Parental involvement in school management: teachers' view

Mosa. Fatema Zohora, Abdul Jalil Othman, Kazi Enamul Hoque, Megat Ahmad Kamaluddin Bin Megat Daud, Rahmad Sukor Bin Ab Samad

Faculty of Education, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Email: keh2009@um.edu.my

Abstract: The purpose of this research is to find the degree of parents' involvement at the present, and also to find a teachers' view of parent engagement in school management of Maldives. Quantitative approach has been used in this study. Data were collected from 115 teacher respondents. Finding show that parents are very much involved in resourcing (Fund raising) but not much involved in other areas such as planning, organizing, leading, etc. Most of the teachers viewed that parent involvement is necessary in the areas of planning, leading, and resourcing to improve educational outcomes. But teachers do not consider their involvement in organizing, controlling and staffing helpful for school outcomes.

Key words: Parents' involvement, school management, teachers' view

1. Introduction

There are three categories of schools in the Maldives namely, government, community or ward, and private schools (UNESCO, 2006). By 2005, 135 community schools in atolls were converted to government, before that most of the schools in atolls were owned by the community; however the government supports the community and private schools by providing a certain percentage of teachers depending on school size, and by providing infrastructure, facilities, and financial subsidies. Today out of 434 schools in the country including primary, lower secondary and higher secondary only 13 schools are owned by private or community (ward).

Though the ownership of most schools in Maldives has been changed from community to the government, still parents play an important role in the provision of education. They take part in various activities that are planned and organized by the schools. However with the development of education in the Maldives, how the parents are involved in educational management also has changed. Today there are different bodies within the school community that represent parents, like parent teacher association (PTA), school board etc. Hence the main focus of this research is to find the degree of parents' involvement in school management of the Maldives as perceived by the teachers.

2. Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study is to find out the perception of Maldivian teachers towards the involvement of parents in different management aspects of schooling such as planning, organizing, staffing, leading, controlling and resourcing. The objectives of this study are to reveal the perception of teachers in involving parents in educational management.

3. Literature review
3.1 Meaning of parental involvement

There are many ongoing discussions about parental involvement though it is a recently established term with a special title. Parental involvement can come in many different ways; but usually it refers to the involvement of parents in the schooling of children. This can be done either by helping their children at home or by participating in school-based activities. Parents' involvement at home can include discussions about school with the children and helping with homework, and, attending workshops or attending sports camp can be considered as involvement at school (Parental Involvement in Education - Research on Parental Involvement, Effects of Parental Involvement, Obstacles to Parental Involvement, Controversies, Current Issues , 2010) .

Parental involvement is defined as a term that can include many different activities; it can range from an impersonal visit to a school once a year, to frequent parent-teacher consultations (Brito& Waller, 1994, cited in Georhiou, 2007). Another definition of parental involvement states it as the degree to which parents are interested in, knowledge about and the readiness to take an active role in the daily activities of the children (Wong, 2008 cited in Staples K.E and Dilberto J. A, 2010). Similarly, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), (1965) defines parental involvement as participating parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication that involves students' academic learning and other school activities. This participation, according to the Act, includes assisting the child's learning; being actively involved in

the child's education at school; serving as full partners in the child's education, including as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of the child (ESEA , 1965, cited in NLCB Action Briefs: Parental Involvement, 2010). Likewise, good parenting at home with providing a secure and stable environment; contacting with school to share information; participation in school events; and participating in the work of the school and in school governance are different forms of parental involvement (Alberto, 2003). A real nurturing learning environment can be produced when the parents are given the opportunity to participate in a variety of school related activities including school management (Staples & Diliberto, 2010). Staples & Diliberto, (2010), identified that some parents view that it is the primary role of the school to provide education while other parents view education as a collaborative role between parents and educators.

3.2 Genesis of parental involvement

The history of parental involvement in the education of their children can go to the very early ages of civilization, though the type and method vary. The documented history of parental involvement can be seen from as early as 1945 to 1950 after the end of the First World War. During that period, parents started participating in conferences including homework monitoring, parent-teacher association (PTA) meetings and in the fundraising events (Judith Martinez, 2004).

The National Congress of Mothers (NCM), founded in 1897, by Alice McLellan Birney and Phoebe Apperson Hearst, is one of the oldest foundations which took out in support of children and their families. The NCM started helping students with whooping cough and diphtheria; and began serving hot lunches to children in schools across the country in 1912 (StateUniversity.com, 2010). Educators and policy-makers in the mid 1960s focused on parent involvement as a promising way to improve educational outcomes for poor and under-achieving students, and they developed a variety of models to promote parental involvement. Parental involvement from 1945 to 1985 included "traditional school organizations and support (PTAs and volunteerism among middle class parents) by some school districts in response to federal mandates to involve low-income parents in policy making in compensatory education and other federally funded programs" (Judith Martinez, 2004).

3.3 Parental involvement in school management of Maldives

When we look at the history of parental involvement in the Maldives, like the international community, it was very informal. It started with helping the *Edhurube* (traditional male volunteer teachers) or *Edhuru dhaitha* (traditional female volunteer teacher) by providing a lunch for example. It was an obligation for each parent to help and assist the *Edhurube* or *Edhuru dhaitha* in some way. However, the tradition has started to change from the late twenty century onwards. The current tradition shows the active involvement of parents in their child's education. They actively engage in helping the children to complete the homework, and in addition, today's parents do participate in events organized by the school.

3.4 Parental involvement in School management

In the literature, the terms 'management' and 'administration' are being used to convey more or less the same meaning whether it is in business or educational context (Gamage, 2006). As such, no distinction has been made between these two terms in this research literature. As identified by Gamage (2006), educational management is a field of practice which has certain aspects common to other fields of management such as public administration, hospital administration and business management. "Management in all business and human organization activity is simply the act of getting people together to accomplish desired goals" (Saxena, 2009, p. v).

Management comprises of planning, organizing, staffing, leading or directing, controlling and resourcing (Saxena, 2009). Planning is about deciding on what has to be done, when, how and by whom it has to be done and how the results are to be evaluated (Talloo, 2007, Hoque et al., 2013b). Organizing is the process of coordinating and allocating the resources of the organization in order to carry out its plans (Gitman & McDaniel, 2009). Staffing in its broadest termed fine as a process of determining the quality and quantity of human resource needed to fill the needs of the organization (Caruth, Caruth, & Pane, 2009). Leading is influencing others to get motivated to contribute to the achievement of organizational objectives (Koontz & Weichrich, 2007). Controlling involves monitoring and correcting the actions of the organization and its people towards the attainment of organizational goals. (Griffin & Moorhead, 2010; Hoque et al., 2011c). Resourcing encompasses the effective utilization of human, financial, technological, and natural resources.

Researches on parental involvement suggest that higher levels of parental involvement may positively affect student achievement (Manjula, Saraswathi, Prakash, & Ashalatha, 2009, Hoque et al., 2011a). However, the knowledge base to support the parents' involvement in specific educational management aspects and its correlated results are significantly limited.

Smit and Liebenberg (2003) states that

parents and teachers should be perceived as equal in terms of expertise, responsibility and accountability in school related matters. Policy-makers encourage parental participation and involvement through the creation of councils in which parents can contribute their ideas (Dom & Verhoeven, 2006). A research conducted in Boston Pilot Schools revealed that there is a greater degree of parental involvement in planning the school policies through parent councils (Ouimette, Feldman, Tung, Chamblin , & Coyne, 2002). Deem (1994) criticized the high degree of involvement of parents in school governance as saying that it is downgrading the importance of educational professionals. Lawrence –Lightfoot (1978,2002) cited in (Sanders, 1998), noted that the conflict which might occur when parents are given the leading role in school activities. According to them, parents will most likely be focused on what is best for their children while teachers are responsible for making decisions which will benefit for a larger population of students. However, studies suggest that the involvement of parental involvement in planning and management is very essential (Adams, Kee, & Lin, 2001).

A number of different studies revealed the importance of parental involvement in school management. When parents are more involved in the school activities, it is likely that they will be more willing to contribute additional revenue to the school (Fuller & Rivarola, 1998, Hoque et al., 2011b). In addition, Fuller & Rivarola (1998) identified many benefits of parental involvement in educational

management processes as it becomes more democratic and participatory, increase in locally generated revenue, more rational spending patterns and the collaborative efforts to improve pedagogical practices to boost the student achievement.

4. Methods and methodology
4.1. Participants
The participants of this survey include teachers from primary and secondary schools in the Maldives. Data were collected from of 115 teachers through internet communication.

4.2 Data collection and analysis
Parental involvement in school management from the teachers' perspectives is the focus of this study. A written questionnaire was developed and used to gather data for the data collection for this research. The major dimensions included in the questionnaire are: (1) Parents active involvement in planning process such as formulating school vision, mission, objectives and making school policies, (2) Parents involvement in organizing school activities such as school anniversary functions, professional development programs etc., (3) Parents' role in recruiting and appraising school staffs, (4) Parents active role in leading school committees, groups, activities etc., (5) Parents involvement in setting, evaluating and correcting expected standards, and (6) Parental contribution in fund raising, proving necessary materials and equipment.

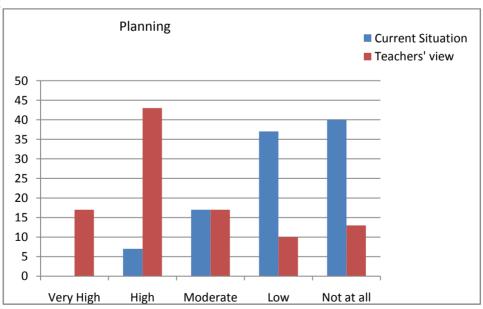## 5. Result and discussion
5.1 Planning

Figure 1: Parental involvement in planning

From the data's it is clear that currently parents are not involved in planning school activities but more than 60 percent teachers suggested that they would like to participate parents in planning activities of their school. Teachers also believe that when parents are engaged in planning activities of the school they will feel more valued and will work with the school administration to achieve the goals of the school. In addition to this teacher's also emphasis that when parents are engaged in formulating the school vision and mission they will feel more belongings and will act as a member of the school community. This will eventually increase the interaction between parents and school staffs; due to this a collaborative environment can be established for the development of the school.
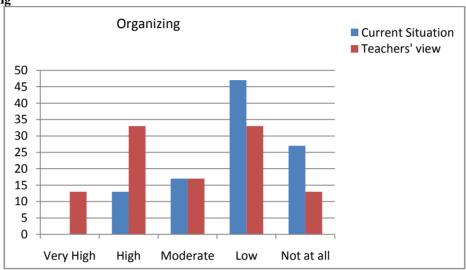
5.2: Organizing

Figure 2: Parental involvement in Organizing

From the graph we can see that parents have a very small involvement in organizing school activities (Eg. School anniversary function, professional development programs, prize day activities etc). But the majority of teachers are in agreement of giving more autonomy to parents in organizing school activities. Such help from parents will decrease the workload of teachers.
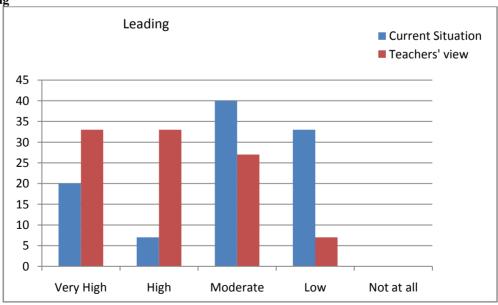
5.3: Leading

Figure 3: Parental involvement in Leading

The data obtained shows that there is a great need for the involvement of parents in leading the school when compared to the current situation. 66% of teachers are in favor of giving more opportunity for parents in leading the school activities. When parents are engaged in leading the school administrative affairs, formal functions etc… they will have more contact with their children in the school environment. This will ultimately help the parents to give necessary feedbacks and guidance to the management of the school in providing quality education and better environments for their children. In addition to this, giving such opportunities for parents will help both school management and the community to identify areas for improvement before it affects progress of the school.
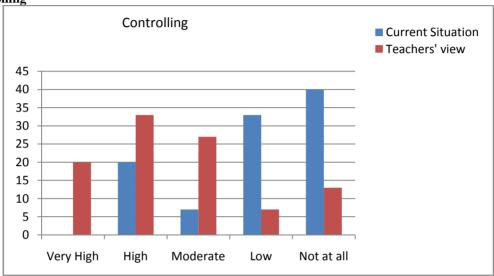
5.4: Controlling

Figure 4: Parental involvement in controlling

Unlike the other aspects, teachers even today believe that there must not be a high amount of control given to parents. The data shows that only 53% of teachers believe that a high level of controlling power in the management can be given to parents. But some teachers refuse to give such a high level of controlling power to parents. Some teachers noted that if parents are highly involved in controlling school administrations like the Maldives, a very unstable environment, can cause disruptions to the organization as a whole. Subsequently, when parents are engaged in school decision making teachers have to become more accountable (Fuller & Rivarola, 1998). Participation at times led to conflict and confrontation, particularly when parents pushed teachers to be more effective. (Fuller & Rivarola, 1998).
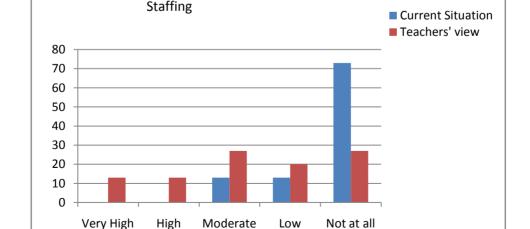
5.5 Staffing

Figure 5: Parental involvement in Staffing

The majority of teachers who participated in the study said that there should not be any involvement of parents in staffing. Only a few percentages (26%) of teachers said that there must be a high amount of authority given to parents on staffing, whereas, 86% of teachers are very much against involving parents in staffing. One reason for this reluctance among teachers not to give authority for parents in staffing can be due to the fact that most of the parents are not aware of the teachers' role in the school. Researches also show that conflict between teachers and parents stem from their different roles and responsibilities. Parents are focused on and likely to advocate for what is best for their children, not necessarily for what is best for all children within a classroom, grade-level, or school. Teachers on the other hand, are responsible for identifying practices

and making decisions that benefit the larger population of students, not just one child. Conflicts that result from this tension are natural and can be managed within the context of a healthy and respectful relationship with appropriate and clearly defined limits and responsibilities for both teachers and parents. Lawrence–Lightfoot (1978,2002) cited in (Sanders, 1998).

5.6: Resourcing

In Maldives resourcing is normally considered as fundraising and maintaining school infrastructure. The following graph summarizes teachers view about involving parents in resourcing and how much autonomy parents does have regarding this issue.
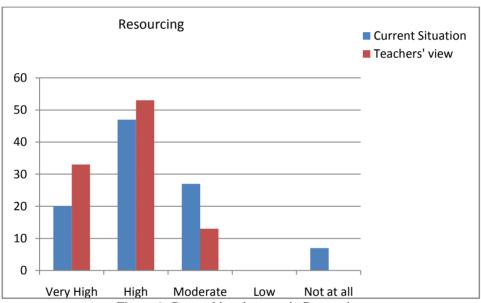

Figure 6: Parental involvement in Resourcing

From the data it is clear that parents are very much involved in resourcing schools of their children. The majority of the teachers (67%) believed that parents have to be engaged in resourcing school. Since in Maldives parents are willing to engage in matters of the school, their only way to engage is in fundraising and other similar activities. We believe that when parents are given more autonomy in school matters their involvement will also increase especially in resourcing. As parents become more involved with the school and in their child's learning, they will be willing to contribute additional revenue to the school (Fuller & Rivarola, 1998). When parents are engaged in organizational processes within the school, as well as strengthen linkages with parents and the community. In turn, as the school's management becomes more democratic and participatory, and locally generated revenues increase, spending patterns are to become

more rational, allocated to efforts that directly improve pedagogy and boost student achievement (Fuller & Rivarola, 1998).

6. Conclusion

Parental involvement in educational management is vital for the development of schools. But data currently shows that parents are not involved in planning school activities in the Maldives but more than 60 percent of teachers believe that when parents are engaged in planning activities in the school they will feel more valued and will work with the school administration to achieve the goals of the school. There are still 40 percent of teachers who strongly oppose giving such high level of controlling power to parents. Some teachers noted that if parents are highly involved in controlling school administrations like the Maldives, a very unstable environment, can cause disruptions to

the organization as a whole. Parents will only choose to focus on what is likely to be best for their own children and not what will be suitable for the whole students in the classroom, grade-level, or school. Teachers on the other hand, are responsible for identifying practices and making decisions that benefit the larger population of students, not just one child. But Evidence shows that when parents are given roles to take part in major areas of management, it will increase their participation in school activities, thus enhances their commitment to achieve goals of the school community (Hoque et al., 2013a). There are advantages when parents are included in school management especially in planning and leading school activities. When parents have a shared participation in setting school mission, vision and objectives, they will be more motivated to contribute in achieving the school goals. Data also shows that parents are highly involved in resource collection in the Maldives and this involvement can be higher if they are allowed to participate in some sort of academic decision making (Hoque et al., 2012, Caruth, Caruth, & Pane, 2009). However, some teachers are still reluctant in giving much autonomy to parents especially in controlling and staffing. The major reason of this perception can be assumed that teachers will have to be more accountable and most of the parents are not aware of teachers' roles in the school.

Corresponding author:
Kazi Enamul Hoque,
 Faculty of Education, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Email: keh2009@um.edu.my .

References

[1]   Adams, D., Kee, G. H., & Lin, L. (2001). Linking research, policy, and strategic planning for education development in Lao People's Democratic Republic. *Comparative Education Review* , 220-241.

[2]   Alberto, A. a. (2003). *The Impact of Parental Involvement, Parental Support and Family Education on Pupil Achievements and Adjustment: A Literature Review.* Queen's Printer.

[3]   Benson, F., & Martin, S. (2003). Organizing a successful parental involvement in urban schools. *Child Study Journal* , 187-193.

[4]   Caruth, D. L., Caruth, G. D., & Pane, S. S. (2009). *Staffing the contemporary organization: a guide to planning, recruiting, and selecting for human resource professionals* (3 Ed.). Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc.

[5]   Caspe, S. M. (2003). How teachers come to understand families. *The school community journal* , 115-132.

[6]   Deem, R. (1994). Free Marketeers or Good Citizens? Educational Policy and Lay Participation in the Administration of Schools. *British Journal of Educational Studies* , 23-37.

[7]   Dom, L., & Verhoeven, J. (2006). Partnership and Conflict between Parents and Schools: How Are Schools Reacting to the New Participation Law in Flanders (Belgium)? *Journal of Education Policy* , 21 (5); p. 567.

[8]   Fuller, B., & Rivarola, M. (1998). *Nicaragua's Experiment to Decentralize Schools: Views of Parents, Teachers, and Directors.* Nicaragua: The World Bank.

[9]   Gamage, D. T. (2006). *Professional Development for Leaders and Managers of Self-Governing Schools* . Dordrecht: Springer.

[10] Gianzero, G. (1999). *Promoting parental invovement, improving students outcomes.* San Diego: San Diego Dialogue at 534-8638.

[11] Gitman, L. J., & McDaniel, C. (2009). *The future of business: the essentials* (4 Ed.). Natorp Boulevard: South-Western Cengage Learning.

[12] Griffin, R. W., & Moorhead, G. (2010). *Organizational behaviour: managing people and organizations* (9 ed.). Natorp Blvd: South-Western Cengage Learning.

[13] Hoque, K.E., Zabidi, A., Othman, A.J., Mishra, P.K. & Sukor, R. (2013a) Quality Services as perceived by students of International and Public schools. *Life Science Journal, 10(2), 74-78.*

[14] Hoque, K.E., Saedah Siraj, Rahmad Sukor Ab. Samad and Ziyad, A (2012) The Role of ICT in school management of Maldives. *The New Educational Review, 27 (1), 370-382.*

[15] Hoque K. E., Alam G.M, & Abdullah A.G. K (2011a) Impact of teacher professional development on school improvement –an analysis at Bangladesh standpoint. *Asia Pacific Education Review 12(3), 337-348.*

[16] Hoque, KE, Alam, GM et al. (2011) Principals' roles under school-based management that influence school improvement. *The New Educational Review*, 23(1), 311-324.

[17] Judith Martinez, M. (2004). Colorado Accountability Conference 2004: Developing a Framework to Increase Parental Involvement in Schools. (p. 4). National Center for School Engagement at The Colorado Foundation for Families and Children.

[18] Koontz, H., & Weichrich, H. (2007). *Essentials of management: an international perspective* (7 Ed.). New Delhi: Tata McGrew-Hill Publishing Company Ltd.

[19] Manjula, P., Saraswathi, G., Prakash, P., & Ashalatha, K. V. (2009). Involvement of parents in the education of children with reading and writing difficulties - Impact of an intervention. *Educational Research and Review , 4 (4)*, 208-212.

[20] Ouimette, M., Feldman, J., Tang, R., Chamblin , N., & Coyne, S. (2002). Parent involvement in the Bostom pilot schools: lessons from a unique urban network. *Annual Meeting of the New England Educational Research Organization* (pp. 1-14). Boston: Center for Collaborative Education.

[21] Parental Involvement in Education. (2004, October). *National Human Services Assembly* , pp. 1-13.

[22] Sanders, M. G. (1998). International Handbook of Research on Teachers and Teaching. *Springer International Handbooks of Education* , 331-341.

[23] Raihan, J., Hoque, K.E. & Azad, M.A.K (2013b) Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Education: Attitudes of Bankers and Teachers working in Bangladesh, Life Science Journal, 10(2).

[24] Saxena, P. K. (2009). *Principles of management: a modern approach.* New Delhi: Global India Publications Pvt Ltd.

[25] Seginer, R. (2006). Parents' Educational Involvement: A Developmental Ecology Perspective. *Parenting: Science & Practice , 1* (1), 1-48.

[26] Staples, K. E., & Diliberto, J. A. (2010). Guidelines for Successful Parent Involvement Working With Parents of students of disabilities. *Teaching exceptional children* , 58-63.

[27] StateUniversity.com, E. E. (2010). *Parental Involvement in Education - Research on Parental Involvement, Effects on Parental Involvement, Obstacles to Parental Involvement, Controversies, Current Issues*. Retrieved October 10, 2010, from Education Encyclopedia - StateUniversity.com: http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/2309/Parental-Involvement-in-Education.html .

[28] Talloo, T. J. (2007). *Business organisation and management for B.Com (Hons.) course of university of Delhi.* New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill.

[29] UNESCO(2006) World Data on Education, Maldives. Retrieved 25 September 2010, from: http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/archive/Countries/WDE/2006/ASIA_and_the_PACIFIC/Maldives/Maldives.pdf .

[30] UNESCO (2007) EDUCATION FOR ALL Mid-decade Assessment. Retrieved 25 September 2010, from: http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Maldives/Maldives_EFA_MDA.pdf.

6/5/2013