

A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DECISION-MAKING STYLE OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND THEIR TEACHERS' JOB SATISFACTION IN TWO DISTRICTS IN THAILAND*

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This study attempted to determine the relationship between the decision-making styles of elementary school principals, as perceived by their teachers, and the teachers' job satisfaction. The schools studied were from Khate Pratumwon, Bangkok, and Amphur Muang Samutsakhon, Samutsakhon, Thailand. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions: (1) What decision-making style is most frequently perceived? (2) What is the decision-making style most frequently preferred by the teachers in Khate Pratumwon and Amphur Muang Samutsakhon? (3) Is there a relationship between the decision-making style perceived and preferred by teachers in Khate Pratumwon and in Amphur Muang Samutsakhon? (4) What styles are preferred by the teachers who perceive a given decision-making style? Specifically:

a) What styles are preferred by teachers who perceive the "tells" style?

b) What styles are preferred by teachers who perceive the "sells" style?

c) What styles are preferred by teachers who perceive the "consults" style?

d) What styles are preferred by

teachers who perceive the "joins" style?

e) What styles are preferred by teachers where the principals' styles cannot be determined?

(5) Is there any relationship between the principals' decision-making styles and teachers' job satisfaction?

The Job Satisfaction Survey used twenty selected items from the instrument used in Prias' thesis, "A Study of the Relationship Between Teachers' Job Satisfaction and School Climate," which was taken from Johnson's Job Satisfaction Scales. The questionnaire on the decision-making styles of the principals was adapted from Pariñal's thesis, "A Study of the Iloilo Public Elementary School Teacher's Morale in Relationship to the Different Administrative Styles at the Point of Measurement." The answers to each question were categorized into "tells," "sells," "consults," and "joins," rather than using Pariñal's administrative categories.

The questionnaire, prepared in English and translated into Thai, was criticized for clarity by bilingual readers, and the instrument was also subjected to a pretest to determine its validity for Thai teachers.

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The questionnaire was then administered to four hundred fifty-five elementary teachers from the two districts in Thailand. To convert teachers' scores to the "satisfied-dissatisfied" rating, the perfect score for the number of items was multiplied by 100 per cent, 80 per cent, 60 per cent, 40 per cent and 20 per cent to determine the upper limits of each category of the satisfied-dissatisfied ratings. The decision-making styles were recorded in the Very Satisfied, the Satisfied, the Neutral, the Dissatisfied, and the Very Dissatisfied columns. The number and percentage of respondents which fell under each of the five categories were taken for each of the five styles for each district. Then the number and percentage of respondents belonging to the Satisfied and Not Satisfied groups were reported. The X^2 test was used to determine the relationship between styles for each district. Then the number and percentage of respondents belonging to the Satisfied and Not Satisfied groups were reported. The X^2 test was used to determine the relationship between the principals' decision-making style as perceived by their teachers' job satisfaction. To determine the extent of relationship, the contingency coefficient was computed.

The perceived decision-making styles of the principals were categorized according to the responses to the questionnaire. The most prevalent perceived decision-making style of the principals was determined in terms of a score for that style of five points or above. The anchor method was used to break a

tie between two or more styles. For ties that could not be broken, when the perceived decision-making styles could not be determined, the styles were categorized under "undetermined."

The relationship between teachers' perceived and preferred decision-making styles in the two districts was determined by using the rank difference coefficient of correlation (ρ).

The significant trend of the teachers' preferred style of those who perceived a given style was determined by using the chi-square test.

The following were the major findings of the study:

1. The most frequently perceived decision-making style of principals in Khate Pratumwon is "tells," followed by "joins," "undetermined," "consults," and "sells"; while in Amphur Muang Samutsakhon, "joins" comes first, followed by "undetermined," "tells," "consults," and "sells," respectively. In the combined districts, "joins" is the most frequently perceived style.

2. The rank of the perceived styles for the individual districts differs between Khate Pratumwon, an urban district, and Amphur Muang Samutsakhon, which is rural.

3. Agreement in the ranking of preferred decision-making styles was observed in both districts, but not in the perceived styles.

4. "Joins" was found to be the most preferred decision-making style of teachers in the combined districts. "Joins" was followed

by "consults," "undetermined," "sells," and "tells."

5. The most frequently preferred decision-making style is the "joins" style, regardless of the style teachers perceived.

6. There is no significant correlation between ranks assigned by the teachers of the two districts to the perceived decision-making style, although both groups of teachers gave rank four to "consults" and five to "sells."

7. There is a tendency of the teachers in both districts to be satisfied with their jobs if the decision-making style is perceived as "joins." This is shown by the "substantial" or "marked" relationship between job satisfaction and decision-making style.

The recommendations of this study are as follows:

1. Administrators should try to use more of the "joins" or participative decision-making style, since this style is associated with more satisfied teachers.

2. Some principals may fail to use the style that relates to teacher satisfaction because they do not know how, so they should be offered training in administration and decision-making.

3. To maximize successful and fruitful participation, teachers should be given proper education on how to participate effectively in decision-making. Such knowledge will not only increase the scope of participation but can also initiate a feeling of involvement in decision or the feeling of belonging in the decision-making process.

4. Administrators of the participating schools should be informed of the results of the study, in the hope that after two years a follow-up study will reveal a change in the principals' decision-making styles.

For further study:

1. It is recommended that studies of decision-making be conducted to determine the extent to which types of schools, rural or urban, public or private, influence the perceived decision-making style of principals.

2. It is recommended that a study be conducted on the relationship of the principals' training or academic background to their decision-making styles.

3. Since not all decision-making can be participated in by subordinates, a study should be conducted to determine what decisions can be made jointly.