



Kindergarten Teachers and Participatory Decision-Making: A Case Study in Lebanon

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INTRODUCTION

- This case study aimed:
 1. to explore kindergarten teachers' involvement in participatory decision-making (PDM)
 2. to identify the components of a professional development program necessary for engaging in PDM.
- **Participatory decision-making (PDM):** The process where the principal engages all members of an organization in jointly identifying its vision, goals, and strategies and involves them in areas of decision making (Spillane, 2005).

INTRODUCTION

- Teachers involvement in decision making hasn't been changed in the 21st century (Johnson & McElroy, 2010).
- Low social status (Faour, 2003), insufficient professional knowledge (Ho, 2010) and centralization of decision-making in Arab countries (ALECSO, 2008).

INTRODUCTION

- PDM ensures school reform and empowers teachers by delegating authority and responsibility to them (Sarafidou & Chatziioannidis, 2013).
- Teachers can be empowered through professional development (Akkary & Rizk, 2011).
- Empowering kindergarten teachers by involving them in PDM is essential to improve teacher's social status, motivation and the educational practices.

LITERATURE REVIEW

- School restructuring will not improve schools if undertaken only from managerial point of view (Klecker & Loadman, 1998).
- Decisions taken without teachers' input are bound to face indifference or resistance (Duze, 2011, Chivore, 1995).
- Preschool teachers wanted greater participation in curriculum decisions (Ho, 2010).
- Principals involve teachers in student affairs and instructional domain rather than in managerial domain (Somech, 2010).

LITERATURE REVIEW

- PDM has positive outcomes like increased dedication, job satisfaction, increased motivation and greater responsibility (Cheng, 2008).
- School support of teachers' involvement in project-based learning was related to teachers' motivation to persist in project-based learning (Lam, Cheng & Choy, 2010).

METHODOLOGY

- The study took the form of a qualitative research.
- The study adopted a case study design since it aimed at explaining, understanding phenomena and answering questions related to the *School* (the case).
- Descriptive and exploratory case study was used to describe the case in details and to answer why and how questions to understand events and people.

METHODOLOGY

- Purposeful sampling was used.
- 8 classroom teachers and 8 assistant teachers who were currently employed in the *School* between the years 2011 and 2014 were involved; and 8 former class teachers were involved. 2 vice principals and the principal of the *School* were involved.
- To gather data, documents (37 departmental meeting minutes and 17 general meeting minutes), questionnaire, BNSW-S, 16 lesson plans and interviews were used.

METHODOLOGY

- Content analysis and constant comparative method.
- Coding was done to look for patterns and frequencies of the messages and to derive themes from these patterns.
- First level codes and then descriptive codes.
- After coding, patterns were derived which led to the emergence of different themes.

METHODOLOGY

- Inter-coder reliability was used to check for reliability of the codes.
- Triangulation was used through the use of multiple sources of data.
- Member check was also used.

Table 10.

Checklist Matrix on Teachers' Participation in Decision Making and Motivation in Relation to their Three Basic Needs According to Self Determination Theory

	Participatory Decision Making		Basic Need Satisfaction Score			
	Teachers	PDM Contributing to Motivation (+)	PDM Hindering Motivation (-)	Autonomy score	Competence Score	Relatedness Score
Former Teachers	TF1		-	5	5	6
	TF2		-	3.7	4.6	4.6
	TF3	+		3.4	4.6	4.1
	TF4	+		4.4	5.5	5.5
	TF5		-	5	5.5	5
	TF6	+		4.7	5.5	4.7
	TF7	+		5.7	5.5	5.5
	TF8		-	1.5	5	4.2
				Average=4.1	Average=5.1	Average=4.9
Class Teachers	T1	+		4.1	5.8	3.3
	T2	+		4.4	5	5.5
	T3	+		5.8	6	5.4
	T4	+		4.8	5	5.6
	T5	+		5.4	5.6	4
	T6	+		5.7	6.6	5.3
	T7	+		4.8	6	4.7
	T8	+		5.4	6.8	4.5
				Average=5.05	Average=5.8	Average=4.7
Assistant Teachers	AT1	+		5.5	6.8	6.6
	AT2	+		5.8	5.5	6.5
	AT3	+		5	5.5	4.3
	AT4	+		4.7	6.3	5.3
	AT5	+		4.7	5.3	3.3
	AT6		-	3	5.6	4
	AT7	+		4.7	6.3	5.1
	AT8	+		4.2	5	5.1
				Average=4.7	Average=5.7	Average=5.02

Table 11.

Emergence of Themes from the Patterns and Evidence from Sources of Data to Support the Emergence of Themes

Code	Patterns	Date Sources	Themes
ADM-D TE-H TI-M II-CO/M	P1, P2, P25, P37, P42	MM, Questionnaire 1 Section D (Table 13), I2, I6, I8, I9, I26	T1: Directors took all decisions in the managerial domain and passed on teachers to follow.
CO-D TE TS TD-R	P3, P4, P8, P9, P16, P39	MM, Questionnaire 1 Section C and D (Tables 9, 12), lesson plans 1 and 2, I1, I6, I17, I25, I27	T2: Teachers experienced some level of involvement in the curricular and instructional domain; however, most of the time the coordinator took the final decision and imposed it on the teachers.
ADM-D TE-H CO-D T- <u>Ing</u> II-CO/Cur	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P24	MM, Questionnaire 1 Section B (Table 8), KG2 lesson plans 2013, I8, I27	T3: Most teachers showed indifference towards the taken decisions when they were not involved in some of the decision making process.
TE GD-EB TE-H	P7, P8, P9, P23, P25	MM, Questionnaire 1 Section B and C, BNSW-S (Table 14), lesson plans, I5, I6, I8, I10, I16, I27	T4: Teachers empowerment wasn't much used in PDM since most of the curricular and instructional decisions were taken by the director and coordinator without teachers' involvement.
EM II-CO/Ins II-GD II-GD/Cur II-CO II-CD/M	P10, P11, P12, P13, P17, P35, P40, P41	MM, Questionnaire 1 Section B, C, D (Tables 8, 9, 12, 13), lesson plans 2013-2014, I1, I5, I8, I18, I22, I27	T5: PDM wasn't promoted by the directors since teachers were mostly involved in school life and in tasks through imposed involvement and extrinsic motivation.
II-CO/Ins II-GD/Ins TD-C TE-H TI TI-Cur	P14, P18, P19, P20, P26, P27, P28, P29, P32	MM, Questionnaire 1 Section C and D (Tables 10, 12), BNSW-S (Table 14), I1, I14, I25	T6: Teachers wanted more involvement in curricular and instructional decisions as they felt their work was controlled by the coordinator and director.

T-IM+			
II-CO	P15, P35,	MM, I14, I25, I26, I27	T7: Since kindergarten teachers were not taking the initiative, the coordinator and director were imposing on the teachers to be involved in school life.
II-GD/Cur	P38		
T-IN-			
T-IM+	P30, P31	MM, I8, I14	T8: Some teachers who were intrinsically motivated took the initiative to be involved in tasks regardless of imposed involvement and extrinsic motivation.
T-IM-	P33, P34,	MM, BNSW-S (Table 14), I5,	T9: Due to imposed involvement, some teachers' intrinsic motivation was hindered.
II-GD/Cur	P35, P38	I6, I8, I15, I25	
T-IN-			

Findings

The themes that emerged constituted the bases to conclude:

- T1: All decisions in the managerial domain were done by the director.
- T2: Teachers experienced some involvement in curricular and instructional domain.

“To a certain extent I am involved in the instructional domain, but I believe my participation is limited. I am involved in planning my unit plans, but again not full participation as there is always someone to approve on them before proceeding in my activities.” (TF6 interview 6)

- T3: Most of the teachers showed indifference when decisions were taken without their input.

“When learning centers were included in the curriculum by the coordinator, we were not part of this decision making, we were opposing this strategy as it wasn’t working in our classes, most of us did not have enough training in this area. I believe this a decision where we should have been involved as we know our students best.” (TF8 interview 8)

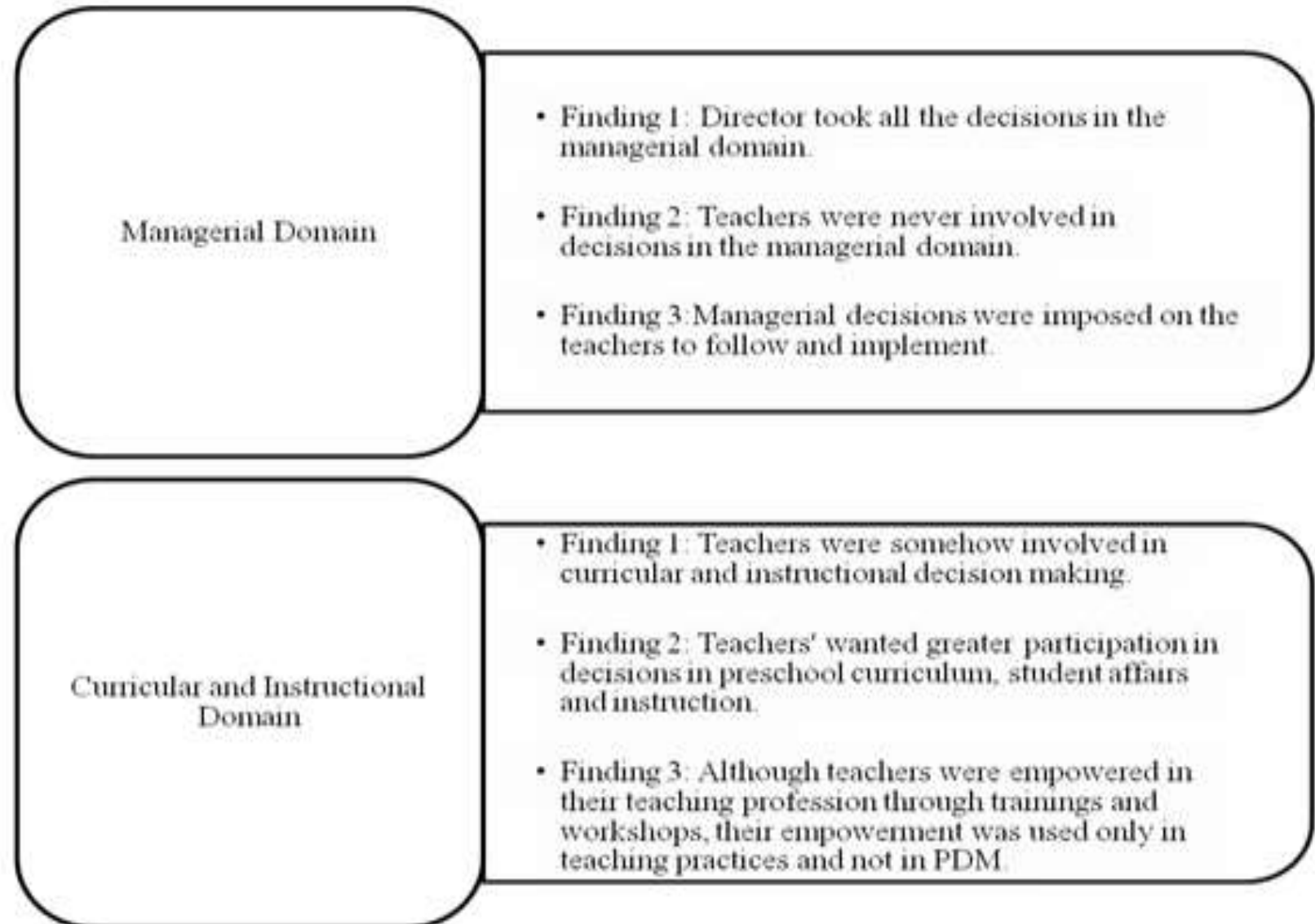
Findings

- T4: Although teachers were empowered through workshops and trainings, their empowerment wasn't much used in PDM.

“Although I have the experience and knowledge and can make decisions for the sake of school improvement, they never asked for my ideas or opinions regarding decisions they have taken and they never involved me in the decision making.” T(8 interview 16).

- T5:PDM wasn't promoted by the directors.
- T6: Teachers wanted more involvement in curricular and instructional decisions.
- T7: Since KG teachers were not taking the initiative, the coordinator and director were imposing on teachers to be involved in school life.
- T8: Some teachers who were intrinsically motivated took the initiative to be involved in tasks regardless of imposed involvement and extrinsic motivation.
- T9: Due to imposed involvement, some teachers' intrinsic motivation was hindered.

Figure 1. Kindergarten Teachers' Involvement in Participatory Decision-Making in the Managerial, Curricular and Instructional Domain



Findings

- Most teachers were feeling competent in their work.
- Most teachers felt somehow autonomous in their work.
- Classroom and former teachers all believed that PDM will contribute to their motivation.
- School hierarchy, teacher-admin relationship and lack of knowledge were the most common factors that hindered teachers' participation in decision making.

Conclusion

- Specialized professional development programs for in-service kindergarten teachers.
- Coaching and mentorship programs towards school improvement and management.
- Programs that target the development of their intrinsic motivation.
- Establish a culture conducive to PDM at schools.

Recommendations

- Empowering kindergarten teachers through programs that help them gain ownership in curricular, instructional and administrative matters.
- Principals need to empower kindergarten teachers through acquiring a positive outlook towards them and through nurturing a relationship that is based on collaboration and trust.