

NURSING EDUCATOR'S INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH JOB SATISFACTION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the involvement of educators in decision making, to identify the most dominant dimension of involvement in decision making, whether there is any significant difference of involvement in decision making, to identify the job satisfaction level of educators, and the relationship between involvement in decision making and job satisfaction. Samples consisted of 32 educators in two private nursing colleges. Instrument used to measure the six dimensions of involvement in decision making were adapted from *Rinehart and Short (1992)* while five dimensions of job satisfaction were measured using an instrument adapted from by *Klecker & Loadman (1996)*, *DeBruyne (2001)*, *Teacher 2000 Survey (2000)* and *Norma (1998)*.

Findings of this study indicated the lack of involvement in decision making with self efficacy as the most dominant dimension. No significant differences were noted in the level of involvement. Dissatisfaction was noted in all five dimensions in both colleges. There is a strong correlation between the educators' involvement in decision making and job satisfaction. This study implied that educators want to play a more active role in decision making. Therefore, a paradigm shift is necessary as success or failure of this initiative is very much dependent on the willingness of the administrators to support and pave the way for the educators.

Key words: *decision making, job satisfaction, nurse educator, empowerment, autonomy, self efficacy, impact, status, professional development*

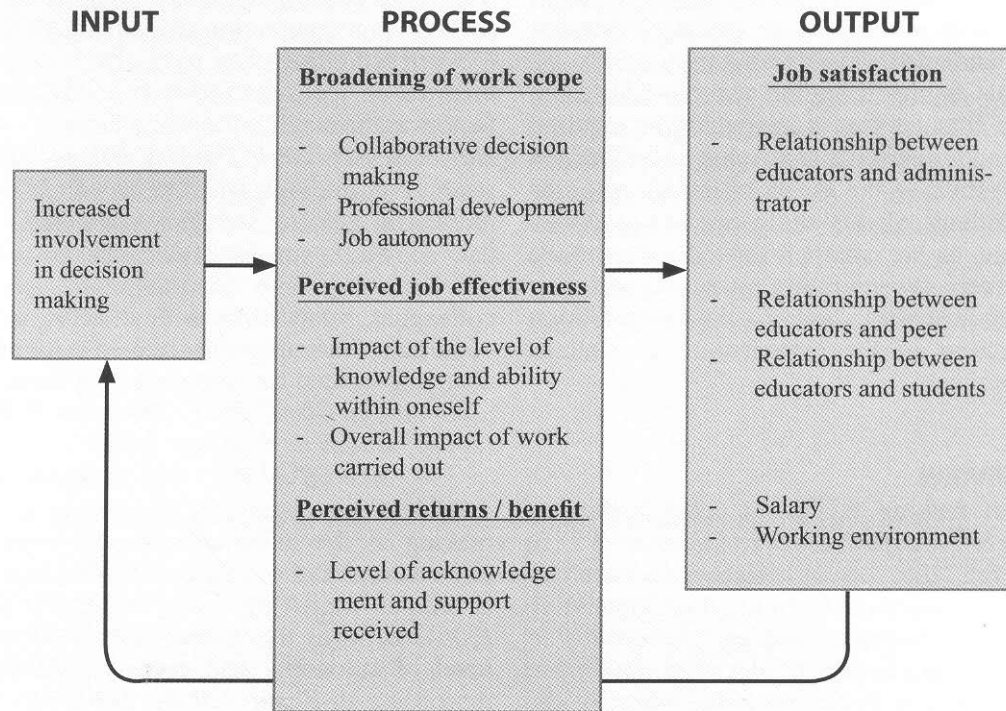
INTRODUCTION

Efforts to improve nursing working conditions are critical in retaining nurses currently in the system and attracting newcomers to the profession both in the clinical as well as in the academic settings. A nurse leader's empowering behaviors can be pivotal in the way nurses react to their work environment. Studies had shown that although leadership is a vital element in determining the success of a school (*Rahimah, Ahmad & Tie, 2004*), an educator's role is equally as important (*Sweetland & Hoy, 2000; Edwards et al., 2002*). The involvement of educators in decision making is seen as a step towards improving the professionalism of educators as well as a means for the management to empower the educators. Furthermore, there seems to be a relationship between involvement in decision making towards better quality decisions, improvement in aspects of job satisfaction, working spirit and level of work commitment. Factors resulting in these relationships include sharing of knowledge and teaching experiences, improved motivational levels and collaborative environment based on trust (*Blasé & Kirby, 2000; 2001*). Therefore, a paradigm shift by both

administrators and educators is necessary in facing the ever dynamic changes and challenges evolving in the education system.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Currently, there are quite a number of new private nursing colleges or higher institutions offering various nursing programs. Most of these institutions are recruiting in a large number of students with several intakes yearly. This development is necessary in view of the acute shortage of nurses in the country currently 1:600 as compared to 1:200 required in year 2020 (*Minister of Health*). Therefore, the onus is on the administrators and nursing educators in making this a reality without compromising on the quality of graduate nurses. Despite the importance of involvement in decision making which can result in better job satisfaction (*Edwards et al., 2002; Apodaca, 2001*), the situation is such that focusing on completing their own teaching duties becomes a priority rather than being involved in decision making regarding student-related issues.



THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework for this study was developed from literature reviews on empowerment by Rinehart & Short (1992) while dimensions of job satisfaction literatures by Klecker & Loadman (1996), DeBruyne (2001), Teacher 2000 Survey (2000) and Norma (1998). According to this framework, involvement in decision making can be determined by improvements in six dimensions (*collaborative decision making, professional development, status, self efficacy, autonomy and impact*) which results in an increase in job satisfaction in five dimensions (*educators' relationship with administrators, peers and students, salary and work condition*). As job satisfaction increases, educators will be more motivated to be involved in subsequent decision making.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research is aimed at identifying the level of educators' involvement in decision making, determining the most dominant dimension of involvement in decision making and whether there is any significant difference of involvement in decision making between the two nursing colleges involved. Researcher also intends to find out the level of job satisfaction amongst the educators and the relationship between involvement

in decision making and job satisfaction.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How involved are the educators in decision making?
- Which is the most dominant dimension of involvement in decision making?
- Is there any significant difference of involvement in decision making between the two colleges?
- How satisfied are the educators with their job?
- Is there a relationship between involvement in decision making and job satisfaction?

SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH

The role and involvement of educators in decision making is an important factor in determining the success of an educational institution (Dee et al., 2003; Maeroff, 1988 & Lightfoot, 1986). However, studies on involvement of educators in decision making especially in the field of nursing in Malaysia is very limited. Despite that, many burning issues had been brought up including the acute shortage of nurses and nursing educators as compared to the large number of qualified nurse going abroad to work, current quality of nurses and the poor public perception towards nursing as a career. Therefore, findings of this research is important

to provide better understanding of the involvement of educators in decision making as an initiative towards increasing the standards and profession of nursing. Further more, this empirical finding also provides some insights into the changes that is happening or required in the aspect of administrative leadership as well as the educators perspective. In the aspect of human resource management, findings of this study can in some way share some light as to whether the educators have been utilized effectively, internally motivated and their abilities had been explored to optimise their contribution towards the success of the organization as well as personal development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Decision making is defined as a making a choice among a few alternatives (*Fred Luthans, 1977 in Zaidatol Akmaliah, 2001*) as an effective decision can only be made if an individual has a good understanding of the process of decision making. According to *Anderson (2002)*, the concept of decision making in the third continuum, is more concrete, whereby the contribution of educators are truly effective in making a change and not just an efficacy level or perception that they can make a change. *Sweetland & Hoy (2000)* has the opinion that involvement in decision making can be explained and evaluated based on the educators' autonomy to control critical decisions in learning and teaching aspects. *Teacher empowerment 2002*, defined this term as empowerment of educators in deciding the aims and policies of an academic institution as well as performing professional evaluation of what and how to teach. *Terry (1998)* stated that involvement in decision making is teacher leadership where decisions are no longer made by the top management instead decision are made by the people who work closest with the students which are the educators! Hence, the administrators' role has changed to a more facilitative role. Studies had shown that frequency of involvement in decision making does not necessarily result in an increase in productivity although involvement in decision making obviously has a positive effect on their effort, autonomy and work commitment. However, in the long run a balance must be made between the needs of the administrators and educators (*Yukl in Peretomode, 2006; Hor & Miskel, 2001, Scott-Ladd et al., 2006*). Various researchers had been involved in studies related to the dimensions in decision making (*Alutto & Belasco, 1972; Marks & Louis, 1977; Maeroff, 1988*). However, according to *Rinehart & Short (1972)*, there are six dimensions of decision making.

According to *Locke (1979)* job satisfaction is a feeling upon completion of a job which fulfill the value of work according to an individual's needs. Studies and theories on job satisfaction had often linked intrinsic factors as the major influencing factor (*DeBruyne, 2001; Hoy & Miskel, 2001; Davis & Wilson, 2000*). Literature review of findings by *Klecker & Loadman (1996)*, *DeBruyne (2001)* and *Teacher 2000 Survey (2000)* had shown 5 similar dimensions in job satisfaction – relationship with administrators, relationship with colleagues, relationship with students, salary and work conditions. Various studies related to job satisfaction had also emphasized the importance of these 5 dimensions (*Jabnoun & Chan, 2001; Zembylas & Papanastasiou (2004); Woods & Weasmer, 2004*).

Maeroff (1988) and *Edwards et al. (2002)* considers involvement of educators in decision making as the main indicator to determine personal empowerment of educators resulting in professionalism as well as improving quality of work while *Scott-Ladd (2004)* believes that it can directly contribute towards level of autonomy and gives an identity to the job. According to *Zhang (2006)*, the level of involvement in decision making can be used as a benchmark to assess the level of job satisfaction. Educators with high level of satisfaction tend to have high level of involvement (*Styly, 1999; Edwards et al., 2002*).

METHODOLOGY

Sample

A total of 32 nursing educators from two private nursing colleges participated in this study in which 16 were from college A and another 16 from college B. 100% return rate of completed questionnaires were obtained.

Research instrument

Instrument used to assess the 6 dimensions of involvement in decision making was adapted from *Rinehart & Short (1992)* instrument which consist of 38 items but reduced to 30 items with a scale of 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 4 (*Strongly agree*). The 6 dimensions of involvement in decision making are collaborative decision making, professional development, status, autonomy, self efficacy and impact.

Instrument used to assess the 5 dimensions of job satisfaction was adapted from an instrument used by a local researcher *Norma (1998)* which consists of 20 items with a scale of 1 (*Very dissatisfied*) to 4 (*Very satisfied*). The 5 dimensions of job satisfaction

are relationship between educator and administrator, relationship between educators and colleagues, relationship between educators and students, salary and working condition.

Validity and reliability

Reliability estimates using Cronbach's alpha measures for involvement in decision making and job satisfaction were 0.927 and 0.903 respectively.

Method of data analysis

All data were analyzed using SPSS 13.0. Descriptive statistic is used to determine the level of involvement in decision making and job satisfaction. t- test is used to determine the difference in level of involvement while Pearson correlation, r to determine the relationship between involvement in decision making and job satisfaction. Values of correlation will be interpreted by using Franzblau's (1958) interpretation chart ($r < .2$ no relationship, $.2 < r < .4$ weak, $.41 < r < .6$ moderate, $.61 < r < .8$ strong; $r > .81$ very strong relationship).

FINDINGS

Table 1. Comparison of means of dimensions in involvement in decision making

Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviations
Self efficacy	3.231	.488
Professional development	3.055	.521
Status	3.050	.561
Autonomy	3.032	.614
Impact	2.656	.570
Collaborative decision making	2.520	.492
Total mean	2.924	

To determine the most dominant dimension of involvement in decision making a comparison of means of the 6 dimensions were done. Results indicated that self efficacy is the most dominant dimension (mean 3.231).

Table 2. Comparison of the ranking of dimensions of involvement in decision making for individual college

	College A	College B
Dimension	Mean	Mean
Self efficacy	3.188	3.229
Professional development	3.156	3.031
Status	3.119	3.000
Autonomy	2.875	2.944
Impact	2.793	2.521
Collaborative decision making	2.749	2.291

Comparison of means of dimensions of involvement in decision making between the two colleges suggests that self efficacy is the most dominant dimension for both colleges. Comparison of means of self efficacy between both colleges indicated that educators in College B had a higher self efficacy. Educators rank collaborative decision making as the most dissatisfying dimension.

Table 3. t- test results for educators' involvement in decision making

Involvement in	Mean	Standard deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference
College A	2.9806	.3126	1.040	30	.307	.1594
College B	2.8213	.5272				

Result indicated that there are no significant difference of involvement in decision making between both colleges t = 1.040, df = 30, significant (2-tailed) = .307 at p < .05.

Table 4. Comparison of means for dimensions in job satisfaction

Dimension	Mean	Standard deviation
Relationship with student	2.867	.407
Relationship with administrator	2.859	.458
Relationship with colleague	2.781	.474
Work condition	2.641	.435
Salary	2.617	.557
Total mean average	2.753	

Results indicated that the most dominant dimension in job satisfaction is relationship with students (mean = 2.867) while salary is at the lowest position mean = 2.617). The total mean average of 2.753 indicates that in general the educators are dissatisfied with their job. As each dimension had a mean values < 3, dissatisfaction is obvious in all 5 dimensions of job satisfaction.

Table 5. Correlation between educator's involvement in decision making and job satisfaction

		Involvement in decision making
Job satisfaction	Pearson correlation	.633**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0
	N	32

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

In general, there seems to be a strong positive correlation between involvement in decision making and job satisfaction with a correlation coefficient, r = .633 (p < .01)

Table 6. Correlation between dimensions of educator's involvement in decision making and job satisfaction

Job satisfaction	Relationship with administrator	Relationship with colleague	Relationship with students	Salary	Work condition
Decision making					
Collaborative decision making	.368*	.516**	.516**	.111	.307
Professional development	.552**	.295	.647**	.224	.439*
Status	.510**	.469**	.442*	.259	.447*
Autonomy	.365*	.282	.493**	.143	.433*
Self efficacy	.679**	.266	.579**	.380*	.576**
Impact	.385*	.279	.527**	.172	.297

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

There is a moderate positive relationship between collaborative decision making and relationship with colleague ($r = .516$) and students ($r = .516$); a weak relationship with administrator ($r = .368$). Professional development showed a moderately positive correlation to relationship with administrator ($r = .552$) and work condition ($r = .439$) but strong correlation with students ($r = .647$). However, status has a moderate positive correlation to relationships with administrator ($r = .510$), colleague ($r = .469$), students ($r = .442$) and work condition ($r = .447$). Autonomy has a weak positive correlation with relationship with administrator ($r = .365$) but moderate relationship with students ($r = .493$) and work condition ($r = .433$). Self efficacy is strongly correlated to relationship with the administrator ($r = .679$); moderate correlation with relationship with students ($r = .579$) and work condition ($r = .576$); and weak relationship with salary ($r = .380$). Impact is moderately correlated to relationship with students ($r = .527$) and weak correlation with relationship with administrators ($r = .385$).

DISCUSSION

Findings indicated that educators are only involved in collaborative decision making regarding classroom matters such as selection of subject to teach. Similar findings were noted by *Somech (2002)* and *Morhman (1978)* where decision making can be categorized into 2 main domains, technical domain which involves student and instructional decisions while managerial domain involves operational and administrative decisions. Educators were also found to be mainly involved in the technical domain. *Schneider (1984)* reported a lower involvement in managerial decisions despite having a high interest to be involved. Therefore, it is emphasized that for an effective change to occur educators should be aware that their capabilities should not be restricted to only teaching. High levels of commitment towards producing high quality students, continuous professional development and specialization should be the way to improve the level of professionalism in teaching. The ranking of collaborative decision making as the least dominant dimensions similar to *Scribner et al. (2001)* indicated that educators in both colleges are capable of making decisions but their involvement level remains low. *Peretomode (2006)* reported that if the roles of educators are not valued it will lead to a decrease in the level of commitment, job satisfaction and job performance. This will further affect the problem of retaining educators. Comparison between dimensions of involvement in decision making for both colleges indicated that

educators in college A are more involved in decision making. However, higher means in autonomy and self efficacy for educators in college B indicated that they have the freedom and ability to be involved and make changes as compared to college A. Overall, the total mean average for involvement of 2.91 indicated that educators' perceived that they are not involved in decision making. This would suggest that administrators are not quite ready to share their autonomy and involve educators in decision making especially critical decisions. According to a study by *Patterson & Patterson (2004)*, administrators who acknowledge and provide strong support for continuous professional development among their educators are the leaders who are clearly aware that school objectives can only be achieved through contributions from a committed group of educators.

Findings indicated that self efficacy is the most dominant dimension for both colleges. Similar findings were noted by *Rinehart & Short (1992)* and *Edwards et al. (2002)*. This suggested that these educators are capable of making changes, ready to take on new roles and challenges, and making meaningful contributions towards the organization if only opportunities, believe and support can be channeled towards them. According to *Cowdery (2004)*, educators do not place a high importance on level of status instead the initial and main reflection an educator has of him/herself is as an educator not a leader. The usage of the term leader for an educator is undemocratic and uncollaborative as compared to the role of an administrator as a leader of an educational institution. Therefore it is not surprising that there is a moderate positive correlation between status and relationships with administrator, colleague and student. Hence, educators perceive acceptance as a professional and respected individual mainly just based on good human relationships.

No significant difference was noted of educators' involvement in decision making in both colleges as indicated by the t-test result. In view of the importance of involvement in decision making, future improvement plans should take into consideration of these dimensions.

Relationship with students as the most dominant dimension in job satisfaction clearly emphasized how much educators value their students. The most satisfying aspect in the relationship was quality of interaction with students which is similar to the finding of *Dinham & Scott-Ladd (2000)*. Salary was instead ranked the lowest among other dimensions of job satisfaction. The influence of intrinsic factors on job satisfaction is clearly demonstrated.

Overall dissatisfaction in all five dimensions of job satisfaction explains the rationale of difficulty in retaining educators (nursing). In addition, lack of transparency in decision making and poor leadership skills resulted in inability to provide good supportive role for educators. This could perhaps indicate that teacher leadership is emerging and should be encouraged. Based on the high levels of leadership and self efficacy, as well as the willingness to continue to develop professionally, educators can definitely play an effective role in decision making. Dissatisfaction with the quality of work and high workload clearly reflects the educators' urgent need to ensure success and high work commitment in order to achieve high quality work. Discussion on job satisfaction should not be restricted only to teaching and effects of situation on work outcome instead influencing factors at a system level should be the main factors in determining the perception of educators towards their profession (*Dinham & Scott, 2000*).

Findings of this study support previous results regarding the strong relationship between involvement in decision making and job satisfaction level. In addition there seems to be a moderate to strong positive relationship between professional development and relationships with administrators and students. This indicates that initiatives taken for professional development does not only benefit the educators but it also indicates the level of support and beliefs of the administrators in upgrading and developing their educators with the purpose of strengthening their relationship which can then influence the educators' level of confidence, efficacy and motivation to excel personally and professionally. *Blasé & Kirby (2000)* found similar findings where interventions carried out by the administrators towards professional development of educators were interpreted positively by the educators as a reflection of an honest attempt, support and opportunity provided by the management to assist them in overcoming their weakness and ensuring a continuous development of their staff. Therefore, the researcher believes that the success of an educational institution is interdependent of 3 groups of individuals which include the ability of a leader to lead successfully, effectiveness of educators to implement teaching and learning interventions and diligent students who are receptive to knowledge. In addition, a study by *Sweetland & Hoy, 2000* found that the school with higher possibility of having a high level of involvement in decision making on teaching and learning aspects, are schools which mainly had educators with high performance objectives, students who accept the challenges positively, while administrators made sure of the adequacy of teaching


materials and are very supportive of activities carried out to ensure objectives are successfully achieved.

A weak positive relationship was found between autonomy and relationship with administrators. This indicates that an increased level of educators' autonomy will lead to better relationships with the administrators. This finding supported the findings by *Moye et al. (2005)* who also found that educators who perceived that their job achievements are very meaningful to them and had a significant level of autonomy in influencing their working environment will demonstrate a better relationship with the administrators especially in the aspect of the level of trust towards their administrators. In contrast, educators who are rarely given the responsibility to carry out administrative task or lack of involvement in school committees are also found to have a better interpersonal relationship with the administrators. The rationale given was probably due to lack of exposure to management issues and its effect on level of trust and opinion of the educators. In fact, there are studies which found that increased level of involvement of educators in critical decisions will lead to increased level of educators' autonomy and input. This will ultimately result in a more complex communication and chance of conflicts to occur between educators and administrators due to a more open opportunity for exchange of opinions and suggestions. Unfortunately, this can be a de-motivating factor and cause work stress (*Davis & Wilson, 2000; Rinehart & Short, 1992*). There is a moderate to strong correlation between self efficacy and relationship with administrators, relationship with students and working condition. Therefore, an increase in the perception of educators regarding their ability to assist in students' achievement, the better the relationship between the educator, administrators and students, and the more conducive the working condition will be. Hence, this implied that the level of involvement of educators in decision making can influence the school climate as supported by *Sweetland & Hoy, 2000*. A moderate positive relationship between impact and relationship with students indicates that educators evaluate their success not based only on students' academic achievements but the ability to fulfill students' affective needs, quality of interaction and amount of time spent with students.

As the size of samples is small (n=32), generalization of the research findings to all nursing colleges in Malaysia is not possible. Another limitation of this research is that the instrument used for this study covered only 6 dimensions of involvement in decision making while the instrument used for job satisfaction only covered 5 aspects of job satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, increased involvement of educators in decision making should be taken as an initiative towards better collaboration between administrators and educators in the future. Findings of this study could perhaps be considered in sharing some light pertaining to educators' involvement in decision making and useful in future improvement plans for

educators. Job dissatisfaction among educators need to be addressed especially due to its impact on the effectiveness of teaching and learning process and most important of all – the students. Although a paradigm shift is necessary, it is very much dependent on the willingness of the administrators to support and pave the way for the educators. 

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