

# Teachers' Role in School Decision-Making Process: A Case Study of Teachers and School Leaders Perceptions in Rwanda Public Secondary School

Irene Musengamana<sup>1</sup>, Md Mirajur Rhaman Shaoan<sup>1\*</sup>,  
Tebatso Namanyane<sup>1</sup>, Niamh Lafferty<sup>2</sup> and Okafor Miracle Uzochukwu<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Education, Southwest University, Chongqing 400715, China

<sup>2</sup>Faculty of Education and Health Sciences, University of Limerick,  
Limerick V94 T9PX, Ireland

**\*Corresponding author's e-mail: [saonmiraj@email.swu.edu.cn](mailto:saonmiraj@email.swu.edu.cn)**

*Received: August 24, 2023   Revised: December 27, 2023   Accepted: January 26, 2024*

## Abstract

The significance of decision-making in educational institutions is widely acknowledged as a pivotal element in school leadership and administration. The school decision-making process involves selecting and determining crucial concerns that benefit the school's and its constituents' overall welfare in Rwanda. All secondary public schools in Rwanda's community are expected to participate actively in this process. This research examines the role and contributions of teachers in the decision-making process and their level of engagement. It also investigates their lived or felt experiences while executing school choices in which they were not involved. A semi-structured interview was conducted with 8 teachers and 2 school principals from 2 public secondary schools in Rwanda. It was concluded that in the context of Rwanda's school teachers' extended invitations to engage in the processes and conversations around school decision-making, their actual desire or willingness to participate needs to be higher, suggesting a limited degree of engagement. The promotion of collaboration and collectivism is enhanced among the school community members. It plays a significant part in augmenting instructors' work happiness and motivation. Nevertheless, instructors argue that following instructions without engaging in decision-making may lead to inflexibility and difficulties. They emphasize the need to integrate teachers' perspectives into every decision made by school management.

**Keywords:** School, Decision-making, Teachers' participation, Involvement

## Introduction

School decision-making has been widely recognized as a fundamental aspect of school administration and leadership. The absence of this procedure would provide significant challenges for educational institutions in effectively carrying out their operations and customarily attaining their objectives. The foundational principle behind decision-making in educational institutions is centred on the notion that those impacted by a particular choice should be granted substantial engagement in the decision-making process. These individuals possess the necessary knowledge and responsibility to comprehend and effectively implement the decision. The involvement of teachers in decision-making processes facilitates the acquisition of significant and comprehensive insights by school administrators on the underlying factors contributing to various school-related challenges (Smylie, 1992). Failure to consider educational administrators' availability and use of this information may hinder their ability to make informed choices and effectively contribute to attaining the school's aims and aspirations. Numerous scholars in education have posited that the active involvement of teachers in school decision-making processes is significant. According to Lunenburg (2010), teacher engagement engenders a perception that the decision-making process is highly quality, legitimate, and well-supported. Active involvement is crucial in achieving a comprehensive understanding, facilitating adaptability, and ensuring the effective execution of a decision. According to Aksay and Ural (2008), as referenced by Eris et al. (2011), the involvement of individuals in decision-making processes within an organization, such as a school, facilitates their learning and enables them to recognize the organization's collective goals and objectives. According to Olorunsola and Olayemi (2011), incorporating perspectives from individuals inside an organization throughout the decision-making process is anticipated to provide high-quality decisions.

Furthermore, these individuals are likely to understand better and exhibit greater acceptance towards judgments in which they actively participated. The active involvement of teachers in school decision-making is paramount as it can significantly enhance the educational institution's overall performance. Therefore, it is essential to encourage and foster their participation in the decision-making processes within the school. Meanwhile, teachers perceive that they contribute more to the educational institution outside the scope of classroom instruction (Pashiardis, 1994). The extent to which teachers may engage in decision-making inside schools differs across administrative, managerial, and academic domains. These judgments regularly have interconnectedness and potential ramifications for the educational institution and its internal stakeholders, including administrators, educators, guardians, learners, and more personnel. There is an apparent tendency for instructors to be more actively involved in academic-related choices compared to other decisions within the school context.

The research by Lydia and Salome (2011) examines teacher involvement in school management and administrative decision-making processes. The research results indicated that head teachers exhibit moderate involvement in including teachers in organizational decision-making. In contrast, previous studies have shown limited teacher participation in

administrative, curricular, and pedagogical decision-making (Dora, 2010; Lydia & Salome, 2011; Mete, 2004; Goldring, 2015).

However, in this paper, we tried to show the dual purpose of contributing to academic discourse on educational governance and advocating for positive changes in Rwanda's educational system. It underscores the significance of teachers' roles in decision-making and their potential impact on the quality of education in the country, emphasizing the need for a more inclusive and collaborative approach in educational policy and practice by the source of the teachers' indecision and improbability over their role in decision-making. Nevertheless, some challenges may arise inside educational institutions or due to the exclusion of individuals from active involvement in decision-making processes by school officials.

### **Statement of the problem**

The acknowledgement and acceptance of the significance of education in many nations and civilizations have been attributed to the social and economic advancements in these regions. Governments are allocating significant resources towards developing their education systems, acknowledging the inherent advantages of education for local communities and organizations, and recognizing its pivotal role in fostering economic prosperity within the nation. Incorporating materialistic perspectives into education is a commonly anticipated phenomenon, now recognized as an industry (Panchamukhi, 1970).

While schools and other educational institutions are often considered conventional establishments, decision-making is crucial in determining their operational and everyday functioning. It would be advantageous if this procedure were conducted by individuals affiliated with the educational institution to benefit members. However, Including teachers in educational decisions is widely believed to positively impact students' academic achievement and overall school performance. A substantial body of empirical research backs this notion of research done by Wadesango (2012); the objective was to examine the impact of teachers' participation in school decision-making on the academic performance of pupils.

The researcher discovered that engaging in this practice yielded noteworthy improvements in educational achievements. Another scholarly work discusses the active involvement of instructors in the decision-making processes inside their educational institutions. However, the level of teacher involvement is contingent upon two key factors. The first factor pertains to the kind of educational institution and its corresponding leadership style. Notably, instructors at private schools have been shown to exhibit higher levels of engagement than their publicly-owned counterparts.

Another aspect to consider is the capacity of educators to participate in the decision-making process. Based on Smylie's (1992) research, it has been observed that instructors exhibit a greater inclination towards engaging in curricular and pedagogical decision-making as opposed to management and administrative decision-making. The results of their study also suggested that the extent to which teachers are eager to engage in or contribute to the school's decision-making processes is contingent upon their level of acquaintance with school officials. These studies have examined teachers' involvement in making decisions inside schools and the

responsibilities they assume in this regard. Based on the findings of the literature assessment, it is evident that the current research strategy for examining instructors' incorporation of their perspectives of involvement needs to be revised. When considering various school choices, it is essential to examine stakeholders' perceived responsibilities and contributions, their level of desire to engage, and their personal experiences in implementing decisions, particularly in the context of public secondary schools.

### **The objective of the study**

As previously stated, there needs to be research examining teachers' perspectives and experiences regarding their involvement in decision-making processes inside the educational institutions where they are employed. This research aims to enhance the existing body of information by examining instructors' perceived roles and contributions within the decision-making process at educational institutions.

This research will further investigate the extent to which instructors are inclined to engage in school decision-making. The present study aims to examine two key aspects: 1) The underlying reasons behind school leaders' choices to include or exclude teachers from meetings and decision-making processes, and 2) The experiences of teachers in implementing decisions that they either contributed to or were not involved in during the decision-making process.

Specifically, this study posed the following research questions:

1. What is the teacher's perceived role and contribution to the school's decision-making process?
2. What are the challenges of implementing decisions without participating in the process?
3. Are the teachers willing to be involved in the school decision-making process?
4. Are school leaders willing to involve teachers in decision-making processes?

### **Literature review**

According to Stosich (2021), teachers often have little involvement in school decision-making processes, although they commonly assume informative and advising responsibilities. The speaker elucidated that two problems require attention to engage teachers in school decision-making processes effectively. One key factor is how the school administration demonstrates a receptive attitude toward including students in decision-making meetings.

Another crucial aspect is the student's capacity to participate actively in such meetings. According to scholarly research in the field of education, the implementation of a collaborative decision-making approach within schools, wherein the perspectives and input of all teachers are actively solicited and considered, is posited to significantly influence and enhance the overall functioning of the educational institution (Hulpia et al., 2011; Louis et al., 2010). According to Harris (2013), it is the responsibility of the school administration to provide a collaborative atmosphere that facilitates the active participation of all members in the decision-making process. Numerous scholarly investigations have provided empirical evidence to substantiate the proposition that the active involvement of teachers in the decision-making

processes within educational institutions is positively correlated with the overall success of the school and has a discernible impact on the academic achievements of students (Smylie and Hart, 1999; Leithwood et al., 2004). For example, Ruter et al. (1979) conducted research that revealed a significant correlation between incorporating instructors' emotions in the school's decision-making process and students' academic performance.

There is a belief that a correlation exists between teachers' engagement in school decision-making and their work performance, leading to heightened motivation and job satisfaction among instructors. Teachers have a sense of belonging and involvement in the many activities undertaken by the school. The active participation of teachers in the decision-making process enhances the overall quality of choices and facilitates the implementation of decisions and policies. Firstly, the research process reveals diverse perspectives from each member of the academic institution. Furthermore, individuals can comprehend choices more efficiently as they thoroughly understand and actively participate in them, particularly those about academic matters inside educational institutions.

According to Udo and Akpa (2007), when teachers are sufficiently engaged in decision-making, it fosters dedication. It receives proper support from the administration, facilitating the achievement of the school's objectives. The prevailing sentiment was indifference, resulting in decreased resistance inside the educational institution. Nevertheless, substantial research suggests that instructors must be more actively engaged in the decision-making processes inside their educational institutions. Wadesango (2012) examined teacher participation in decision-making on student achievement within secondary schools in Zimbabwe.

According to the interview conducted with teachers, it was found that there is notable dissatisfaction among instructors due to the infrequent solicitation of their perspectives on significant matters inside their educational institutions, such as disciplinary concerns. Furthermore, their participation in crucial administrative and curriculum-related decision-making processes is consistently disregarded despite their possession of specialized knowledge in several domains. According to Özden's (1996) research, it was observed that instructors reported a lack of regular and serious consideration of their opinions on many subjects. Additionally, it was shown that administrators exhibited a higher frequency of decision-making compared to actively seeking input from instructors. According to Deepa et al. (2010) findings, including participatory decision-making (PDM) in the decision-making process inside educational institutions or organizations is crucial for achieving success in educational management. Implementing this practice across all levels of school management and administration is essential.

Furthermore, the literature suggests a strong correlation between teacher engagement in decision-making, job satisfaction, and motivation. It promotes a sense of belonging and involvement among teachers, facilitating the implementation of decisions and policies that ultimately enhance the quality of educational choices. However, the prevailing sentiment in the literature is that teachers adequately engage in decision-making processes within their educational institutions. Research, such as the study by Wadesango (2012), demonstrates

notable dissatisfaction among teachers due to the infrequent solicitation of their perspectives on significant matters and their limited participation in crucial administrative and curriculum-related decision-making. In light of these findings, it becomes evident that fostering a culture of participatory decision-making (PDM) is essential for educational institutions. Implementing PDM practices across all levels of school management and administration, as advocated by Deepa et al. (2010), is crucial for achieving success in educational leadership. This addresses the concerns teachers raise and contributes to the overall improvement of educational institutions by tapping into their teaching staff's diverse perspectives and expertise. In summary, the reviewed literature calls for a reevaluation of the role of teachers in school decision-making, emphasizing the potential benefits of their active involvement in shaping the direction and policies of educational institutions. The findings presented in this conceptual framework lay the foundation for further research and policy initiatives to enhance teacher engagement and, subsequently, the overall quality of education.

## **Methodology**

### **Research design**

The primary investigation approach used in this study was a qualitative research design. The technique in question pertains to a naturalistic research strategy that seeks a comprehensive understanding of social phenomena within their genuine and unaltered surroundings (University of Texas Arlington, 2022, as quoted in Erwin et al., 2022). Similar to the study mentioned earlier, the primary objective of the researcher was to elucidate the viewpoints, encounters, and emotions of instructors about their involvement in making decisions inside the school setting. The primary data-collecting strategy used in this research was semi-structured online interviews. This approach was chosen to aggregate participant replies meticulously, minimizing the risk of missing material.

### **Participants of the study**

The present research had a sample size of 10 participants, encompassing two school head teachers and eight instructors. The demographic details of these individuals are shown in the following table. The study included educators and administrators from two publicly funded secondary schools in Rwanda's southern and western regions. Among the total number of participants, it was observed that 30% were identified as female, and the remaining 70% were identified as male. Four individuals in the group had positions as educators at lower secondary schools. Four individuals held the position of upper secondary school teachers based on their teaching credentials.

The individuals included in the research ranged in age from 25 to 44 years and had teaching experience from 2 to 15 years. Code names were assigned to all study participants to ensure ethical concerns and maintain participant anonymity. Specifically, teachers were identified as T1-T8, while head teachers were referred to as H1-H2.

**Table 1** Demographic information of participants

<b>Names</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Education background</b>	<b>Teaching experience</b>
T1	Male	37	A1 (Lower secondary school teaching qualification)	12 Years
T2	Male	40	A1 (Lower secondary school teaching qualification)	10 Years
T3	Female	25	A0 (Upper secondary school teaching qualification)	2 Years
T4	Male	34	A1 (Lower secondary school teaching qualification)	3 Years
H1	Male	30	A0 (Upper secondary school teaching qualification)	4 Years
T5	Male	26	A1 (Lower secondary school teaching qualification)	2 Years
T6	Female	32	A0 (Upper secondary school teaching qualification)	10 Years
T7	Female	27	A0 (Upper secondary school teaching qualification)	3 Years
H2	Male	44	A0 (Upper secondary school teaching qualification)	15 Years
T8	Male	28	A0 (Upper secondary school teaching qualification)	5 Years

### **Data collection**

The investigator conducted semi-structured online interviews with ten individuals to collect their data. The participants were provided with an explanation of the study's objectives and the methodologies used to complete it. The participants were informed about their rights to refuse, engage, and discontinue their involvement in the study after it had started. They were also provided information on any anticipated negative consequences or favourable results. The participants were furthermore supplied with information on the intended purposes for which the data will be used. In the present study, participants willingly disclosed crucial and sometimes sensitive information to the researcher, expecting their identities to be safeguarded.

The commencement of the interview session was contingent upon obtaining the interviewee's consent. Three participants were allowed to express themselves in their native language due to their perceived lack of fluency in English during the interview. The interview was performed in the language selected by the participants, either their native language or English. The first segment of the discussion included a concise overview of the respondents, facilitating the researcher in collecting data about the participant's demographic characteristics, including their teaching credentials and professional background.

The subsequent section included the participants' perspectives about the involvement of teachers in making decisions inside the school, becoming the primary focus of the inquiry. The whole interview session was recorded, with each interview lasting around 30 to 45 minutes. All audio recordings were transcribed after the discussion to facilitate further data processing.

### **Data analysis**

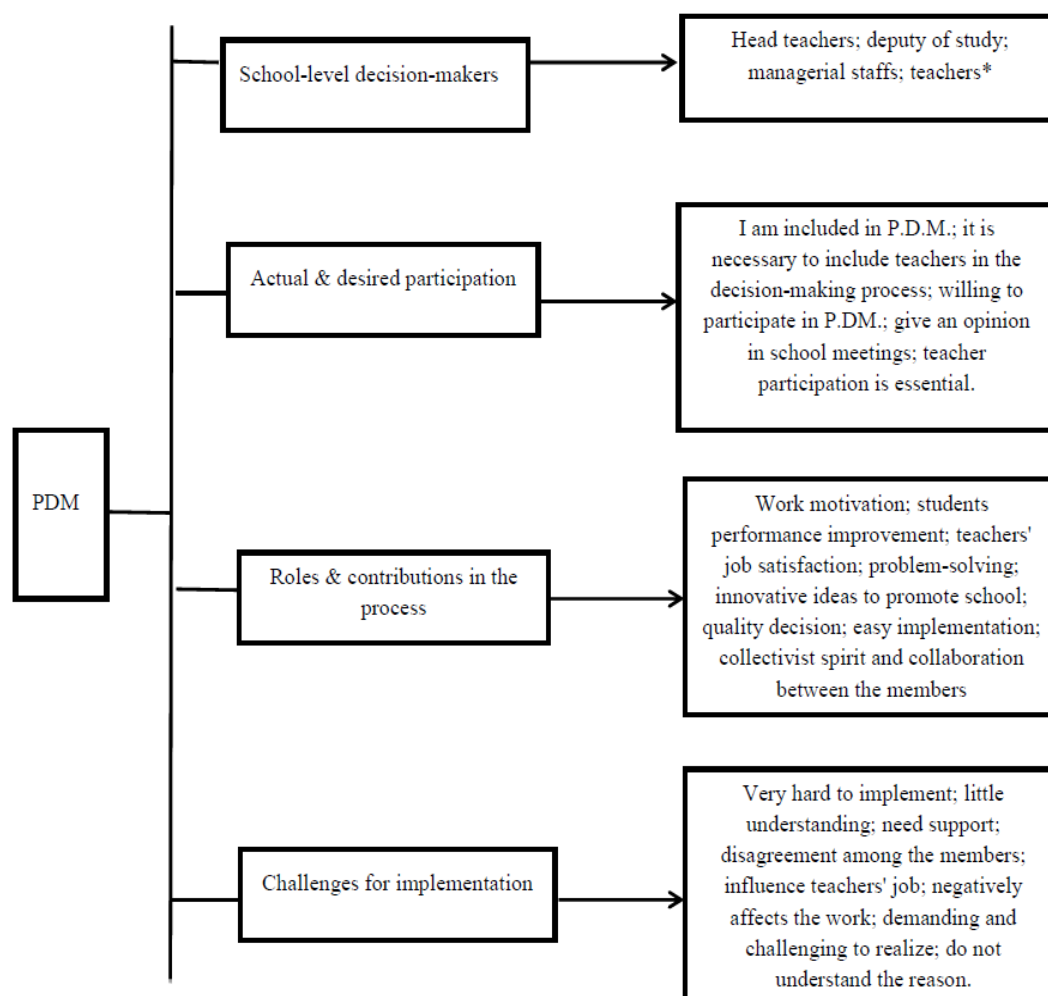
The interview transcripts were subjected to thematic content analysis using ATLAS.ti 23, a software tool for qualitative research. Thematic analysis is a methodology used to identify, examine, and present recurring patterns (referred to as themes) within collected data. This approach facilitates producing a comprehensive study focused on achieving specified

research objectives (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The primary aim of doing a thematic analysis is to identify noteworthy or meaningful patterns within a dataset. These identified themes are then used to comprehensively describe the study findings or shed light on a specific topic. This research used the six-phase framework Braun and Clarke (2006) proposed as its theoretical foundation. The data analysis process included many stages. Initially, the researchers familiarized themselves with the whole data set by thoroughly reviewing the interview transcripts on two separate occasions and documenting their observations. Additionally, this aided the researcher in gaining a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under investigation and acquiring further insights from the interview materials. Additionally, this method served as an alternative means of verifying the credibility and dependability of the participants' answers.

Subsequently, the researchers developed the first algorithms to organize the collected data coherently and structured systematically. The coding process was used to partition the data into smaller units of semantic significance. During the coding procedure, the researchers in this study gathered comparable data organized into distinct categories and codes. Furthermore, these codes were interpreted to facilitate comprehension for the intended audience. The study analyzed research and interview questions and completed initial codes to acquire relevant categories. The rules were then sub-categorized. The interview transcripts in languages other than English were subjected to simultaneous coding and translation into English.

The subsequent step included identifying themes using codes and categories that signify significant patterns within the data. However, to ascertain the validity and meaningfulness of the articles, the last stage included revisiting the original dataset and conducting a comparative analysis of the results. Subsequently, the themes were examined and delineated in a way that facilitated a comprehensive comprehension of the data. Figure 1 illustrates the main components and codes used in this investigation.





**Figure 1.** Demonstration diagram for meaningful themes and codes

## Results

In the present section, we will investigate the fundamental components of the involvement of teachers in the decision-making process at the school level, as derived from the principal themes identified in the raw data provided by participants. This analysis aims to elucidate the strategies employed in decision-making and identify the key individuals responsible for making decisions in public secondary schools in Rwanda.

In addition, an analysis will be conducted on teachers' genuine and preferred level of engagement in making decisions within the school. The former pertains to whether teachers are given opportunities to engage in school decision-making or perceive adequate representation throughout this process. The latter, however, seeks to ascertain the willingness of instructors to engage in the decision-making process inside their educational institutions. Based on available studies, the desire to engage in decision-making may include two key dimensions. The first dimension pertains to teachers' inclination to participate actively in

decision-making activities. The second dimension focuses on the dedication of head teachers to include teachers in the decision-making processes. In conclusion, we will now examine the responsibilities and contributions of teachers as described concerning school choices. This section will also discuss the difficulties teachers encounter when adopting options or policies in which they do not participate in decision-making.

### **School-level decision making**

The school insiders, including instructors, make crucial choices regarding the school's daily operations and overall welfare. Typically, school decision-making includes budgetary and financial matters, curriculum development and instructional approaches, the well-being of school employees, instructors, and students, the recruitment of new staff, and the management of kids' disciplinary concerns. Most of these choices are expected to be taken at regularly or intermittently convening school meetings concerning the personnel responsible for decision-making within the educational institution. The decision-making process includes the active participation of several stakeholders within the academic setting, including school officials, instructors, non-teaching personnel, and representatives from the student and parent community. In some instances, perspectives from other educational stakeholders are included. According to educators, their sense of representation is heightened when they can express their views throughout the decision-making procedures inside the educational institution, given their integral role within the school community.

*"....., I also feel that I am represented and respected when my voice heard, or my idea is taken into consideration during the process of decision making." (T4)*

It explains how necessary school leaders must involve and consider teachers' sides when making school-related decisions. However, on the other side, in the cases of emergency head teachers, school leaders sometimes make decisions without noticing and consulting the subordinates' opinions. Other teachers "think it is OK" as it is not applicable to consult their opinions for every school matter because of the nature of their job.

*"....., according to the emergency of the situation, sometimes the headteacher can decide without consulting teachers and other staff members" (T1)*

### **Teachers' actual and desired participation in decision-making**

The term "actual participation in decision-making" refers to the teachers' current degree of participation in meetings and decision-making procedures at their respective schools. It demonstrates the involvement of teachers in decision-making on the part of school administrators, and teachers have corroborated that they routinely solicited their opinions and ideas during meetings and decision-making at the school.

*"....., I am included in the decision-making process because, at our school, we usually give our ideas in decision-making meetings and make a decision together as a team." (T3)*

Teachers explained that they usually contribute to making teaching and learning decisions, class management, student assessment and evaluation, and other extra-curricular-related decisions related to their expertise. Within the line of one of our main research

---

questions, for school leaders, there were different reasons to welcome teachers' opinions and views on the table of decision-making at schools. They (school leaders) revealed that it is of great importance to allow teachers to contribute to the decision-making, and one of the main reasons is to let the decision-maker be exposed to different opinions and ideas aiming to solve a specific problem which is believed to improve the quality of the decision or solution. Another reason is that shared decision-making will bring a sense of responsibility among the members, which will ultimately ease the realization of the decision or policy. In the cases of poor completion, there will be someone in charge.

Regarding the desired participation of teachers in the decision-making process, this is a double-sided phenomenon and will be discussed in 2 aspects. One side refers to teachers' desire to be included in different decision-making discussions and meetings, which also shows the willingness of the teachers to participate in school decisions on various critical issues. One of the participants stated that.

*Schools should involve participative decision-making, and all teachers should be willing to participate and give their opinions, especially when deciding on issues that can enhance teachers' jobs or affect teachers' lives (T8).*

On the other hand, school administrators want teachers to participate in meetings where decisions are made. The need for teachers to participate in decision-making by school leaders is linked to 1. school leaders' willingness to do so, which can be justified by various factors as previously discussed; 2. another crucial factor that makes school leaders need teachers to participate in decision-making is the teachers' deliberate nonparticipation (unwillingness). The critical question is: Why would teachers purposefully choose not to participate in school decision-making?

As per interviews with teachers, some decisions are made beyond their concerns. Another primary reason is that even though they participate in decision-making, their opinions will not be considered during final choices. Additionally, to some extent, when teachers feel that the process will result in an additional workload, these are reasons for teachers' refusal to participate in making some school decisions. Lack of experience and knowledge regarding the decisions are reasons for not including teacher (s) in schools' decision-making, as explained by the school leader (H2).

### **Teachers' roles and contributions in the process of deciding on a school**

Including teachers in the decision-making process inside schools is seen as a reciprocal arrangement that yields advantages for the overall advancement of the institution. Simultaneously, it is advantageous for educators themselves. This section will primarily focus on the many roles that instructors see themselves fulfilling and their contributions to the decision-making process. However, it is essential to quickly explore the potential benefits of including teachers in decision-making, particularly concerning their professional roles. In the context of public school environments, it is customary for higher-ranking administrators to convey information on school decisions and policies to teachers passively.

These leaders may have a limited comprehension of the potential impact of such choices on teachers' employment and the complexity involved in their implementation. Educators assert that including their emotions, viewpoints, and thoughts is vital while engaging in conversations about crucial matters at the classroom level. Including teachers in the decision-making process is often regarded as a means to elicit a diverse range of inventive ideas about various school matters during meetings or conferences. This inclusion enhances the overall quality of choices and policies created.

*"....., my colleague and I can provide important advice and innovative ideas on how to solve some school issues." (T5)*

An additional advantage of including instructors in the decision-making process inside the educational institution is that their active participation will foster a heightened feeling of community and collaboration among the group members. Furthermore, this initiative has the potential to contribute significantly to the overall progress and advancement of the educational institution. Another factor to consider is that implementing choices about teaching, learning, and classroom management is likely more efficient and straightforward when instructors actively engage in decision-making.

*"....., we, teachers, have a big contribution in school decision making. For example, teachers are a direct intermediate between school and students. Teachers understand students more than school leaders do. So, they contribute to the easy implementation of decisions and inform leaders and students' reactions about these decisions." (T3)*

Another potential purpose might be enhancing students' academic performance via the involvement of teachers in decision-making, as supported by several empirical data identified in the literature study. However, it is essential to note that there are more factors that instructors contribute to the decision-making process inside schools. There are many pertinent advantages for educators who engage in this procedure. Most of these advantages relate to teachers' everyday work's emotional and behavioural aspects, including dedication, motivation, and professional happiness. During the interview, several educators expressed a sense of validation when school administrators sought their input on various matters during the decision-making process, leading to a discernible enhancement in their professional responsibilities.

### **Challenges for implementation without participation**

As previously mentioned, the significance of engaging in school decision-making cannot be overstated. However, considering this, the inherent characteristics of the teaching profession. The comprehensive involvement of teachers in all choices and concerns about the school may only some times be feasible. In public school settings, it is standard for a range of options to be made external to the school environment but then implemented by instructors inside the school. In this study, it is in this particular meaning. The objective was to understand the prevalent difficulties in this context.

The part will focus on the examination of teachers' comments. According to educators, there were instances when the implementation of decisions in which they were not involved posed challenges. Commonly, individuals need more comprehension of the underlying

objectives and rationales behind these actions and policies. Another obstacle is the teachers' need to work on acquiring choices that directly impact their professional responsibilities. These decisions include several aspects, such as teaching methods, curriculum, pedagogy, and class-level matters. Ultimately, when individuals without sufficient knowledge endeavour to execute choices, they must seek assistance and support, perhaps leading to the postponement of decision implementation and their respective tasks.

## Discussion

The primary focus of this study was to examine the overall circumstances surrounding school-based decision-making within the realm of primary education in Rwanda, with a particular emphasis on public secondary schools. The primary objective of this research was to investigate the extent of teacher involvement in shared decision-making within their respective schools. Additionally, the study examined teachers' roles during this decision-making process and the advantages of their active participation. Furthermore, the study sought to assess the contributions made by teachers toward establishing high-quality school choices.

The ancient adage "many heads are better than one" suggests an inherent disparity between the outcomes achieved by a collective effort and those accomplished by an individual. In this context, choices collectively made by members of an organization are seen to possess superior quality and adherence to standards compared to those made without input from all members or by a limited number of individuals in the organization's upper echelons. Based on the results of this research, it is evident that the participants believe that their engagement in school decision-making processes is of utmost importance, as it contributes significantly to generating sound choices within their respective educational institutions. The inclusion of teachers in school decision-making processes has been shown by (Mokoena & Machaisa 2018; Eris et al., 2017; Harisson et al., 2016).

Teachers' involvement in school decision-making pertains to their contributions during meetings and decision-making processes and their benefits from such engagements. According to educators, assuming a crucial part in the decision-making process inside schools has been shown to enhance work satisfaction. Firstly, the implementation of this process fosters a sense of camaraderie and collaboration, thereby potentially enhancing overall effectiveness. Secondly, including employees in decision-making symbolizes their integration within the organization, catalyzing their commitment and dedication to their jobs. Mokoena and Machaisa (2018) found comparable findings in their research, indicating that teachers expressed satisfaction with their professional trajectories due to the consideration given to their perspectives and contributions in the decision-making processes at their respective schools. These choices, in turn, directly or indirectly impacted their daily work. Dincer and Osman (2015) established a correlation between the logical decision-making style of administration and the levels of job satisfaction and work motivation among instructors. Educators have a sense of fulfilment in their profession while engaging in activities that contribute to the productivity and advancement of their educational institution.

From a holistic standpoint, it is widely accepted that teachers contribute to enhancing the schools they are affiliated with by their active involvement in decision-making and collaborative discourse. From the perspective of educators, they express a sense of assurance that their participation in the decision-making process can yield several benefits. These include facilitating the smooth execution of school-related decisions, particularly those about academic matters. Additionally, educators believe that their involvement can foster the introduction of novel and innovative ideas for problem-solving within educational institutions. Furthermore, educators perceive their participation as creating high-quality and effective decisions. Lastly, educators view their involvement in decision-making as a way to distribute responsibilities among members of the school organization.

Another significant finding derived from the outcomes of this research pertains to the limited feasibility of teachers' involvement in the decision-making processes inside schools despite the prevailing potential for their participation as self-reported. Possible factors contributing to this problem include the teachers' occupational characteristics, the school's leadership approach, the teachers' inclination to engage in decision-making procedures, and the administration's dedication to involving teachers in such processes and discussions. Similar findings were expressed by Wadesango (2012), who observed in his research that respondents said their engagement in educational decision-making is contingent upon the nature of the issue at hand. Often, instructors are directed on how to proceed. Potential avenues for future study might be explored in light of this scenario, focusing on investigating the ramifications of teachers' exclusion from management and administrative decision-making processes on school operations and students' academic outcomes.

Teachers need to consider the many viewpoints involved in implementing choices. Many of these choices need to be more inadequately executed, primarily due to their challenging nature and the occasional lack of understanding among those responsible for implementing the rationale behind a particular decision.

However, that diagram, along with the summary explanation, has provided a comprehensive overview of the study's findings, highlighting the critical role of teachers in decision-making processes within schools and the impact of their involvement on various aspects of the educational environment. However, this study shows the effect of participation on school operations and academic outcomes. It is also highlighted that teachers play a significant role in the decision-making process. It was (Mokoena & Machaisa 2018; Dincer & Osman., 2015) noted that when teachers' experience was increased, their job satisfaction and motivation were more involved in decision-making. However, the collective decision-making process results in higher quality and more effective decisions despite the potential benefits of full teacher participation in decision-making.

### **Recommendations**

However, there are many challenges in Rwanda's public secondary schools regarding teachers' participation in school decision-making, including organizational constraints, leadership styles, willingness to engage, and administrative support. More involvement of

teachers in decision-making can lead to challenges in implementing decisions and may negatively impact school operations and student outcomes. Further investigation is recommended to explore the effects of excluding teachers from management and administrative decision-making on school performance and student achievements.

### **Conclusion**

However, this present research aimed to investigate and understand teachers' perspectives about their involvement in decision-making processes at the school level. Specifically, the study examined teachers' views of their roles and contributions in decision-making and their willingness to assume decision-making positions. The research also sought to ascertain the primary factors influencing the involvement or exclusion of teachers in the collaborative decision-making process led by school administrators. Additionally, it attempted to explore teachers' perspectives on implementing confident choices without a comprehensive grasp of the rationale and process behind their selection.

This research indicates that educators express dissatisfaction with their involvement in decision-making processes and conversations, suggesting a persistent desire for more engagement. Teachers had a sense of engagement and inclusion, primarily in topics about teaching and learning, while being excluded from involvement in school administrative, management, and disciplinary affairs. The school management has disclosed that the limited participation by teachers in decision-making may be linked to their reluctance to engage and their insufficient competence in the matters at hand. Nevertheless, it is sometimes necessary for school administrators to include teachers in the decision-making process about allocating responsibilities or implementing collaborative efforts.

The teachers' perspective emphasized the importance of teachers' involvement in decision-making processes, as they believe it to be crucial for their professional development and the overall functioning of the educational institution. The degree of teachers' engagement ranges from augmenting their work happiness and motivation to promoting school and student performance. It implies that the involvement of teachers in decision-making processes inside educational institutions has significant value and continues to be highly sought.

Nevertheless, teachers are sometimes unable to engage in conversations or attend meetings for decision-making events owing to several factors, such as the inherent characteristics of their profession, the leadership style within the school, and their lack of enthusiasm to participate. In this scenario, when instructors are expected to adhere to prescribed instructions, it has been noted that complexity and difficulty arise when they are tasked with implementing choices they must comprehend thoroughly. Consequently, this lack of understanding contributes to subpar execution and hinders the timely completion of their daily responsibilities.

This research suggests that it is exceptionally desirable for instructors to actively and proactively engage in decision-making processes. When it is impractical for all teachers to participate in meetings and discussions on school choices, including teachers' representatives might be considered a means to include teacher input. This inclusion aims to enhance the

collective understanding of the conclusions reached during these deliberations and facilitate the subsequent implementation process.

## References

- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Cansoy, R., Polatcan, M., & Parlar, H. (2020). Paternalistic school principal behaviors and teachers' participation in decision making: The intermediary role of teachers' trust in principals. *Research in Educational Administration & Leadership*, 5(2), 553-584.
- Chaaban, Y., Abu-Tineh, A., Alkhateeb, H., & Romanowski, M. (2022). A Narrative Study Exploring Content and Process Influences on Male Teachers' Career Development. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 1-16.
- Deepa Mehta, Alok G., & Rathore, H.C.S. (2010). Teacher participation in the decision-making process: reality and repercussions in Indian higher education, Compare: *Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 40(5), 659-671.
- Dincer, O., & Osman, T. (2015). The Effect of School Administrators' Decision-Making Styles on Teacher Job Satisfaction. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 197, 1936-1946.
- Eriş, H., Kayhan, H., Baştaş, M., & Gamar, C. (2017). Teacher and administrative staff views on teachers' participation in decision making process. *EURASIA Journal of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education*, 13(11), 7411-7420.
- Harris, A. (2013). Distributed leadership: Friend or foe? *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 41(5), 545-554.
- Harrison, K., & Taysum, A., McNamara, G., & O'Hara, J. (2016). The degree to which students and teachers are involved in second-level school processes and participation in decision-making: An Irish case study. *Irish Educational Studies*, 35(2), 155-173.
- Hulpia, H., Devos, G., & Van Keer, H. (2011). The relation between school leadership from a distributed perspective and teachers' organizational commitment: Examining the source of the leadership function. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 47(5), 728-771.
- Louis, K. S., Leithwood, K., Wahlstrom, K. L., & Anderson, S. E. (2010). *Investigating the links to improved student learning: Final report of research findings*. NY, USA: Wallace Foundation.
- Luschei, T. F., & Jeong, D. W. (2023). Organizing schools for improvement: The role of school decision making and authority.
- Mokoena, S. P. (2011). Participative Decision Making: Perceptions of School Stakeholders in South Africa. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 29(2), 119-131.
- Panchamukhi, P., (1970). Decision-Making in Education: Some Issues. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 5(3/5), 219-222.
- Pashiardis, P. (1994). Teacher Participation in Decision Making. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 5(8), 14-17.



- Smylie, M. A., & Hart, A. W. (1999). School leadership for teacher learning and change: A human and social capital development perspective. *Handbook of research on educational administration*, 2, 421-441.
- Wadesango, N. (2012). The influence of teacher participation in Decision-Making on student Performance. *The Anthropologist*, 14(5), 425-431.