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A SURVEY OF TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES IN MALAYSIAN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' perceptions of their participation in the decision-making processes in the Malaysian primary and secondary schools. A sample of 150 teachers, comprising of 60 primary school teachers and 90 secondary school teachers was drawn from the district of Merlimau, Melaka. It was decided that a small-scale survey study in the form of questionnaire method would be used. An adaptation and a translation were made of the Decisional Condition questionnaire which has been used by several researchers (Alutto & Belasco 1972; Conway 1976; Poo 1995) and has proved to be effective after adaptation in different countries. The multi-domain, evaluative approach was also used. This approach assumes that, participation is multi-dimensional and individuals' attitudes toward participation depend on their expectations (Bacharach 1990). The findings showed that, in general, teachers in both types of school are currently involved in all areas of decision-making. However, the primary school teachers currently participate more than the secondary school teachers in almost all decision-making areas. The findings also indicated that teachers experienced and desired participation is in the decision-making areas related to their classroom teaching and learning. The findings further indicated that teachers from both type of schools have positive attitudes toward participation and collective decision-making, although they still believe their headteachers should have substantial authority in making final decisions. The findings also suggest that 'contrived collegiality' is being practiced by headteachers in these schools. In conclusion, the dissertation argues if effective decisions are to arise from teachers' participation in decision-making processes, organisational, managerial and employee barriers need to be overcome or at least minimised through the awareness and co-operation of the policy makers, the headteachers, and teachers themselves.