to accept and embrace the tenets and demands of participating in school decision-making processes. In this vein, most Ghanaian basic school teachers will turn away from decision-making because first, they would not be involved and even if they were, their contributions would not be taken into consideration by head teachers.

CONCLUSION

The study's findings have established that majority of the teachers in the Cape Coast metropolitan area and Mfantseman municipality studied are currently participating at the individual/classroom level, while some are participating at the committee/ group level. However, only a few teachers are participating at the school level. Regardless of these levels of participation, teachers expect head teachers to motivate them to participate in school decision-making, trust and be transparent to them in all school-related issues. The head teachers, circuit supervisors and teachers agreed that they all need regular training, especially for the head teachers in school decision-making to enable them to understand and practise the tenet of participative or shared decision-making in their schools. Regardless of the disparities in levels of teacher participation in the study sites, participants shared the common view that the end product of teacher participation in school decision-making is school improvement.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Following the discussion of findings and conclusions; the following recommendations are made by the researchers to enhance teacher participation in basic schools in the study area and similar contexts in Ghana. At the national level the researchers recommend the following:

Academic Qualification and Regular Training: Majority of the basic school head teachers who are regarded as custodians and leaders of the school are seen as 'helpless' in managing their schools. One major step towards improving their situation is by empowering them. However, the researchers argue that their basic challenge is how to tap teachers' expertise and experience to facilitate enlightened decisions and

build better educational policies. This is a major challenge to the majority of the head teachers because studies indicate that majority of them are appointed to become head teachers through long-service and with or without any formal training and qualification in school leadership and management or its equivalent (Oduro, 2008; Afful-Broni and Dampson, 2015). This situation has compelled the majority of the head teachers to manage schools from their past experiences or trial-and-error method which has contributed to the lack of teacher participation in school decision-making.

The researchers, therefore, recommend a review of the existing procedure for selecting and appointing of basic school head teachers to headship positions by the Ghana Education Service. In addition, the GES should enact special policies to appoint head teachers with headship qualification to head basic schools. In this regard, head teachers should have at least a minimum of first degree qualification in school administration and leadership or its equivalent and a minimum of 5 years of teaching experience before being appointed to head a school. Regular in-service training and workshops should be tailored to address needs and demands of basic schools and this should be periodically organised by the GES in collaboration with the University of Education, Winneba to train head teachers in school leadership and management.

At the school level the researchers recommend the following:

Teacher Empowerment: To empower is to give an opportunity and confidence to act upon one's ideas to influence the way one performs in one's profession. The findings of the study have shown that true empowerment will lead to increased professionalism as teachers assume responsibility for involvement in the decision-making process. Blasé and Blasé (2001), however, remind us that to empower teachers requires investing in teachers the right to participate in the determination of school goals and policies, and the right to exercise professional judgement about the content of the curriculum and means of instruction.

In this regard, the researchers recommend that at the school level, school policies should be structured to mandate head teachers to tap teachers' expertise and experience to facilitate enlightened decisions to build better educational programmes. This can be done by first, the head teachers investing in teachers the right to participate at all the three levels of school decision-

making (individual, committee and school level). Secondly, head teachers should entrust teachers with administrative responsibilities such as budgeting, expenditure, school goals and policies. Thirdly, school policies should mandate head teachers to grant new respect and trust to teachers and enhance teachers' working conditions in the classroom by providing them with the needed teaching and learning materials.

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