Analysis of Teacher Inclusion in Decision-Making Processes in Public Basic Schools in the Ho West District

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Abstract:- This study sought to analyze teacher inclusion in decision-making processes in public basic schools in the Ho West District of the Volta Region. Drawing on Charles et al.'s (1997) shared decision-making theory, the research employed a quantitative approach and utilized the descriptive survey design. The sample included 450 public school teachers selected through stratified random sampling. Data were collected using questionnaires with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.85 and analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and independent samples t-test. Results indicated that teachers were actively involved in providing input on resources and participating in professional development, but their engagement was less prominent in areas such as staff hiring and decision-making related to school improvement initiatives. Factors influencing teacher inclusion included the school administration's recognition of teacher input, clarity in communication, time constraints, and leadership support. Based on these findings, recommendations were suggested to enhance communication channels, ensure transparency, and establish structured mechanisms for teacher involvement in decision-making.

Keywords:- Decision-Making, Factors, Nature, Public Basic School, Teacher Inclusion.

I. INTRODUCTION

The inclusion of teachers in the decision-making processes of educational institutions has been a key focus of educational reforms. These reforms have been influenced by various factors, including state interventions, educational policies, and local initiatives (Dampson & Afful-Broni, 2018). Despite efforts made by previous governments in Ghana to encourage stakeholder engagement in educational policymaking, challenges persist, preventing the decentralization of decision-making in schools (Gronn, 2020; Leithwood et al., 2016). Traditionally, decision-making was seen as solely a managerial function. However, contemporary perspectives now emphasize the importance of collaborative decision-making to address the evolving needs of the educational system, both at the national and school levels. Consequently, the Ministry of Education in Ghana has made the decentralization of educational management a priority since 1987. This is achieved through the promotion of democratic leadership via school management committees and Parent-Teacher Association committees, where teachers actively participate in various aspects such as curriculum development, implementation, evaluation, and decision-making (MOE, 2018).

It is widely recognized that valid inputs from stakeholders, including teachers, play a critical role in ensuring effective educational policies and practices (Mualuko et al., 2009). Given that teachers are central to instruction and the implementation of school policies, they possess valuable insights into how decisions impact teaching and learning outcomes. Despite this, studies conducted in Ghana have revealed a significant lack of teacher involvement in decision-making, resulting in unmet expectations from educational reforms. Factors such as low motivation and insufficient resources have been identified as contributors to this situation (Afful Broni & Dampson, 2008; Dampson, 2010; Migwi, 2018). However, there is growing recognition among researchers, including Leithwood et al. (2016), regarding the importance of involving teachers in decision-making to enhance their motivation, job satisfaction, and retention. Ahmed et al. (2019) argue that when teachers actively participate in decision-making, it not only improves curriculum development but also ensures effective disciplinary actions and policy implementation. Ultimately, this contributes to the academic growth and future success of students.

➢ *Statement of the Problem*

The rapid changes in the external environment and the demands of a dynamic global economy have created significant pressures on schools, necessitating the development of students with competitive skills (Moran, 2009). To address these challenges, there is an increasing recognition of the importance of improving school effectiveness through the active involvement of educators in

decision-making (UNESCO, 2015). According to Short and Greer (2020), teachers are acknowledged as the foundation of school activities, playing a vital role in the teaching, and learning process, and consequently influencing overall school performance. Despite the well-established significance of teacher inclusion in decision-making, informal observations in the Ho West District revealed a lack of interest among teachers in participating in such processes. This raises concerns among educational stakeholders (MoE, 2018). Existing literature, as noted by Murray and Lawrence (2017), supports the importance of teacher inclusion in decision-making for promoting a participatory environment and improving teaching and learning outcomes. However, there are ongoing concerns about the negative effects resulting from limited teacher engagement. While studies conducted in Ghana (Amissah, 2009; Agebure, 2013; Dampson & Afful-Broni, 2018) have explored the topic, there is a lack of empirical data specifically on teacher inclusion in decision-making within the Ho West District. Teacher inclusion appears to be low, particularly in this specific district. Given the potential of teacher inclusion in decision-making to enhance teaching and learning outcomes, further investigation is essential to understand the extent of teacher involvement, specifically within the Ho West District. This empirical data can then be utilized to shape educational policies and practices in Ghana.

➢ Purpose of the Study

The study sought to examine teacher inclusion in decision-making processes in public basic schools in the Ho West District of the Volta Region of Ghana.

➢ Research Questions

The research questions were:

- What is the nature of teacher inclusion in decision-making processes in Ho West District?
- What factors affect teacher inclusion in decision-making processes in public basic schools in Ho West District?

➢ Significance of the Study

This study on teacher inclusion in decision-making within public basic schools has far-reaching implications for improving school performance and effectiveness. By investigating the various forms of teacher inclusion, this study aims to raise awareness among school administrators, teachers, students, and educational authorities about the importance of inclusive decision-making processes. Uncovering the factors that influence teacher inclusion will enable stakeholders to harness teachers' expertise and perspectives, fostering collaborative problem-solving and a positive school culture. Moreover, the study's findings would contribute to the existing body of research on teacher inclusion and decision-making, providing valuable insights for future studies and informing evidence-based practices to enhance school dynamics and outcomes.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is grounded in the shared decision-making theory (Charles et al., 1997), which posits that organizational decision-making should involve collaborative input from diverse stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, students, and community members. This theoretical framework emphasizes the importance of transparency, inclusivity, and collaboration in decision-making processes, to leverage collective wisdom and expertise to inform decision-making. In the context of public basic schools in the Ho West District, shared decision-making theory provides a conceptual lens through which to examine teacher inclusion in decision-making, recognizing the critical role teachers play in implementing educational policies and shaping the learning environment. This study applies shared decision-making theory to investigate the forms and levels of teacher inclusion in decision-making, identify factors influencing such inclusion, and examine the impact on teaching and learning outcomes. By exploring the dynamics of shared decision-making in schools, this study seeks to contribute to the existing body of research on teacher inclusion and decision-making, with implications for improving school effectiveness and student achievement.

III. METHODOLOGY

This investigation employed a quantitative research design to examine the phenomenon of teacher inclusion in decision-making in public basic schools within the Ho West District. The quantitative approach facilitated the systematic collection and analysis of numerical data, enabling an exploration of the forms and factors influencing teacher inclusion in decision-making processes. A stratified random sample of 450 public school teachers was selected from diverse schools across the district, ensuring representation from various school levels and geographical locations. A rigorously validated structured questionnaire served as the primary data collection instrument, comprising closed-ended and Likert-scale questions designed to elicit quantitative responses from participants regarding their level of inclusion in decision-making processes and the factors that influence such inclusion. We employed a rigorous methodological approach to establish the validity and reliability of the research instrument, where internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, yielding a high value of 0.85, indicative of excellent reliability. Additionally, test-retest reliability was evaluated through a repeated-measures design, demonstrating stability in participants' responses over time. Content validity was ensured through a comprehensive literature review, guaranteeing that the questionnaire items adequately captured the constructs related to teacher inclusion in decision-making. Face validity was assessed through expert feedback, confirming the questionnaire's relevance and appropriateness for the study context (DeVellis, 2016). Construct validity was evaluated using factor analysis,

examining the underlying factor structure, and confirming that the items measured the intended constructs. This multi-faceted approach to validity and reliability enhancement ensures the trustworthiness of the study findings and strengthens the conclusions drawn from the data analysis (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The quantitative data collected through the questionnaires underwent descriptive statistical analysis, including frequency, percentages, mean, and standard deviation. These numerical summaries provided a comprehensive understanding of the forms and factors influencing teacher inclusion in decision-making. The analysis revealed patterns and trends in the data, offering valuable insights into the level and nature of teacher inclusion in decision-making within public basic schools in the Ho West Municipality. This study adhered to stringent ethical guidelines throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before completing the questionnaire, ensuring their awareness of the study's purpose

and potential risks. Participants were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses, and data handling and storage procedures were conducted per ethical standards.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

➢ *Research Question 1: What is the form of teacher inclusion in decision–making processes in the Ho West District?*

Research question one explored the various forms of teacher inclusion in decision-making processes within the Ho West District of the Volta Region. Each statement in the table reflects a specific aspect of teacher inclusion, providing a nuanced understanding of their role in shaping various aspects of school governance and administration. Table 1 provides insights into different aspects of teacher inclusion in decision-making, as perceived by the respondents.

Table 1: Forms of Teacher Inclusion in Decision–Making

STATEMENT	M	SD
I am actively involved in determining school policies and procedures.	3.3	0.7
My opinions and suggestions are taken into consideration when making decisions about school resources and budgets.	4.6	0.3
I am actively involved in the selection and hiring of new staff members.	3.7	0.4
I am encouraged to participate in professional development planning and decisions.	2.3	0.6
I have a say in determining the allocation of resources for instructional materials and equipment.	2.1	0.4
I am involved in decision-making processes related to school improvement initiatives and programs.	2.5	0.3
I have been given opportunities to provide input and feedback on school-wide policies and initiatives.	2.3	0.6
I have been encouraged to collaborate and share my perspectives during staff meetings and planning sessions.	3.0	0.4

Source: Field Survey Data (2024)
Key: Number of respondents (N) = 450; Mean (M); Standard Deviation (SD)

The data presented in Table 1 reveals the nuances of teacher inclusion in decision-making within the Ho West District. The results indicate a significant variation in the levels of teacher engagement, with a moderate mean score of 3.3 (SD = 0.7) for determining school policies and procedures, suggesting a complex interplay of factors influencing teacher involvement. In contrast, the high mean score of 4.6 (SD = 0.3) for decisions related to resource allocation indicates a statistically significant level of teacher inclusion, underscoring the importance of resource management in shaping teacher engagement. Furthermore, the relatively high mean score of 3.7 (SD = 0.4) for staff selection and hiring suggests that teachers are actively involved in shaping the school's workforce. However, the lower mean scores for inclusion in professional development planning (M = 2.3, SD = 0.6), allocation of resources for instructional materials and equipment (M = 2.1, SD = 0.4), and school improvement initiatives and programs (M = 2.5, SD = 0.3) indicate a need for further investigation into the factors influencing teacher inclusion in these areas. Additionally, the results highlight the importance of opportunities for input and feedback on school-wide policies and initiatives (M = 2.3, SD = 0.6) and

encouragement to collaborate and share perspectives during staff meetings and planning sessions (M = 3.0, SD = 0.4). These findings contribute to the existing literature on teacher inclusion in decision-making, underscoring the complexity of this phenomenon and the need for further research to inform evidence-based practices.

The findings of this study revealed a sophisticated landscape of teacher inclusion in decision-making processes, aligning with and contributing to the existing body of research in this field. Teachers demonstrated active engagement in aspects such as resource allocation, professional development planning, and collaborative staff meetings, corroborating Smylie's (2019) assertion that teachers are more likely to participate in decisions directly related to their instructional roles. The significance of teacher involvement in resource allocation decisions is reinforced by Bryk et al.'s (2011) study, while Leithwood et al.'s (2019) and Mehmet and Yan's (2018) research highlight the importance of teacher inclusion in professional development planning and collaboration during staff meetings for fostering teacher growth and promoting a collaborative school culture. However, the limited inclusion of

teachers in personnel decisions, such as the selection and hiring of new staff members, is consistent with Gronn's (2020) findings on the hierarchical nature of such decisions within schools. Moreover, the restricted involvement of teachers in decision-making related to school improvement initiatives resonates with Mehmet and Yan's (2018) findings on the centralized nature of strategic planning and policy development processes, underscoring the need for more inclusive approaches to engage teachers in shaping broader school improvement strategies and enhance their commitment to school goals. These results contribute to the ongoing discourse on teacher inclusion in decision-making, emphasizing the importance of context-specific and sophisticated approaches to promote teacher engagement and empowerment.

➤ *Research Question 2: What factors affect teacher inclusion in decision–making processes in public basic schools in the Ho West District?*

The data presented in Table 2 shed light on the factors influencing teacher inclusion in decision-making within public basic schools in the Ho West District. Each statement in the table reflects a specific aspect of the organizational environment and its impact on teacher inclusion, providing insights into the challenges and opportunities teachers encounter in contributing to decision-making processes.

Table 2: Factors Affecting Teacher Inclusion in Decision–Making.

STATEMENT	M	SD
I am provided with opportunities to participate in decision-making processes in the school.	2.6	0.5
The school administration values and actively seeks teacher input when making decisions.	3.1	0.3
There is clear communication about decision-making processes and opportunities for teacher inclusion.	2.7	0.4
My headteacher empowers me to share their opinions and ideas during decision-making discussions.	2.8	0.9
Time constraints and heavy workload hinder teacher inclusion in decision-making.	2.1	0.2
I perceive that decisions made in the school by the headteacher align with my professional expertise and experience.	2.8	0.5
School leadership fosters a culture of collaboration and collective decision-making.	2.9	0.8
The school administration recognizes and acknowledges teacher contributions to decision-making.	450	0.5

Source: Field Survey Data (2024)
Key: Number of respondents (N) = 450 Mean (M); Standard Deviation (SD)

The data presented in Table 2 offered a subtle examination of the factors influencing teacher involvement in decision-making within public basic schools in the Ho West District. The results indicated that teachers perceived limited opportunities for inclusion (M = 2.6, SD = 0.5), suggesting potential barriers to their active engagement in decision-making processes. While school administration recognized teacher input (M = 3.1, SD = 0.3), there was room for improvement in fully integrating teacher perspectives. The findings also revealed moderate clarity regarding decision-making processes (M = 2.7, SD = 0.4), but variability in perceptions highlighted the need for transparent communication to ensure equal inclusion. Teachers felt moderately empowered to share their opinions (M = 2.8, SD = 0.9), but inconsistencies in empowerment may have existed. Time constraints and heavy workload posed significant barriers to inclusion (M = 2.1, SD = 0.2), hindering teachers from engaging fully. Decision alignment with teacher expertise was perceived to some extent (M = 2.8, SD = 0.5), but utilization of teacher input may have varied. School leadership's efforts to foster collaboration were apparent (M = 2.9, SD = 0.8), yet consistency may have varied. Recognition of teacher contributions was moderately acknowledged (M = 3.0, SD = 0.5), enhancing morale. These findings contributed to the existing literature on teacher inclusion in decision-making, emphasizing the importance of addressing barriers and fostering inclusive decision-making processes to promote teacher engagement and empowerment.

The findings indicate that while recognition and acknowledgment are present, challenges such as time constraints and inconsistent empowerment may impede meaningful teacher inclusion in decision-making processes. These challenges are corroborated by existing literature, including Smylie (2019), who found that time constraints limit teachers' ability to engage fully in decision-making activities due to multiple responsibilities within limited time frames. Moreover, Smylie (2019) noted that inconsistent empowerment leads to disparities in inclusion levels, hindering the effectiveness of collaborative decision-making efforts. Leithwood et al. (2019) and Gronn (2020) emphasize the importance of consistent empowerment in fostering a culture of shared decision-making within schools. Inconsistent empowerment can erode trust and diminish teachers' willingness to participate in decision-making processes. Furthermore, Smylie (2019) and Wolthuis et al. (2022) assert that consistent empowerment is essential for ensuring equitable opportunities for all teachers to contribute their perspectives and expertise to decision-making discussions. These findings underscore the need for schools to address these challenges and foster a culture of inclusive decision-making that values and empowers all teachers.

V. STUDY FINDINGS

The study revealed the following findings:

- Teachers participated in decision-making, actively contributing to resource allocation, professional development, and staff meetings. However, their involvement was restricted in the areas of personnel selection and hiring of new staff members.
- Factors influencing teacher inclusion in decision-making included: administrator valuation of teacher input, clarity of communication, time constraints, alignment with teacher expertise, collaborative culture promotion by leadership, and recognition of teacher contributions.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study revealed a gap between teachers' involvement in daily operations and strategic decision-making in public basic schools in the Ho West District. Teachers were keenly engaged in decision-making related to daily operations, but their inclusion in strategic decision-making areas, such as hiring and school improvement initiatives, was limited. Therefore, the study concludes that promoting teacher inclusion in decision-making is crucial for improving school effectiveness and teaching and learning outcomes. Schools should prioritize creating an inclusive decision-making culture that empowers teachers to contribute their expertise and perspectives, fostering a collaborative environment that leverages the collective knowledge and skills of teachers to drive school improvement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and the conclusion drawn, it is recommended that:

- The Ho West District Education Directorate should collaborate with headteachers to prioritize the establishment of clear and transparent communication channels, ensuring that teachers are well-informed and engaged in decision-making processes through regular updates, clear guidelines, and opportunities for feedback, fostering a culture of collaboration and trust among educators.
- Headteachers in the Ho West District should establish inclusive platforms for teacher inclusion in decision-making, such as committees, forums, and anonymous suggestion channels, to foster collaboration and shared decision-making in school governance.

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