

DECISION-MAKING BEHAVIOR OF
KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS

By

JANET LORRAINE MALONE

Bachelor of Science in Home Economics
University of Nebraska
Lincoln, Nebraska
1959

Master of Home Economics
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, Colorado
1968

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate College
of the Oklahoma State University
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Thesis Approved:

Frances Stromberg
Thesis Adviser

Judith A. Powell

Anna M. Gorman

Arnon Trope

Donald A. Myers

Norman N. Burham
Dean of the Graduate College

1032778

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Problem

The fact that early educational programs have had a positive impact upon the cognitive functioning of young children has been well established (Steele, 1974). While the value of such programs has been established, the type of program which is most appropriate for children of this age is not yet known (Spodek, 1973).

As a result, a great deal of conflict exists among those individuals who are concerned with the education of young children. In describing this conflict, Cabler (1974) wrote:

. . . the role of kindergarten has been a conflict and controversy since its introduction into the United States during the late 1850's. As early as 1892, serious philosophical conflicts among professional educators arose over what the role of kindergarten should be. Since the turn of the century these disagreements have not been solved but have, in fact, become more pronounced primarily because of an increasing awareness of the processes by which children grow and learn (p. 3).

Katz (1977) stated that this controversy existed in several areas. These were: (1) needs of young children, (2) how these needs should be satisfied, and (3) when these needs should be satisfied. Katz further stated, "Perhaps the most common case of conflicting views is expressed in questions about the effects of 'structured' versus 'unstructured' curriculum models" (p. 70).

Elkind (1969) believed that this controversy arose out of two widely differing orientations toward early education. He indicated that one group viewed the purpose of the kindergarten program as enrichment, while the other group believed that the purpose of the program was academic instruction.

There is some evidence that the orientation which an individual has toward early education is the result of the "ideologies" which that person holds (Kohlberg and Mayer, 1972; Spodek, 1975; and Katz, 1975, 1977). Kohlberg and Mayer (1972, p. 463) defined an ideology as a "fairly systematic combination of theory about psychological and social fact with a set of value principles".

In relation to this, Katz (1977) made the following statement:

A basic assumption here is that in any field in which the data base is unreliable--especially in terms of validity--the vacuum generated by such data weaknesses is filled by ideologies (p. 70).

Katz further stated that the field of early education is especially susceptible to data weaknesses. The result of this is a reliance upon ideologies rather than upon a valid data base. The consequences of this, according to Katz, are: (1) the development of encampments such as Piagetians, neo-Freudians, behaviorists, open educators, etc.; (2) susceptibility to "fads and bandwagons"; and (3) susceptibility to charismatic leaders. She concluded the discussion by saying:

As long as we are responding to powerful claims or personalities rather than to reliable evidence, programs and practices will fluctuate with the rise, fall, and resurrection of various 'in' ideologies (p. 72).

The importance of the role of the teacher as a decision-maker in matters pertaining to the program provided to children was emphasized by Harnack (1968). He stated that the classroom teacher must have

major involvement in decisions regarding: (1) screening and selection of specific instructional objectives; (2) identification and organization of subject matter; (3) selection of instructional techniques and materials; and (4) selection of measuring devices to help realize whether or not objectives were accomplished.

Reports by Dreyer (1969), Frost and Rowland (1969), Ekstrom (1976), and Halperin (1976) indicated that the decisions made by teachers which were manifested in teacher behaviors or classroom activities were of major consequence in determining educational outcomes in the children involved. These investigators found relationships between what teachers did in the classrooms and such items as children's perceptions of school, children's level of school satisfaction, students' reactions to testing situations, and various orientations to the learning process.

In view of the wide divergence of attitudes and philosophies espoused by the authorities in the field, and because of the lack of conclusive research, it is not surprising that the decision-making role of the kindergarten teacher has become an issue. Bowles (1973) stated, in fact, that decision-making is of such importance that it should rank first among the priorities for skill development in teacher education programs.

Feeney, Phelps, and Stanfield (1976) believed that decision-making was a task for which teacher preparation programs had not adequately prepared prospective teachers. They indicated that teacher education has generally been based upon the views of education which were held by the educator responsible for the training. According to these authors, there were as many different views of education as there were educators, and students were faced with many different

perspectives about what constituted acceptable educational practices. The need, according to these authors, was to provide prospective teachers with the necessary tools and resources which would allow them to examine their own goals and values for children and to make decisions based upon their own beliefs.

Though numerous authors stressed the vital role of the teacher as a decision-maker, there was little research into the subject of the decision-making behavior of teachers. As such, there is only a weak data base which may be used by teacher educators to aid in planning and implementing curricula for training prospective teachers in the area of decision-making. In order to determine the most effective means of providing teachers with this training, it is essential that additional insights be gained which will add to the understanding of the behavior of kindergarten teachers as they make program-related decisions.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to examine behaviors of public school kindergarten teachers in regard to the making of program-related decisions. Specific objectives of the study were:

1. To determine if there were differences in the decision-making behavior of teachers (satisfaction, dissonance, power, and factors impacting on decisions) according to the training and experiential backgrounds of the teachers.
2. To determine if there were differences in the decision-making behavior of teachers (satisfaction, dissonance, power, and factors impacting on decisions) according to characteristics of the programs in which the teachers were employed.

3. To determine if there were differences in the decision-making behavior of teachers (satisfaction, dissonance, power, and factors impacting on decisions) according to the type of program supervision available to the teachers.
4. To determine if there were differences in the degrees of decision-making satisfaction expressed by teachers according to the decision-making dissonance scores.
5. To determine if there were differences in the degrees of decision-making satisfaction expressed by teachers according to the amount of decision-making power which the teachers held.
6. To determine if there were differences in the teachers' decision-making dissonance scores according to the amount of decision-making power which the teachers held.
7. To make recommendations for further research related to teacher education programs and training for decision-making.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated in relation to the study:

Hypothesis I: There will be no significant differences in the decision-making behavior of teachers (satisfaction, power, dissonance, and factors impacting on decisions) when compared according to the training and experiential backgrounds of the teachers.

Hypothesis II: There will be no significant differences in the decision-making behavior of the teachers (satisfaction, power, dissonance, and factors impacting on decisions) when compared according to specified characteristics of the programs in which the teachers are employed.

Hypothesis III: There will be no significant differences in the decision-making behavior of the teachers (satisfaction, power, dissonance, and factors impacting on decisions) when compared according to the type of program supervision available.

Hypothesis IV: There will be no significant differences in the teachers' decision-making dissonance scores when compared according to their expressed degrees of decision-making satisfaction.

Hypothesis V: There will be no significant differences in the amount of decision-making power which the teachers hold when

compared according to their expressed degree of decision-making satisfaction.

Hypothesis VI: There will be no significant relationship between the amount of decision-making power which the teachers hold and their decision-making dissonance scores.

Assumptions

In the preparation of this study, the following assumptions were set forth:

1. Public school kindergarten teachers were responsible for making a great many decisions regarding activities and procedures included in the program which they provided for children.
2. In most cases, teachers were not provided with detailed guides for program implementation.
3. A variety of alternatives was available from which teachers might have selected the activities and procedures which they believed to be most appropriate to the children whom they taught.

Limitations

The following limitations of the study were identified:

1. Public school kindergartens in the state of New Mexico from where the data were collected were relatively new institutions (New Mexico Department of Education, 1976). It is possible that decisions would be made in a somewhat different manner than would be the case in states in which programs had been established for a longer period of time.
2. Kindergarten classes in the state of New Mexico included a high population of Spanish-speaking and Native American children. This might cause a different process to be employed in making decisions in this state than in those states with low populations of minority group children.

Definitions

In order that accurate understanding and interpretation of the study might be assured, it was necessary to define the following terms.

1. Decision-making behavior: The reaching of a state of organization or relevant information which predisposes (i.e., provides a set for), or determines at some probability level, a course of action for attaining some outcome or objective (Ryans, 1965, p. 47). In the context of this study, decision-making behavior is comprised of four components.
 - a. Decision-making dissonance: The expressed difference between what the teacher believes the basis for making decisions actually is and what the teacher thinks that it should be.
 - b. Decision-making power: The degree of input which a teacher has into the making of program-related decisions.
 - c. Decision-making satisfaction: The degree to which a teacher's desire to participate in the decision-making process is fulfilled.
 - d. Factors impacting on decisions: An indication of those factors which teachers express as having the greatest impact on their program-related decisions.
2. Program: All of the experiences and activities which are provided for children in an educational setting. This includes experiences which are both teacher directed and child initiated.
3. Kindergarten: A public school educational program provided in a group setting for children in the school year prior to entering first grade.
4. Teacher training program: The planned course of study provided to a student in an institution of higher learning in which the outcome of completion is teacher certification or licensure.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The program which should be provided for children in public school kindergartens has been the subject of much discussion. A great deal of controversy in regard to the type of program which best meets the needs of five year old children exists among those who are proclaimed as authorities in the field. This conflict leaves the teachers without a definitive set of guidelines which will aid them as they make decisions relating to program. Consequently, the role of the kindergarten teacher as a decision-maker becomes a highly significant aspect of the position.

Because of the significance of this role, a need exists for more adequate preparation of teachers in this area. At the present time, little is known about the decision-making behavior of teachers. As such, teacher training programs have only a weak data base upon which to design curricula which will aid teachers in the processes involved in effective decision-making. As a result of this lack of data, decision-making skills have not been heavily emphasized in teacher education programs.

There is a great deal of literature available on the decision-making process itself. Much of this literature is at the theoretical or conceptual level. There have been fewer attempts to relate these theoretical constructs to the role of the teacher as a decision-maker.

This review represents an effort to do this. Specifically, the chapter will review: (1) Critical Educational Decisions; (2) The Decision-Making Process; (3) The Teacher as a Decision-Maker; and (4) Implications for Teacher Education.

Critical Educational Decisions

Several authors have written in regard to the decisions which are critical to the various processes involved in education. A classic among these writings was that set forth by Tyler (1950) in what has become known as the Tyler rationale. Tyler identified four questions which he believed to be basic to decisions concerning curriculum development. These questions were:

1. What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?
2. What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?
3. How can these educational experiences be effectively organized?
4. How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained (p. 1)?

Macdonald, Wolfson, and Zaret (1973, p. 3), in an effort to develop a "more open ended model for thinking about schooling based on a humanistic ethical commitment," raised some different questions. These authors postulated that instead of Tyler's questions, the following decision-related questions must be considered:

1. What are our value commitments and what is our view of the nature of man?
2. What are the sociocultural forces now operating in our society that we would choose to maximize or perpetuate?

3. What are our conceptions of learning? What is the nature of human experience in general, and how is it related to learning (pp. 3-4)?

Spodek (1972) examined the decision-making process of educators involved with young children. He identified three types of decisions that are critical to the educational process. Paraphrased from Spodek, these are:

1. Policy decisions relate to the goals and purposes of education. These are derived from statements of values as well as from educational ideologies.
2. Institutional decisions are those concerned with the maintenance of school itself.
3. Technical decisions represent the "translation of policy into classroom activity and to the development of educational experiences that will help achieve goals determined in educational policy" (p. 9). Long and short range classroom planning belong in this category as does the selection and use of educational resources.

Spodek (1977) proposed a three dimensional model for judging the worth of educational programs. The model was composed of three questions which may also be identified as relating to critical program decisions. These questions were:

1. Is what is taught to the child developmentally appropriate?
2. Is what is taught to the child worth knowing?
3. Is what is taught to the child testable by the child (p. 6)?

The Decision-Making Process

A number of theories, models, or conceptual frameworks have been postulated in an effort to further the understanding of the decision-making process. These materials had their roots in a variety of disciplines--economics, mathematics, psychology, social-psychology, and

sociology. In the following pages are summaries of several models which have been utilized to investigate decision-making activity.

Theories and Conceptual Frameworks

Bross (1953) proposed that decision-making could best be dealt with through a statistical model. In this model, uncertainties and values were translated into numbers so that risks could be calculated. Bross stated that when the calculation was completed, the individual had lists of possible actions, possible outcomes for each action, numerical consequences of each outcome, probabilities associated with each outcome, and costs associated with each line of action.

Social exchange theory appeared to have applicability to understanding the decision-making process. Simpson (1972) summarized the basic ideas of this theory as such:

The basic idea of social exchange theory is that people must undergo psychological costs to get psychological rewards. In their interaction they try to maximize rewards and minimize costs to maintain the most profitable outcomes. They choose one activity or situation instead of another if one is more profitable or less costly than the other (p. 2).

Nye (1978) proposed that exchange theory be expanded to encompass choice theory and that a theory of choice and exchange can explain much of the decision-making process. Nye posited eight propositions which appeared to be applicable. These were:

1. Human beings seek rewards and avoid costs to maximize profits.
2. Costs being equal, individuals will choose alternatives which supply or are expected to supply the most rewards.
3. Rewards being equal, individuals will choose the alternative which exacts the fewest costs.

4. Immediate outcomes being equal, individuals will choose those alternatives which promise better long term outcomes.
5. Long term outcomes being equal, individuals will choose alternatives providing better immediate outcomes.
6. Costs and other rewards being equal, the individual will choose the alternative which supplies or can be expected to supply the most social approval.
7. Costs and other rewards being equal, individuals will choose statuses which provide the most autonomy.
8. Costs and other rewards being equal, individuals will choose activities which provide the greatest financial remuneration and/or the smallest financial expenditures.

Systems analysis presented another framework which may be useful in developing an understanding of the decision-making process.

McManama (1971) defined the systems approach as:

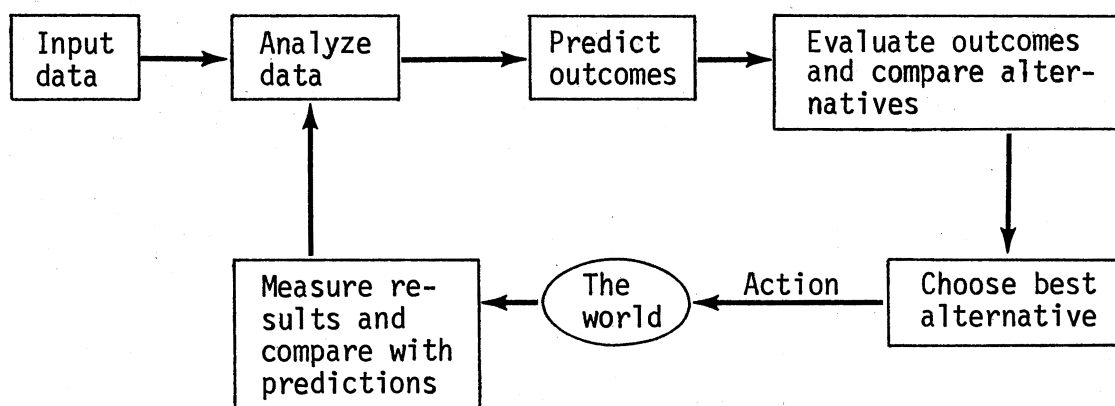
A scientific method for moving from a goal to its attainment. The primary purpose of the procedure is to eliminate the discrepancy between the stated goal and the actual output. In performing the operations we are concerned with both the effectiveness and the efficiency of our approach (p. 21).

Cleland and King (1975) utilized the systems approach and proposed a model which diagrammed the process through which they believed that decision-making proceeds (Figure 1).

Diesing (1964) proposed a framework for decision-making from a socioeconomic standpoint. Diesing contended that decisions are made according to the following steps:

1. Defining a relatively independent problematic situation and uncovering the conflicts that exist in it as well as the factors maintaining the conflicts.
2. Estimating the changes that are possible in each problematic factor, together with the degree of strain the change would bring.
3. Discovering what strain reducing support is available for each change.

4. Predicting future conflicts, strains, and stresses likely to accompany each direction of change, or likely to occur in any case.
5. Looking for a change at a manageable level of strain that will reduce conflict, or increase flexibility, or prepare for future stresses (p. 65).



Source: Cleland and King, 1975, p. 74.

Figure 1. The Decision-Making Process

A scheme listing steps in the decision-making process was proposed as a portion of Griffiths' (1959) administrative theory. He included the following items as components of the decision-making process:

1. Recognize, define, and limit the problem.
2. Analyze and evaluate the problem.
3. Establish criteria or standards by which the solution will be evaluated or judged as acceptable and adequate to the need.

4. Collect data.
5. Formulate and select the preferred solution or solutions; test in advance.
6. Put into effect the preferred solution:
 - a. Program the solution
 - b. Control the activities in the program
 - c. Evaluate the results and the process (p. 94).

Rational Decision-Making

The rationality with which decisions were made was the subject of much decision-making literature. In regard to this topic, Wilson and Marcus (1964) stated:

We call an individual rational if he takes into account the possible consequences of actions open to him; if he is aware of a certain preference ordering and considers it, and if, in the light of such knowledge, he chooses that course of action which in his estimation, leads to the best or most preferred consequence (p. 182).

These authors further stated that rational man makes choices on the basis of:

1. A known set of relevant alternatives with corresponding outcomes.
2. An established rule or relation which produces an ordering of the alternatives.
3. Maximizing something such as money rewards, physical goods, or some form of utility (p. 182).

Lee's (1971) decision-making theory represented a further attempt to explain the decision-making process in terms of rationality or reasonableness. He wrote:

Commentators on human conduct have attributed human choice to various bases, including instinct, id, altruism, reinforcement, blind passion, duty, wickedness, and moral uprightness. There is another possible basis of greater concern here: reason (p. 1).

Lee posited that the rational man is the one who, when confronted with a decision, makes the choice that is best for him. He stated that the best decision is called a rational decision and identified properties of rational decisions as:

1. The basic indice of a rational decision is that it is in some sense, a "best" or optimal decision.
2. The rational decision depends on the decision principle employed by the investigator. A decision principle is a rule for specifying which of a set of possible decisions is optimal.
3. The rational decision for a decision situation may differ among persons. People evaluate possible consequences of a decision differently, and the rational decision is dependent upon such evaluations.
4. A rational decision is dependent on relevant information available to the person. A decision is judged to be irrational if relevant, available information is ignored (p. 8).

The question regarding who can most rationally make varying decisions has been discussed by several authors. The position that decisions can be most rationally made by the personnel most directly involved was set forth by Griffiths (1956). In support of this concept, Griffiths wrote:

Decision making is related to the level of authority in a school, and decisions should be made at that level at which authority resides. The faculty should have authority in those matters that directly influence their professional behavior (p. 232).

Goodlad (1962) was in agreement with Griffiths. He expressed concern in regard to the irrationality of many decisions made in an educational setting. He stated:

The character of education at any place and moment is the result of many decisions, some made at times and places far removed from the present point of observation. These decisions are sometimes interrelated, frequently conflicting, and commonly irrational (p. 164).

In the introduction to Myers (1970), Goodlad described rational decision-making as:

. . . the making of decisions which one should make (that is the most appropriate person) in the light of the greatest possible knowledge of circumstances and in the shortest possible time. . . . A person acts, therefore, in the light of awareness of responsibility to act (that is an appropriate decision for me) and a weighting of the time and data factors (p. xi).

Goodlad (1966) developed a conceptual scheme which provided a mechanism for dealing with the decision-making process in educational settings. He combined the four questions included in the Tyler rationale with Parson's (1959) levels in formal organizations. The resultant scheme postulated that educational decisions are made at three levels.

The first level was the societal level. Goodlad (1976) stated that at this level, decisions were made regarding who shall be educated and for how long; sources of authority in controlling public education; the purposes of schools, etc. At the second level or institutional level, decisions were made regarding the formulation of specific educational objectives, selection of fields of study, placement of content, selection of materials, deployment of resources, evaluation of students and programs, and so on. At the third level or the instructional level, decisions were made regarding the selection of immediate goals, diagnosis of student learning and accomplishments, grouping of pupils, timing and pacing of learning, utilization of space and equipment, remediation of student learning, and so on.

Griffin (1970) conducted a study which was designed to test the concept that certain curricular decisions were made at the three

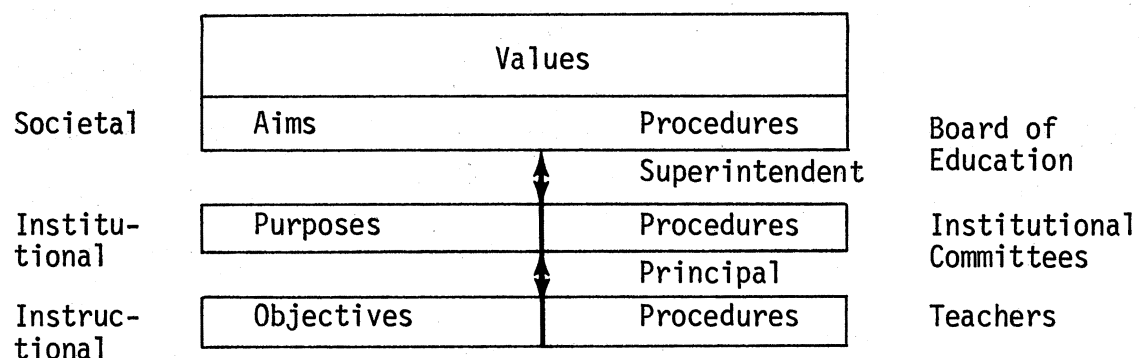
levels identified by Goodlad. From five selected school districts, Griffin, in consultation with the school superintendents, selected a sample. The sample, according to judgments of the investigator and the superintendents, reflected characteristics of the total school district in terms of point of view toward education, levels of education offered by the district, socioeconomic status of the population served by the district, age and length of service, and levels of competence.

Data were collected through the use of a questionnaire listing 43 curricular decisions. Respondents were asked to indicate who, in their particular school systems, made each of the specified decisions. Griffin's study pointed out that two of the three levels, societal and instructional, operated as proposed by Goodlad. There was not evidence to support the assumption that decisions were being made at the institutional level (central office personnel). Examination of the responses indicated that noninstitutional level persons were extensively involved in the making of decisions which Goodlad identified as institutional level decisions.

Myers (1970) also wrote in regard to rational decision making. He made the following statements:

1. Rational decision making obligates persons to proceed in an orderly and systematic manner in their pursuit of a solution to a problem (p. 9).
2. In rational decision making all persons directly affected by the ultimate decision are allowed to take part in making the decision (p. 10).
3. Rational decision making excludes the use of an authority figure, an administrator, who makes the ultimate decision or who has more influence or power over a decision than other persons in the group (p. 10).

Myers used Goodlad's conceptual scheme and attempted "to formulate a conceptualization to both view and guide the practical business of making curricular decisions in school systems, school, and classrooms" (p. xii). Figure 2 shows the scheme developed by Myers to show the relationship between Goodlad's decision-making levels and the types of decisions which can most rationally be made at each level. According to Myers, this represented a decision-making hierarchy as societal aims, values, and procedures govern decisions made at the other levels.



Source: Myers, 1970, p. 11.

Figure 2. Conceptual Scheme Showing the Relationship of the Values, Aims, and Procedures of the Board of Education to the Institutional and Instructional Levels of Decision-Making

Decision-Making Power

Griffiths (1959) stated that:

It would appear that power can be operationally defined only in terms of the decisions which a power holder actually makes. . . . A person, therefore, has power to the extent that he makes decisions which: (1) affect the course of action of an enterprise to a greater degree than do decisions made by others in the enterprise and (2) influence other decisions. . . . Thus it can be seen that the one who exercises most control over the decision making process in an organization has the most power (p. 87).

Ryan and Cruz (1974) wrote in agreement with Griffiths. They said this about decision-making power:

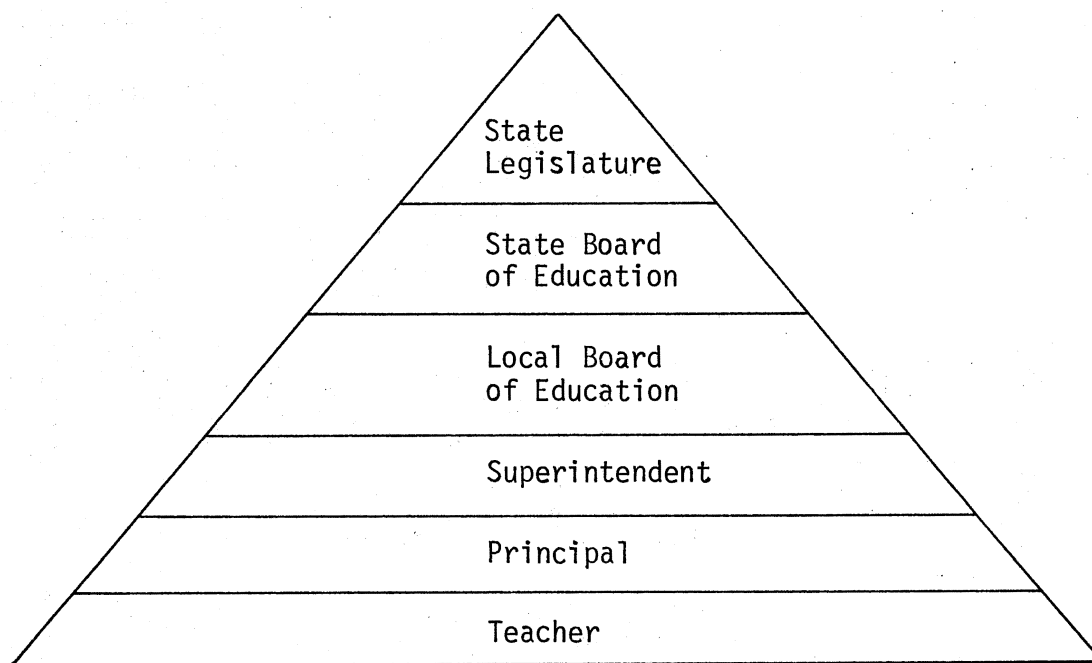
Decisions usually imply a power relationship between people. Individuals with power make decisions for and about people without power. . . . Powerless people are at an obvious disadvantage if they disagree with the decision(s) unless they have access to a process for altering the decision (p. 2).

The role of the administrator in decision making was the subject of two reports by Griffiths (1956, 1969). He stated that making decisions is not the function of administration. Instead, the role of the administrator should be "to develop and regulate the decision-making process in the most effective manner possible" (1959, p. 73). Griffiths further stated that if the executive was personally making decisions, the organization was malfunctioning.

Griffiths (1956) applied his administrative decision-making theory directly to the school situation and indicated that decision-making policy setting should be a function of the administration. This policy, according to Griffiths, should indicate who was to make the various decisions, what the decisions should be concerned with, and how the decisions were to be made. He stated that the chief cause

of decision-making confusion in schools was a lack of clear policy set by the administration.

Myers (1973) viewed the role of the teacher as a "functionary" whose decision-making power was limited. He implicated that one reason that teachers lacked power in making decisions was the hierarchical authority pattern that existed in bureaucratically organized school districts. He stated that bureaucracies demanded a vertical structure of authority whereby an order given by one official at the top influenced a much larger number of persons at the bottom. Myers illustrated this phenomenon by way of a "power pyramid." Figure 3 shows a power pyramid in education as illustrated by Myers.



Source: Myers, 1973, p. 12.

Figure 3. Power Pyramid Showing the Hierarchical Authority Structure in Education

In relation to this power pyramid, Myers stated:

The last person on the hierarchial ladder is the teacher, excepting teachers' aides and students. . . . While the teacher has some autonomy in the classroom, it is apparent that the authority possessed by persons operating at higher levels restricts severely the authority of the teachers (p. 79).

Leles (1968) believed that teachers had a considerable amount of power, but that the power was frequently misused in ways that were actually detrimental to the learning processes of the children involved. He wrote:

Power without purpose is likely to be ineffective and wasteful. But prolonged uses of ineffective power are corrupting, for they thrive on ignorance, confusion, and incompetence. Teacher autonomy is not an end to be sought but a means by which teachers can help children learn (p. 61).

Myers (1973) attributed a portion of this problem to the fact that such a large number of instructional decisions were made by other persons. He wrote:

The practice of persons other than teachers making instructional decisions concerning teaching in the classroom has become so widespread in America today that when teachers are allowed, indeed encouraged, to make decisions, they are often not competent to fulfill the role of decision maker and tend to resist what is considered by some to be an inappropriate role (p. 8).

Decision-Making Dissonance

Information focusing upon the subject of decision-making dissonance was drawn largely from the works of Festinger (1957, 1964).

Festinger (1957) stated that:

Two elements are dissonant if, for one reason or another, they do not fit together. They may be inconsistent or contradictory, culture or group standards may dictate that they do not fit, and so on (p. 12).

Festinger (1964) wrote in regard to pre-decision behavior and its relation to post-decision behavior. He utilized the concept of cognitive dissonance in developing his theory. His theory posited that the amount of dissonance that existed after a decision was a direct function of the number of things the person knew that were inconsistent with that particular decision.

Festinger reviewed 10 studies and from the results of these studies, plus his own speculation, reached several conclusions. Paraphrased from Festinger, these are:

1. Pre-decision behavior is largely oriented toward making an objective evaluation of the alternatives and establishing a preference among the alternatives.
2. The individual continues to seek new information and to re-evaluate old information until he acquires sufficient confidence that his preference order will not be reversed by subsequent information.
3. The individual makes a decision when the required level of confidence is reached. The level of confidence is dependent upon several factors, with a higher level of confidence required when: (1) the alternatives are close together in attractiveness; (2) the decision is important; and (3) the information about the alternatives is variable.
4. Once the decision is made the person is committed to a course of action, the situation changes from an objective situation to one characterized by bias and partiality as the individual seeks to reduce the dissonance. This he does by attempting to increase the attractiveness of the chosen alternative and decrease the attractiveness of the alternative not chosen. If there is no commitment resulting from the decision, there is no evidence of dissonance reduction.
5. A state of regret intervenes between the decision and dissonance reduction. There is evidence of a strong tendency toward decision reversal in this period.

Thibault and Kelley (1959) also recognized cognitive dissonance as a follow-up to decision making. They were in agreement with

Festinger when they said, "the greater the information favoring the unchosen alternative, the greater the post-decision dissonance" (p. 113).

The Teacher as a Decision-Maker

The importance of a kindergarten teacher's role as a decision-maker may be seen in the following statement by Berman (1968). She wrote:

Perhaps no human function calls as many of man's essentially human resources into play as decision making, particularly when the consequences are apt to be long in duration, the persons affected many, and the opportunity to turn back unlikely (p. 101).

Such is the case of the kindergarten teacher.

Significance of the Role

The significance of the role of decision-maker was identified by several authors. Bargar (1974) stated that teachers were key decision-makers in the classroom and that what they perceived, what they valued, what they decided, and how they acted were critical in the development of children.

Frost and Rowland (1969) had this to say about the importance of the decisions made by teachers of young children:

In the hands of the educator of the very young, preschool and elementary, the curriculum is a device for great intellectual challenge or the means of almost irreparable harm (p. 3).

Harnack (1968) also emphasized the need for intelligent decision-making by teachers. He stated that this need extended to the following decision-making situations: (1) screening and selection of

specific instructional objectives; (2) identification and organization of subject matter; (3) selection of instructional techniques and materials; and (4) selection of measuring devices to help him realize whether or not the objectives are accomplished (p. 11).

Spodek (1972) said the following in regard to the kindergarten teacher as a decision-maker:

Teaching as decision making is crucial at all levels. It is the basis for planned experiences. Decision making, however, is different in the early years. What children can learn in the early years is more a function of developmental level than in any other period of schooling. In addition, the greater dependency of young children on the teacher requires different kinds of behavior and organization. Similarly, the relational aspects of teaching, with its concern for providing support and nurturance, are of prime importance, while the instructional aspects of teaching are of lesser importance (p. 10).

There is evidence that the decisions which a teacher made regarding classroom activities had significant consequences for the children involved. Halperin (1976) investigated the effect of teacher practices on first grade children. She found that the behaviors of teachers had a significant effect upon the children's perceptions of the school situation and consequently, upon their school behavior. Children who were students of teachers classified as "strict" exhibited more non-attending behavior and a lower awareness of personal responsibility. Students whose teachers were classified as "permissive," showed more attending behavior and a greater awareness of personal responsibility.

Stallings (1974) studied the impact of program variations in implementing seven "Follow Through" models. Her study showed a significant correlation between classroom practices and the behavior of the children in the class. She found that children in the classrooms

which were more academically oriented and structured made higher gain scores in reading and mathematics and were more willing to take responsibility for their own failure. Children in the models which were classified as more open, scored higher on the problem solving tests, were absent less often, took more responsibility for success, were more often independent and cooperative, and exhibited more question asking behavior.

Dreyer (1969) observed children in two different types of nursery schools; namely, Montessori and contemporary. He concluded that differing preschool environments, including program provided, yielded different outcomes. He found that the children in the Montessori school were highly task oriented while children in the contemporary nursery school were highly socially oriented.

Factors Affecting Decisions

A review of the literature led to an assumption that factors other than the goals which teachers identified were most important in determining the specific decisions made by teachers in regard to program inclusions. The results of some studies have, in fact, shown a low level of consistency between what teachers expressed as goals and what they actually did in the classroom. Berk (1976) studied the activity environments in five types of programs with differing emphases. These programs were: (1) Montessori, (2) laboratory nursery school, (3) community day care center, (4) franchise day care center, and (5) Head Start program. She concluded that teachers' goals were closely related to practices in the Montessori and laboratory nursery schools, but not in the other three. A conclusion of this study was

that a critical factor in determining match between expressed goals and classroom activities was the availability of clearly defined guidelines for program implementation.

A study conducted by the New Mexico Department of Education (1976) reported findings consistent with those of Berk. The data collected from a survey of all public school kindergarten teachers in the state, indicated a number of inconsistencies between what teachers reported that they were doing and those behaviors, attitudes, and skills which they felt to be most important to the five year old child. The report stated:

For example, among the behaviors which teachers marked as most important were: working and playing independently, taking responsibility for materials, and communicating with teachers and peers. In contrast, over 75 percent of the teachers reported that the greatest portion of the classroom day was teacher planned and directed (p. 11).

Very similar information was collected by the New York Department of Education (1976). This report showed that both teachers and administrators placed greatest emphasis upon social-emotional development, language development, and attitude toward learning (curiosity, experimentation, enthusiasm). The same report stated that:

In most classrooms observed, there is a high percentage of teacher directed group activity with little or no choice on the part of the child. When individual or independent activity is permitted, it is either to reward completed assignments or to enable teachers to work with small groups on teacher selected, skill-related activities (p. 7).

If goals did not serve as the basis for specific program related decisions, it is important that those factors be identified which had strong impact upon decisions. Various authors provided insights into this problem.

Hymes (1974) stressed the importance of working with parents when planning the program to be provided for children. He stated that the impact of programs, especially half day programs, was very small unless school and home worked together. It seemed a logical assumption, then, that the desires and expectations of parents had an impact upon teachers' decisions. The results of several studies (Cabler, 1974; Goulet, 1975; and New Mexico Department of Education, 1976) indicated that parents and kindergarten teachers did not agree upon the tasks of kindergarten. These findings may contribute to an explanation of the conflict between teachers' expressed goals and decisions which were made and manifested in classroom practices.

A similar lack of agreement was found to exist between kindergarten teachers and first grade teachers (Goulet, 1975), and between younger teachers and older teachers (Spindler, 1955; and Prince, 1957). Differences between kindergarten teachers and school principals were identified by Cabler (1974). It was again logical to assume that differing opinions of individuals within the school system had an impact on teachers' decisions.

Sharples (1975) expressed concern that the increased demands which are being placed upon educators for accountability may be becoming a significant factor in determining teachers' decisions about what to include in the program. Sharples contended that these demands may have deterred teachers from attempting any innovative instructional methods. He further contended that teachers would be more likely to select as goals those for which performance objectives were available.

A study by the New York Department of Education (1976) also indicated that the emphasis upon accountability may well have an impact upon the process of program planning. This study reported that this movement may have resulted in demands for earlier introduction of formal reading and greater dependency upon teacher proof, programmed materials.

Hymes (1974) supported the need for the kindergarten teacher to be accountable for responsible decisions in terms of program input. He believed that the danger in regard to an emphasis upon accountability was that it tended to focus upon the few areas where objective tests were available. He spoke in agreement with the New York Department of Education when he wrote:

This coincides with the ever-present anxiety of parents over reading. The result is that reading and reading readiness take over the whole show. Many kindergartens measure the effectiveness of their total program by children's scores on reading readiness tests (p. 117).

The speculation that various demographic factors in the classroom had an impact on program-related decisions was strengthened by Shapiro (1975). She found that important relationships existed between child behavior, as well as teacher behavior, and the class size, the child-teacher ratio, and the amount of classroom space. She pointed out that the ideal class size was between 16 and 20 children with inherent problems for teachers and children if class size fell at either end of the spectrum. She found that a ratio of eight children per adult in the classroom provided for a greater number of contacts between children and adults and between children and children than did ratios either higher or lower. Shapiro further reported that classroom space was of considerable importance in the determination of

classroom activities. Her conclusion was that the highest quality programs were conducted in classrooms which consisted of between 30 and 50 square feet of floor space per child.

Decision-Making Satisfaction of Teachers

Alutto and Belasco (1973) investigated the degree to which teachers were involved in the process of decision-making in relation to the desired amount of participation in the process. Their findings indicated that not all teachers wanted to make decisions regarding classroom practices. They found that teachers who were classified as "decisionally saturated" were likely to be older females who were teaching in elementary schools. Those who were classified as "decisionally deprived" were younger males teaching at the secondary level.

Findings of a similar study by Best (1975) showed that more than 50 percent of the subjects in the sample were satisfied with the degree to which they participated in each of the 12 decision-making situations. The study showed that few teachers were more involved in decision making than they wanted to be, while many more wanted greater involvement. An example of this was in the category labeled "Instructional Methods." Of the 183 subjects responding to the instrument, two indicated that they would like less involvement, and 103 indicated decision-making satisfaction.

Simonson, Poncelow, and McClure (1976) found that administrators and teachers did not agree upon the subject of who should make the decisions. This study indicated that administrators were more in favor of decentralization of decision making than were teachers. The

findings of this study showed that administrators felt more knowledgeable about making decisions than did teachers. The study further showed that teachers in the middle range as far as experience was concerned felt more knowledgeable than did younger or older teachers.

Implications for Teacher Education

Lindsey (1962) reported that:

Thus, in the end, the teacher makes the crucial decisions. The quality of the teaching-learning process depends in the last analysis on whether the decisions are made with professional competence by a person shouldering a professional responsibility or whether they are made by an employee following orders, deliberately not becoming involved as an agent responsible for using his own intelligence in the situation (p. 39).

She further stated that there may have been validity in the claim that many teachers were unable to effectively make decisions. She indicated that if this is so, it should serve as a challenge to pre-service and in-service education. The task of teacher education, according to Lindsey, should be to decide what roles we want teachers to assume and to be sure teachers are selected, prepared, and guided in their activities in such a way that they might continuously increase their abilities to make decisions.

Bowles (1973) indicated that decision making was a factor of such importance that it should rank first among the priorities for skill development in teacher training programs. He proposed a teaching model comprised of seven decision points. These were: (1) gathering data, (2) selection of appropriate information, (3) dispersing information, (4) evaluating the effect of the information gathered, (5) modifying instruction, (6) maintaining a learning climate, and

(7) controlling student behavior. Bowles maintained that the task of teacher training should be to assist students in the process of making appropriate decisions at each of these seven points.

A second author who suggested that teacher preparation should include training in rational decision making was Goodlad (1962). He identified four components which a program should include. These were: (1) identification of significant educational decisions and decision-making processes, (2) identification of data sources appropriate to understanding the nature of these decisions, (3) identification of the roles demanded of the teacher in the understanding and effecting of educational decisions, and (4) development in the teachers of the behaviors deemed essential to the fulfillment of these roles.

Several authors emphasized the importance of educational ideologies in making decisions regarding the program to be provided for children (Kohlberg and Mayer, 1972; Spodek, 1975; and Katz, 1977). Kohlberg and Mayer identified an ideology as a "fairly systematic combination of a theory about psychological and social fact with a set of value principles and social fact with a set of value principles" (p. 463).

Feeney, Phelps, and Stanfield (1976) were critical of teacher education programs in that such programs served basically to espouse the views of the educator responsible for the training. This was in contrast to giving the teachers the tools necessary to develop their own style of teaching based upon their own beliefs. As a result, according to these authors, teachers tended to jump from system to system without examining whether the various actions were consistent with one another or with established goals.

These authors maintained that the focus of decision-making training in teacher education programs should be upon helping prospective teachers identify personal value systems. They indicated that when teachers were clear in regard to their personal values and goals, decisions were made to implement these goals in the classrooms. Until that time, according to these authors, it was not uncommon to find that what teachers did in the classroom was in actual contradiction to stated goals.

Summary

This review represented an effort to further the understanding of the role of the kindergarten teacher as a decision-maker. Various authors' conceptions of the decisions which are critical to the educational process were identified in an attempt to emphasize the importance of the total decision-making process.

The decision-making process itself was examined from several standpoints. Theories, models, and conceptual frameworks which may have applicability were reviewed. These materials were drawn from a variety of disciplines and were reviewed in relation to their relevancy to the teacher as a decision-maker.

A second aspect of the decision-making process which was explored was that of rational decision making. This subject was investigated in relation to the meaning of the term, characteristics of rational decisions, and where and how decisions were most rationally made.

A third aspect of the process was decision-making power. The role of the administrator in relation to that of the teacher was

examined as a means of furthering understanding of the overall power structure within the school system.

Decision-making dissonance was the fourth aspect of the decision-making process which was reviewed. This material focused upon the results of the decision-making process when the final decision was inconsistent with what the individual knew and believed.

The significance of the kindergarten teacher's role as a decision-maker was pointed out. Several studies included in the review indicated that decisions which teachers made which were manifested in teacher behaviors or in the selection of certain classroom procedures were critical to the educational development of children.

Several factors were identified which could be assumed to have an impact on the decisions which teachers made. These factors were: desires and expectations of parents, administrators, and other teachers; demands for accountability; class size; teacher-pupil ratio; and amount of space in the classroom.

The degree to which teachers were satisfied with the number and type of decisions which they had an opportunity to make was investigated. It was pointed out by some investigators that while some teachers were satisfied, many would like to make more decisions regarding the program which they provided.

This review emphasized the need for decision-making training as a component of teacher education programs. A summary of the literature implicated that there should be three aspects of this training. These were: (1) training in skills included in the decision-making

process; (2) development of an accurate theoretical base in regard to human development and learning; and (3) identification and understanding of a personal value system.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter includes a review of the methods used in planning the study, selecting the sample, collecting the data, and analyzing the results. Specifically, the following topics are covered: (1) Type of Research; (2) Selection of the Population and Sample; (3) Description of the Population and Sample; (4) Methods of Data Collection; and (5) Analysis of Data.

Type of Research

This study was undertaken in order to gain insights into the dynamics of the decision-making behavior of public school kindergarten teachers. In order to meet the objectives of the study, a decision was made to conduct the study using the techniques of survey research.

Kerlinger (1964) indicated that survey research is appropriate for a study of this type. He stated that survey research focuses on people and their beliefs, attitudes, opinions, and motivation in relation to behavior. He further stated that survey research may be used to discover the relative incidence, distribution, and interrelations of social and psychological variables among large populations of people by studying small samples selected from the population.

Selection of the Population and Sample

The population upon which this study was based consisted of all kindergarten teachers in the state of New Mexico who were teaching in a public school program during the 1977-1978 school year. A list of these teachers was secured from the office of Teacher Education and Certification in the New Mexico State Department of Education. This list consisted of a total of 509 teachers.

The role of kindergarten teacher is a relatively new role in the state of New Mexico, as kindergartens in that state are somewhat recent components of the public school system. Although there have been some experimental and some federally funded programs for a number of years, it was only in 1973 that the state legislature allocated funds in sufficient amounts that all districts might begin implementation of programs. A phase-in schedule was designed which mandated that beginning in school year 1977-1978, school districts provided a kindergarten program for all children who had reached their fifth birthday by September 1 of the year in which they were to be enrolled (New Mexico State Department of Education, 1976).

The invited sample for the study consisted of 217 teachers. This figure was consistent with the "Table for Determining Sample Size from a Given Population" (Krejcie and Morgan, 1967, p. 608). The sample was a stratified random sample based upon the size of the school districts in which the teachers were employed. The number of kindergarten teachers in the district served as the basis for determining size of district (New Mexico State Department of Education,

1978). It was necessary that this procedure be followed in order that representation would be assured from school districts of all sizes. This method of selection was more critical in view of the wide variation of size of school districts in the state.

Table I shows a breakdown of school district size as indicated by the number of kindergarten teachers employed by the district.

TABLE I
NUMBER OF KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS AS AN
INDICATOR OF SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE

Size of District	Number of Districts in Range	Teachers in Range	
		Number	Percentage
1 teacher	40	40	8
2-10 teachers	37	156	30
11-19 teachers	6	87	17
Over 20 teachers	5	226	45
Total	88	509	100

Table II shows the method by which the population was stratified and the number of subjects which were drawn from each strata.

Names of the teachers on the list secured from the Department of Education, were divided into groups according to the appropriate stratum. Each teacher was assigned a number, and numbers of subjects were

randomly drawn from each stratum until the desired number of subjects was acquired.

TABLE II
SELECTION OF THE INVITED SAMPLE

Size of District	Percentage of Teachers in Size Range	Teachers in Sample	
		Number	Percentage
1 teacher	8	17	8
2-10 teachers	30	65	30
11-19 teachers	17	37	17
Over 20 teachers	45	98	45
Total	100	217	100

Questionnaires were mailed to 217 teachers. Eight were returned as being undeliverable. Of the 209 questionnaires which were delivered, 126 (62 percent) were returned. Two of the returned questionnaires were not usable as they were completed by program specialists (music and physical education) rather than by classroom teachers. The percentage of questionnaires in each strata which was returned varied only slightly from the percentages which were represented in the original mail-out. This information is summarized in Table III.

TABLE III
SUBJECTS BY STRATA IN DATA PRODUCING SAMPLE
AS COMPARED TO INVITED SAMPLE

Size of District	Teachers in Invited Sample		Teachers in Data Producing Sample	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
1 teacher	17	8	10	8
2-10 teachers	65	30	33	27
11-19 teachers	37	17	25	21
Over 20 teachers	98	45	54	44
Total	217	100	124	100

Data Collection

Three instruments designed by the investigator were used to collect the necessary data. A Teacher Information Questionnaire (TIQ) was used to collect data regarding the training and experiential backgrounds of the teachers as well as information about the programs in which they were currently employed (Appendix A). The second instrument was the Decision Making Input Survey (DMIS). This survey was used to assess the amount of power which the teachers had in making program-related decisions (Appendix B). The third instrument was the Inventory for Assessing Impact on Decisions (IAID) (Appendix C). This instrument was used to measure the amount of impact which selected factors have upon the decision-making process of the teachers as well as the amount of dissonance which the teachers experience in regard

to the differences between how they think that decisions should be made and how they actually are made.

The instruments were mailed to the subjects in the invited sample with a letter explaining the study and requesting their cooperation (Appendix D). Included with the letter and the instruments was a stamped return envelope.

Development of the Instruments

Teacher Information Questionnaire. This questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section (Part I) was composed of eight questions regarding the teachers' training and experiential backgrounds. The second section (Part II) derived information in regard to the program in which the teacher was currently employed. The questions were closed ended; however, space was allotted which would allow respondents to complete the question in the event that no adequate response was given.

Part I of this instrument was piloted with 38 Early Childhood Education teachers enrolled in a summer workshop. The purpose of the pilot testing was to assure clarity of questioning. Following the pilot test, minor changes were made in Part I to facilitate accurate interpretation of the questions. Part II was added following the pilot test. This section was reviewed by several teacher educators in the Department of Family Relations and Child Development at Oklahoma State University in order to judge the validity of the instrument.

Decision-Making Input Survey. The purpose of this instrument was to obtain a measure of the amount of power which the teacher had

in making decisions which pertained to the program which he/she provided for children. The instrument consisted of 17 items, each reflecting a program related decision. Items included in the survey were selected on the basis of the current literature, consultation with professionals in the area of early childhood education, and the experiences of the investigator. Participants responded to each item on the basis of the amount of input which they had in making the specified decision.

Inventory for Assessing Impact on Decisions. This instrument consisted of a list of 20 items which have potential for exerting varying degrees of impact upon the program-related decisions made by kindergarten teachers. Items were selected on the basis of current literature reviewed, recommendations from early childhood educators, and field experiences of the investigator.

This instrument was also piloted with the 38 participants in the summer workshop. Mean scores were calculated on the responses to the 20 items. Scores ranged from 2.29 to 4.60 when measured on a Likert type scale, with 5 indicating the greatest degree of impact and 1 indicating no impact. The mean scores indicated that the participants felt that each item had at least a small amount of impact on their decision-making processes.

The format of the instrument was modified following the pilot test. The original instrument allowed the subjects to respond to the items only on the basis of the impact which they felt that the item actually had upon their program-related decisions. The modified instrument requested that subjects also respond on the basis of the

impact which they felt the item should have on decisions. The second set of responses was included in an effort to secure more accurate answers from participants. It was felt that in cases where the respondents believed that a difference existed between the situation as it should be and the situation as it actually was, they would be more likely to answer honestly if given the opportunity to show that they recognized that the difference existed.

This modification in the instrument also provided for a measure of decision-making dissonance. This measure was obtained by comparing the two sets of responses. This was consistent with Festinger's (1957, p. 12) explanation of the concept of decision-making dissonance.

Analysis of Data

Responses to the items on the three instruments were coded and the data was keypunched onto computer cards.* The Statistical Analysis System (Barr, Goodnight, Sall, and Helwig, 1976) was used for analysis of the data. The probability of .05 was accepted as the criterion for significance.

Frequency tables were prepared in order that characteristics of the sample might be reported. Data regarding training and experiential backgrounds of the teachers, characteristics of the programs in

*Copies of coding sheets containing all raw data may be secured by writing to:

Department of Family Relations
& Child Development
Home Economics West
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74074

which the teachers were employed, and type of administrative program supervision available to the teachers were summarized through these tables.

Chi-square was used to test for significant differences in the degree of decision-making satisfaction which the teachers expressed when this was compared according to the variables identified in the preceding paragraph. In this, as well as all analysis involving program supervision, only the administrative personnel closest to the teachers in the hierarchial structure were considered.

One-way analysis of variance was used to test for significance of differences of means in all analyses of items where there were more than two categories of response available. Where only two categories were available, t tests were used. Where t tests were computed, F values were calculated in order to check for equality of the variances of the two populations. In those cases where the variances of the two populations were found to be unequal, Satterthwaites Approximation for populations of unequal variance was utilized to compute the t value.

Correlation coefficients were computed in order to determine if there were significant relationships between the power scores and dissonance scores of the teachers. Power was compared both to total dissonance and to dissonance relating to the individual factors on the instrument.

In some cases, there was a need to determine not only whether or not significant differences existed in the means, but where the differences were. In such cases, Duncan's Multiple Range Test was used.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY

The primary purpose of this study was to gain insights into the decision-making behavior of kindergarten teachers. This chapter presents an analysis of the data collected on three instruments designed by the investigator. Questionnaires deemed as usable were returned by 124 teachers. Of the 124 teachers who returned the questionnaires, 12 did not complete the Inventory for Assessing Impact on Decisions. Consequently, data in regard to dissonance or impact of various factors on decisions is based upon 112 responses rather than 124.

Description of the Sample

A detailed description of the 124 subjects participating in the study is shown in Table IV. All of the teachers included in the study were female. A total of 70 percent of the teachers was 39 years of age or younger. The majority of subjects (73 percent) have been employed as a teacher for nine years or less. All but five percent reported having more than a Bachelor's Degree, while the number of respondents who reported having a Master's Degree or more totaled 35 percent. Only one of the subjects indicated that her most recent college credit course was completed prior to 1975.

Coursework in the area of Early Childhood Education was most often completed in departments of Elementary Education (84 percent).

This finding was also reflected in the fact that 81 percent of the undergraduate majors were in this area. At the graduate level, 17 percent of the total sample earned degrees in Elementary Education, while 14 percent have degrees in other areas. The data showed that 81 percent of the sample had completed three or more credit courses in the area of Human Growth and Development, while 85 percent had completed three or more courses in Early Childhood Methods and/or Materials.

TABLE IV
TRAINING AND EXPERIENTIAL BACKGROUNDS
OF SUBJECTS
(N=124)

Variable	Classification	Number	Percentage
Length of employment as teacher	20 years or more	14	12
	15-19 years	10	8
	10-14 years	21	17
	5-9 years	40	32
	3-4 years	20	16
	Less than 3 years	19	15
Age	60 or over	3	2
	50-59	11	9
	40-49	24	19
	30-39	43	35
	20-29	43	35
Highest college degree	Masters' with additional hours	32	26
	Masters' Degree	11	9
	Bachelors' with additional hours	76	61
	Bachelors' Degree	5	4

TABLE IV (Continued)

Variable	Classification	Number	Percentage
College Major (Undergraduate)	Elementary Educa- tion	100	81
	Early Childhood Education	12	10
	Home Economics	2	1
	Other	10	8
College Major (Graduate)	No graduate degree	82	66
	Elementary Educa- tion	21	17
	Family Relations & Child Development	1	1
	Early Childhood Edu- cation	16	13
	Other	4	3
Department in which most coursework in Early Childhood Edu- cation was done	Elementary Educa- tion	104	84
	Home Economics	11	9
	Other	9	7
Number of courses in Human Growth and De- velopment	0 courses	0	0
	1 course	3	2
	2 courses	21	17
	3 or more courses	100	81
Number of courses in Early Childhood Meth- ods and/or Materials	0 courses	1	1
	1 course	5	4
	2 courses	13	10
	3 or more courses	105	85

A description of the programs in which the teachers were employed is shown in Table V. Most of the teachers (68 percent) teach a morning and an afternoon session, each of two and one-half to three hours duration. Much smaller percentages of the subjects taught in all day programs (28 percent), or taught only a morning session (4 percent). In each group, the most frequent response in relation to the number of children per session was 21 to 25.

TABLE V
CHARACTERISTICS OF PROGRAMS
(N=124)

Variable	Classification	Number	Percentage
Length of session	5-6 hours	27	22
	3-5 hours	7	6
	2½-3 hours	90	72
Number of children per session (A.M.)	15 or less	3	2
	16-20	27	22
	21-25	53	43
	26 or more	9	7
	No A.M. session	32	26
Number of children per session (P.M.)	15 or less	9	7
	16-20	26	21
	21-25	44	36
	26 or more	8	6
	No P.M. session	37	30
Number of children per session (all day)	15 or less	8	7
	16-20	5	4
	21-25	16	13
	26 or more	3	2
	No all day session	92	74
Types of adult assistance available in classroom*	Full time paid aide	84	68
	Part time paid aide	14	11
	Regularly scheduled parent volunteers	42	34
	Parent volunteers only as needed	50	40
	Student help	38	31
	No adult help	5	4
	Other	6	4
Program supervision available	Elementary principal	49	40
	Elementary curriculum specialist	30	24
	Kindergarten special- ist	40	32
	Other	5	4

*Items in regard to the types of adult assistance available total more than 100 percent due to the fact that subjects marked all applicable responses and some teachers utilize more than one type of adult assistance.

Adult assistance in the form of a full time, paid aide was available to 68 percent of the teachers. A total of 74 percent indicated that parent volunteers are involved in the program to some extent. Student help, ranging from that provided by fourth grade children to that provided by college practicum students, was utilized by 31 percent of the teachers. Only four percent reported that they had no adult assistance in the classroom.

Decision-Making Behavior of Teachers

Four measures of decision-making behavior were examined. Findings in relation to each measure will be discussed below.

Satisfaction. Subjects were asked to respond to a question designed to elicit their perceptions in regard to satisfaction with the number and type of decisions which they had the opportunity to make. The largest majority, 95 teachers (76 percent), indicated that they were generally satisfied in this respect. The remainder of the subjects, 29 teachers (24 percent), responded by saying that they would like to make more decisions. Though the choice was available, no subject expressed a desire to make fewer decisions.

Power. Power scores were calculated for each of the 124 subjects who responded to the Decision-Making Input Survey. The possible range of scores, from low to high, was from 0 to 68. The actual range of scores was from 24 to 59, with the mean power score being 43.23.

Mean scores were calculated for each of the 17 items on the survey in an effort to determine those decisions in which the teachers had the greatest power. Analysis of variance was used to determine

whether there were significant differences among the means of the 17 items, $F(139,1968) = 15.04$, $p < .0001$. This was followed by Duncan's Multiple Range Test, which was utilized in order to determine where the differences were. Four groups were identified as having means which were significantly different from each other at the .05 level. This information is summarized in Table VI.

TABLE VI
GROUPS OF ITEMS ON DMIS WITH MEAN SCORES
DIFFERING SIGNIFICANTLY FROM OTHER
GROUPS AS INDICATED BY DUNCAN'S
MULTIPLE RANGE TEST

Factor	Mean Score
Group I (highest amount of input)	
Arranging the classroom	3.88
Planning the daily schedule	3.85
Group II (high amount of input)	
Scheduling field trips	3.51
Determining short term objectives	3.48
Group III (moderate amount of input)	
Purchasing supplies	2.92
Determining procedures for evaluation other than standardized testing	2.86
Determining broad, long range program goals	2.85
Selecting procedures for reporting to parents	2.65
Passing or retaining children	2.53
Replacing or adding classroom equipment	2.38
Selecting a basal program	2.33
Setting policies, i.e., attendance, disci- pline, retention, etc.	2.25
Determining use(s) to be made of scores from standardized tests	2.06

TABLE VI (Continued)

Factor	Mean Score
Group IV (low amount of input)	
Procedures for placement of children in morning or afternoon session	1.52
Determining whether or not to administer standardized tests	1.44
Selecting paid, paraprofessional aides	1.41
Selecting instruments for standardized testing	1.31

Dissonance. A dissonance score was computed for each subject completing the Inventory for Assessing Impact on Decisions (N=112). This score represented a total of the differences between the subjects' responses to the degree of impact which they felt the factors should have on decisions and the degree of impact which they felt that the factors actually had on decisions. Possible range of dissonance scores was from 0 to 80. The actual range was from 1 to 53, with the mean dissonance score being 14.37.

Dissonance scores on individual items ranged from 0 to 4. Mean scores were calculated for each item. Analysis of variance showed that there were differences among these means which were significant, $F(130,2109) = 5.75$, $p < .0001$. Duncan's Multiple Range Test was used to determine where the differences were. The results showed that two items, pupil/teacher ratio and coordination with specialists, had means which were significantly different ($p < .05$) from the remainder of the items.

In order to determine on which items there were significant differences between teachers' perceptions regarding how decisions should be made and perceptions of how they are actually made, t tests were calculated. Differences between these perceptions which were significant at the .05 level or beyond were found in 13 of the 20 items (65 percent). These 13 items, presented in descending rank order according to mean differences, are presented in Table VII.

TABLE VII
FACTORS WITH SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN
TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF IMPACT FACTOR
SHOULD HAVE ON DECISIONS AND IMPACT
IT ACTUALLY HAS

Factor	Mean	Standard Deviation	<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
Pupil/teacher ratio	0.99	1.56	6.74	.0001
Coordination with specialists	0.88	1.47	6.29	.0001
Needs of children based on knowledge of child development	0.62	0.88	7.39	.0001
Length of class day	0.51	1.29	4.16	.0001
Availability of adult assistance	0.47	1.22	4.12	.0001
Availability of materials	0.42	1.10	4.02	.0001
Space available for activities	0.42	1.31	3.40	.001
Cultural and/or economic backgrounds	0.41	0.82	5.28	.0001
Funding provided for program	0.32	1.35	2.52	.01

TABLE VII (Continued)

Factor	Mean	Standard Deviation	<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
Desires and expectations of parents	0.29	1.09	2.87	.01
Location of classroom in relation to rest of school	0.29	1.18	2.65	.01
Lack of available materials	0.24	1.14	2.24	.05
Personally formulated goals and objectives	0.21	0.75	3.01	.01

In each of the cases where the dissonance score represented a significant difference between the "should have impact" and the "actually has impact" scores, subjects indicated that the item should have a greater impact than it actually did have. Though the differences were not significant at the .05 level, teachers identified four factors which they felt had more impact than they should have. These items were: (1) desires and expectations of other teachers; (2) demands for accountability; (3) desires and expectations of administrators; and (4) preparing children for testing.

Factors Impacting on Decisions. Data in regard to the factors which had an impact on the decisions which teachers make were secured from the Inventory for Assessing Impact on Decisions. Analysis of variance was used to determine if significant differences existed among the means of the 20 items, $F(130,2109) = 6.23$, $p < .0001$. Duncan's Multiple Range Test was computed in order to determine where

the means differed significantly from each other. Three groups were identified as having means which were different from each other at the .05 level of significance. These data are shown in Table VIII.

TABLE VIII
GROUPS OF FACTORS IMPACTING ON DECISIONS WITH
MEAN SCORES DIFFERING SIGNIFICANTLY FROM
OTHER GROUPS AS INDICATED BY DUNCAN'S
MULTIPLE RANGE TEST

Factor	Mean Score
Group I (High Impact)	
Needs of children based on knowledge of child development	4.18
Personally formulated goals and objectives	4.13
Group II (Moderate Impact)	
Space available for activities	3.86
Cultural and economic backgrounds of children	3.65
Availability of materials	3.57
Guidelines from local school administration	3.51
Guidelines from State Department of Education	3.48
Desires and expectations of administrators	3.39
Funding available for program	3.39
Demands for accountability	3.31
Pupil/teacher ratio	3.28
Availability of adult assistance	3.28
Length of class day	3.24
Desires and expectations of parents	3.21
Lack of materials	3.17
Group III (Low Impact)	
Desires and expectations of other teachers	2.89
Teachers' Guides with commercially prepared materials	2.79
Location of classroom in relation to rest of school	2.71
Coordination with specialists	2.52
Preparing children for testing	2.48

Examination of Hypotheses

Six hypotheses were examined in an effort to identify significant differences among the identified variables. Using the statistical procedures identified in the previous chapter, the appropriate computations were completed. The results of these calculations are discussed in the following pages.

Hypothesis I: There will be no significant differences in the decision-making behavior of teachers (satisfaction, power, dissonance, and factors impacting on decisions) when compared according to the training and experiential backgrounds of the teachers.

Satisfaction by Training and Experience

Chi-square was used to test for significant differences between satisfaction and variables related to the teachers' training and experiential backgrounds. No significant differences at the .05 level were found to exist.

Power by Training and Experience

Differences in decision-making power compared according to the training and experiential backgrounds of the teachers were examined through the use of t tests (two classes of response) or one way analysis of variance (more than two classes of response). No significant differences were found to exist.

Dissonance by Training and Experience

The t test and one way analysis of variance were also used to determine if there were significant differences in decision-making

dissonance when compared according to the teachers' training and experiential backgrounds. A significant difference was found to exist in mean dissonance scores when compared to the number of courses which the teachers had completed in human growth and development, $t(56.8) = 3.03$, $p < .01$. Mean dissonance score for teachers who had completed three or more courses was 15.31. For those who had completed less than three courses, the mean score was 10.50.

No other significant differences were found to exist.

Factors Impacting on Decisions by Training and Experience

One way analysis of variance and t tests were used to determine if differences at the .05 level of significance existed when the factors which impact on decisions were compared according to nine variables related to the training and experiential backgrounds of the teachers. A number of differences was found to exist.

A difference was found when the degree of impact which Teachers' Guides had upon the teachers' decisions was compared according to the length of time which the subjects had been employed as teachers $F(5,106) = 2.28$, $p < .05$. There were no other significant differences when the 20 factors were compared according to the length of experience of the subjects.

Significant differences were found when the degree of impact of six factors was compared according to the age of the teacher. These data are summarized in Table IX.

TABLE IX
SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN DEGREE OF IMPACT
OF FACTORS WHEN COMPARED ACCORDING TO
AGE OF TEACHER

Factor	F Value	p
Availability of materials	2.68	.05
Teachers' Guides with commercially prepared materials	3.05	.05
Demands for accountability	2.80	.05
Lack of materials	3.19	.05
Desires and expectations of administrators	3.71	.01
Cultural and economic backgrounds of children	3.09	.05

df = 3,108

A Duncan's Multiple Range Test revealed that teachers who were 40-49 years of age had the highest mean impact score for all but one of the above items. This would indicate that teachers in this age group were more likely than the remainder of the teachers to base decisions on these factors. The exception was that teachers 50-59 years of age indicated the highest mean impact of Teachers' Guides. The impact of Teachers' Guides was found to be in an exact inverse order when viewed in relation to the age of the teacher.

No differences were found when the factors which impact on decisions were examined in relation to the highest degree which the teacher had earned. Two differences were found when the date the teacher had taken the last credit course was considered. The data showed that teachers who had taken a course for credit in 1978 were

more likely to strongly consider desires and expectations of parents $t(68.7) = 2.00$, $p < .05$, and cultural and economic backgrounds of children, $t(79.8) = 2.13$, $p < .05$, than were teachers whose most recent course had been prior to this date.

Differences in factors impacting on decisions as reported by teachers with different undergraduate and graduate majors were also investigated. Elementary education was the major classification in this analysis. All other areas were grouped and classified as "other." At the undergraduate level, several significant differences were found when the factors were compared according to the subject's major area. These findings are reported in Table X. In each case, the mean for those teachers with degrees in Elementary Education was found to be higher than for those in the group classified as "other."

TABLE X
SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN DEGREE OF IMPACT
OF FACTORS WHEN COMPARED ACCORDING TO
UNDERGRADUATE MAJOR OF SUBJECTS

Factor	Degrees of Freedom	<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
Teachers' Guides with commercially prepared materials	44.1	2.29	.05
Desires and expectations of administrators	33.7	2.28	.05
Preparing children for testing	34.3	1.97	.05
Location of classroom in relation to rest of school	35.6	2.71	.01
Coordination with specialists	39.6	2.07	.05

At the graduate level, significant differences were found when three of the 20 factors were compared according to the major area. These were: (1) demands for accountability, $t(33) = 3.79$, $p < .001$; (2) desires and expectations of administrators, $t(27.6) = 2.30$, $p < .05$; and (3) lack of materials, $t(32.9) = 2.85$, $p < .01$. Examination of the means showed that subjects with graduate majors in Elementary Education were more likely to consider that these factors had a high impact on their decisions.

Another variable which was examined was the department in which most of the coursework in Early Childhood Education was completed. Significant differences found are reported in Table XI. The data indicated that teachers trained in Elementary Education Departments were more likely to consider that demands for accountability had a high impact on their decisions. Teachers who received their coursework in other departments were more likely to view the remainder of the factors as having high impact on decisions.

The number of courses which the teachers had completed in Human Growth and Development and in Early Childhood Methods and/or Materials was examined in relation to the factors impacting on decisions. It was found that teachers who had two or fewer courses in Human Development were more likely than those completing three or more courses to consider funding available for the program, $t(45.4) = 2.36$, $p < .05$, as having high impact on decisions. Teachers who indicated that they had completed three or more courses in Early Childhood Methods and/or Materials indicated a higher impact than did other teachers of demands and expectations of parents, $t(26.6) = 2.19$, $p < .05$, and of needs of children based on knowledge of child development, $t(26.1) = 2.48$, $p < .05$.

TABLE XI
SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN DEGREE OF IMPACT
OF FACTORS ACCORDING TO DEPARTMENT IN
WHICH SUBJECT COMPLETED EARLY CHILD-
HOOD COURSEWORK

Factor	Degrees of Freedom	<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
Demands for accountability	21.3	2.02	.05
Availability of adult assistance	27.4	2.38	.05
Location of classroom in relation to rest of school	24.7	2.33	.05
Coordination with specialists	29.7	3.47	.001
Preparing children for testing	22.6	2.05	.05

Hypothesis II: There will be no significant differences in the decision-making behavior of the teachers (satisfaction, power, dissonance, and factors impacting on decisions) when compared according to specified characteristics of the programs in which the teachers are employed.

Satisfaction by Program Characteristics

Chi-square was used to test for significant differences in the degree of decision-making satisfaction expressed by the teachers when compared according to length of the kindergarten session and number of children in the classroom. No differences at the .05 level were found to exist.

Power by Program Characteristics

A series of t tests was computed to determine if there were

significant differences in the decision-making power which the teachers held when compared according to program length and number of children per session. No significant differences were found in power scores when compared according to number of children. There was a significant difference when power scores were compared according to program length, $t(122) = 2.74$, $p < .01$. The mean power score of teachers teaching in all day programs was 40.59, while teachers teaching in half day programs had a mean power score of 44.23.

Dissonance by Program Characteristics

Differences in dissonance scores when compared according to program characteristics were examined through the use of t tests. No differences significant at the .05 level were found to exist.

Factors Impacting on Decisions by Program Characteristics

A series of t tests was used to identify differences which existed in the factors identified by teachers as having the greatest impact on decisions when compared according to program length and number of children per session. It was found that no differences significant at the .05 level existed.

Hypothesis III. There will be no significant differences in the decision-making behavior of the teachers (satisfaction, power, dissonance, and factors impacting on decisions) when compared according to the type of program supervision available.

Satisfaction by Program Supervision

A chi-square test was calculated in order to determine if there

were significant differences in the degree of decision-making satisfaction which teachers expressed when compared according to the type of program supervision which was available to them. A difference significant at the .05 level was not found to exist.

Power by Program Supervision

Analysis of variance was used to determine if there were significant differences in the amount of decision-making power which the teachers held when compared according to the type of program supervision available to them. A significant difference was not found.

Dissonance by Program Supervision

Analysis of variance was used to test for significant differences in the dissonance scores of teachers when compared according to the type of program supervision available to them. The data showed that the differences were not significant.

Factors Impacting on Decisions by Program Supervision

Examination of the data which compared the factors impacting on decisions according to type of program supervision was completed by way of analysis of variance. Significant differences were found in relation to the impact of two factors. These were: Teachers' Guides with commercially prepared materials, $F(2,105) = 3.34$, $p < .05$, and coordination with specialists, $F(2,105) = 5.04$, $p < .01$.

The data indicated that Teachers' Guides most often had a high impact on the decisions made by teachers whose program supervision

came mainly from an Elementary Curriculum Specialist. Teachers who worked under the direction of a kindergarten specialist were least likely to base decisions on such documents.

Coordination with program specialists was selected most often as a high impact item by those teachers who had access to a kindergarten specialist. The lowest mean impact of this factor was indicated by those teachers who worked most directly under the supervision of an elementary principal.

Hypothesis IV: There will be no significant differences in the teachers' decision-making dissonance scores when compared according to their expressed degrees of decision-making satisfaction.

A t test was computed in order to determine if there was a significant difference in the mean dissonance scores of the teachers when compared according to their decision-making satisfaction. These data are summarized in Table XII.

TABLE XII
MEAN DISSONANCE SCORES COMPARED ACCORDING
TO EXPRESSED DEGREE OF SATISFACTION

Response	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum Score	Maximum Score
Generally satisfied	86	12.84	7.96	1	39
Would like to make more decisions	26	19.42	11.78	3	53
N=112, <u>t</u> (110) = 3.28, $p < .001$.					

The above data indicated that those teachers who would like to make more decisions indicated a significantly higher amount of dissonance between how they think decisions should be made and how they were actually made.

Hypothesis V: There will be no significant difference in the amount of decision-making power which the teachers hold when compared according to their expressed degree of decision-making satisfaction.

A t test was computed in order to determine if there was a significant difference in the mean power scores of the teachers when compared according to their expressed degree of decision-making satisfaction. A summary of the data in regard to this hypothesis is shown in Table XIII.

TABLE XIII
MEAN POWER SCORES COMPARED ACCORDING TO
EXPRESSED DEGREE OF SATISFACTION

Response	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum Score	Maximum Score
Generally satisfied	95	44.35	6.23	31	59
Would like to make more decisions	29	39.59	7.36	24	53
N=124, $t_{(41)} = 3.16$, $p < .05$.					

The above analysis indicated that those teachers who were generally satisfied with the number and type of decisions which they were allowed to make were also those teachers whose mean power scores were highest. This difference was found to be significant at beyond the .05 level.

Hypothesis VI: There will be no significant relationship between the amount of decision-making power which the teachers hold and their decision-making dissonance scores.

A correlation coefficient was computed in order to test for the significance of the relationship between power and dissonance. A negative correlation coefficient of $-.22$ was found to exist. With an N of 112, this coefficient was found to be significant at beyond the .05 level. An item by item analysis was also completed. Negative relationships significant at the .05 level or beyond were also found to exist between power and dissonance relating to: (1) needs of children based on knowledge of child development ($r = -.18$, $p < .05$); (2) personally formulated goals and objectives ($r = -.27$, $p < .001$); and (3) cultural and economic backgrounds of children ($r = -.20$, $p < .001$). Though significant relationships were found to exist, the low r values place limitations on the predictive power of these findings.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine the behaviors of public school kindergarten teachers in regard to the making of program-related decisions. This chapter includes conclusions drawn from the study, recommendations for further research and for preparation of teachers and administrators, and a discussion of the findings.

Conclusions

Four aspects of decision-making behavior of kindergarten teachers were examined in the study. When the data were analyzed, a number of conclusions were formulated. These are stated in the following paragraphs.

Most teachers (76 percent) were generally satisfied with the number and type of decisions which they were allowed to make. No teachers wished to make fewer decisions.

Teachers had a significantly greater amount of decision-making power in decisions relating to arranging the classroom, planning the daily schedule, determining short term objectives, and planning field trips than they had in 13 other program-related decisions. The least amount of power was shown to be in decisions relating to standardized testing and selecting paid aides.

The dissonance which teachers felt existed between the impact a factor should have upon decisions and the impact it actually had was greatest in regard to pupil/teacher ratio and coordination with specialists (music, art, physical education). In each case, teachers thought the factor should have greater impact than it did.

Teachers indicated that needs of children based upon knowledge of child development and personally formulated goals and objectives had the greatest amounts of impact upon their program-related decisions.

In the preparation of the study, six hypotheses were formulated. Following are the conclusions in regard to the hypotheses:

Hypothesis I: There will be no significant differences in the decision-making behavior of teachers (satisfaction, power, dissonance, and factors impacting on decisions) when compared according to the training and experiential backgrounds of the teachers.

There were no significant differences in the level of satisfaction expressed by teachers or in the power scores of teachers when compared according to each of the nine training and experiential variables. There were no significant differences in the dissonance scores when compared to eight of the variables. However, a significant difference did exist when dissonance scores were compared according to the number of courses in human growth and development which the teachers had completed. A number of significant differences were found to exist when the factors impacting on decisions were compared according to the training and experience of the teachers. Therefore, it was possible to accept a portion of Hypothesis I; however, it could not be accepted in totality.

Hypothesis II: There will be no significant differences in the decision-making behavior of teachers (satisfaction, power, dissonance, and factors impacting on decisions) when compared according to specified characteristics of the programs in which the teachers are employed.

Analysis of the data showed no significant differences in the decision-making behavior of teachers when compared to the number of children in the program. No differences were found among satisfaction, dissonance, and factors impacting on decisions when compared according to program length. A significant difference was found to exist between power and program length. On the basis of these findings, Hypothesis II may be only partially accepted.

Hypothesis III: There will be no significant differences in the decision-making behavior of teachers (satisfaction, power, dissonance, and factors impacting on decisions) when compared according to the type of program supervision available.

No significant differences were found to exist when satisfaction, power, and dissonance were compared with type of supervision. Significant differences in relation to two items were found when program supervision was compared according to the factors impacting on decisions. These items were coordination with specialists and Teachers' Guides with commercially prepared materials. Based on these findings, a portion of Hypothesis III was accepted.

Hypothesis IV: There will be no significant differences between the teachers' decision-making dissonance scores when compared according to their expressed degree of decision-making satisfaction.

Analysis of data in relation to this hypothesis showed that significant differences existed. Hypothesis IV was not accepted.

Hypothesis V: There will be no significant difference between the amount of decision-making power which the teachers hold when compared according to their expressed degree of decision-making satisfaction.

A significant difference was found to exist when power was compared according to satisfaction. Therefore, Hypothesis V was not accepted.

Hypothesis VI: There will be no significant relationship between the amount of decision-making power which the teachers hold and their decision-making dissonance scores.

A significant negative relationship was found to exist between these two variables. Hypothesis VI was also not accepted.

Discussion

A total of 124 kindergarten teachers in the state of New Mexico completed questionnaires which provided data for this study. The sample completing the study was a stratified, random sample with the size of the school district providing the basis for stratification.

It was found that all responding teachers were female; that 70 percent were 39 years of age or younger, and that 73 percent had been employed as a teacher for nine years or less. A total of 35 percent of the teachers had a Masters' Degree or more, and all subjects except one stated that the most recent course which they had taken for credit had been taken since 1975.

The recency of coursework and the somewhat high percentage of teachers with advanced degrees undoubtedly has resulted from the fact that kindergartens have been in public schools in New Mexico for a relatively short period of time. Since a kindergarten certificate or a kindergarten endorsement attached to an elementary certificate is

required for kindergarten teaching, teachers who had been certified as elementary teachers were required to take additional courses in order to teach at this level.

Most of the coursework in the area of Early Childhood Education, as well as most of the subjects' undergraduate majors, were in the area of elementary education. At the graduate level, there was only a slightly higher percentage of degrees in Elementary Education than in the combined fields of Early Childhood Education and Family Relations and Child Development. This difference between undergraduate and graduate majors would be expected as no in-state institution offered an undergraduate degree in Early Childhood Education, while such degrees were available at the graduate level.

Most teachers taught two sessions per day of two and one-half to three hours per session. A smaller number of teachers taught a full day session of from five to six hours in length. Most of the all day programs were in small schools or in geographically isolated areas where transportation for a half-day session is nearly prohibitive.

The majority of teachers teach from 21 to 25 children per session. State Department of Education minimum standards required that in order for a program to be approved for funding, the pupil/teacher ratio must not exceed 20 children per teacher unless a full time aide is provided. The data indicated that 68 percent of the program utilize full time paid aides.

Four measures were used to examine the decision-making behavior of the subjects. These were decision-making satisfaction, decision-making power, decision-making dissonance, and factors impacting on

decisions. Following is a discussion of the findings in regard to each measure.

Decision-Making Satisfaction

The majority of the teachers (76 percent) responded by saying that they were generally satisfied with the number and type of decisions which they were allowed to make. The remainder of the teachers stated that they would like to make more decisions. No teacher stated that she was making more program-related decisions than she would like to make.

This finding is consistent with the study by Best (1975) which indicated that more than 50 percent of the teachers in the sample were satisfied with the amount of decision-making activity in which they were involved. It also provides some strength for the findings of the study by Alutto and Belasco (1973), wherein the investigators concluded that not all teachers want to make decisions. The Alutto and Belasco study pointed out that a relationship existed between age and decision-making satisfaction with older teachers being classified as "decisionally saturated." A relationship between age and desire to make decisions was not found in this study.

Decision-Making Power

A power score was computed for each subject. On a scale of from 0 to 68, the mean power score for the 124 subjects was 43.23. Further analysis showed that the highest mean scores were found to be in relation to arrangement of the classroom, planning the daily schedule,

determining short term objectives, and scheduling field trips. This would indicate that, on the average, teachers have the greatest amount of power in decisions relating to the above topics. The least amount of power was shown to be in decisions relating to standardized testing, selection of aides, and placement of children in a morning or afternoon session.

It is to be expected that teachers would indicate only limited input into decisions relating to testing. The State Department of Education mandates a kindergarten testing program with results being sent for analysis to the Division of Evaluation and Assessment. Also, many of the kindergarten programs have federally funded components which require the use of various tests. In such cases, the decision-making power lies not in the local school district, but with another governmental agency.

An examination of the data showed that teachers had greater input into those decisions which Spodek (1972) classified as technical decisions. He stated that technical decisions represented the "translation of policy into classroom activity and to the development of educational experiences that will help achieve goals determined in educational policy" (p. 9). Decisions involving planning the daily schedule, arranging the room, scheduling field trips, and setting short term objectives would fit into this classification.

Spodek defined policy decisions as those relating to the goals and purposes of education. Teachers indicated that they had only a moderate degree of power in relation to the identification of long range, broad program goals.

The third classification of decisions as identified by Spodek was institutional. He stated that these decisions were concerned with the maintenance of school itself. Decisions such as purchasing supplies, placement of children, setting policy, etc. would fit into this group. The data pointed out that teacher input into decisions of this nature is limited.

These data also indicated that teachers had a high level of input into decisions regarding two of the questions identified by Tyler (1950). The top four decisions, in terms of differences in means, relate to the selection of experiences and to the organization of the experiences. However, teacher power in relation to determining what the purpose of the school (program) should be--determining broad overall program goals--and in relation to determining whether the purposes are being met--testing and evaluation--was limited.

The data may also be compared with Goodlad's (1976) conceptual scheme regarding where decisions are made. According to Goodlad, teachers make decisions regarding selection of immediate goals, diagnosis of student learning and accomplishments, grouping of pupils, timing and pacing of learning, remediation of student learning, etc. This study showed that the teachers had a high degree of input into decisions regarding selection of immediate goals, timing and pacing of learning, and utilization of space. However, teacher power in relation to diagnosis of student learning, grouping of pupils, and remediation of student learning was limited.

Griffiths (1956) wrote that decisions should be made at the level at which authority for the decision resides. It is apparent from viewing these data that this was not happening when many decisions

were considered. This would seem to be especially true in decisions relating to the evaluation of children. It is possible that this may be a reaction to the current nationwide emphasis upon skill development and teacher accountability.

Myers (1975) wrote in regard to the belief that teacher power was limited. He said that a vertical power structure exists in schools with the teachers at the bottom of the hierarchy. An examination of these data would add support to Myers' position. The decisions into which teachers indicated a high amount of input would be dependent upon decisions made at a higher level in the bureaucratic structure.

One teacher expressed her feelings in regard to this situation when she wrote the following on her questionnaire:

Please note most checks are on #1 (no input) or #2 (little input) on the scale because most items of concern are either dictated or the decision-making gets so lost in the composite of many opinions (often irrelevant) sometimes downright terrible, when people not knowledgeable in Early Childhood make decisions for those actually charged with that duty and program!

Another teacher who indicated that she had a satisfactory level of input into decisions made these statements:

I have to fight for my way. One of the main reasons I am able to have relatively good input into my program is because I feel confident enough to insist on it.

Decision-Making Dissonance

A dissonance score was calculated for each individual. This score showed the extent to which teachers felt that a difference existed between the impact various factors have on decisions and the impact which they should have. The possible range of scores on

dissonance was from 0 to 80. Subjects' scores ranged from 1 to 53, with a mean of 14.37. Further analysis showed that the greatest amounts of dissonance existed in relation to pupil/teacher ratio and coordination with program specialists. In both cases, respondents felt that the factor should have a greater impact than it did.

The data indicated that there were significant differences between the amounts of impact which teachers felt factors should have on decisions and the impact which they actually have on 13 of the 20 items (65 percent). In all of these instances, the mean score on the "should have impact" scale was higher than the mean score on the "actually has impact" scale.

Though the differences were not significant at the .05 level, teachers indicated that desires and expectations of administrators and other teachers, demands for accountability, and preparing children for testing had a greater degree of impact than they should. This finding may be reflective of the "Back to the Basics" movement which is prevalent on a nationwide basis.

Factors Impacting on Decisions

Examination of the data indicated that two factors had a significantly greater mean impact on the decisions which teachers make than did the remainder of the items. These items were needs of children based on knowledge of child development and personally formulated goals and objectives. This appears to be consistent with the literature cited by Kohlberg and Mayer (1972), Spodek (1975), and Katz (1977) in which attention is drawn to the importance of an individual's ideologies in determining the outcome of decisions.

It was not possible to determine from this study whether or not the responses, in regard to the role of goals and objectives, were consistent with what could actually be observed in classrooms. The study by Berk (1976) indicated that the consistency between stated goals and objectives and classroom practice is low in programs which do not have clearly delineated guidelines. Reports by the New Mexico Department of Education (1976) and the New York Department of Education (1976) pointed out similar findings. In view of this information, the possibility exists that teachers' perceptions of the impact of various factors on decisions and the degree to which the factors actually impact may be different. A desirable follow-up to this study would be to conduct a series of teacher interviews and classroom observations in an effort to determine if such a discrepancy does, in fact, exist.

Six hypotheses were examined in an effort to gain further insights into the decision-making process. Discussion relating to the testing of the hypotheses follows.

No differences significant at the .05 level were found to exist when satisfaction and power were compared to nine training and experience variables. A significant difference was found to exist when dissonance was compared according to the number of courses which the teachers had completed in human growth and development. Teachers who had completed three or more courses had significantly higher mean dissonance scores than did those with two or fewer courses. This finding would support the speculation that many expectations in regard to kindergarten education are not consistent with concepts traditionally presented in courses in human growth and development.

This is also consistent with Festinger's (1964) position. His theory stated that the amount of dissonance that existed after a decision was a direct function of the number of things that the person knew which were inconsistent with a particular decision.

A number of significant differences were found to exist when the factors impacting on decisions were compared according to training and experience of the teacher. Differences found according to the age of the teacher are somewhat difficult to explain. In each case, with the exception of one, where significant differences were found, teachers in the 40-49 age group had the highest means. No pattern was apparent among the remainder of the sample.

The one exception to this was in regard to the impact of Teachers' Guides with commercially prepared materials. The amount of impact of Teachers' Guides was found to be in an exact reverse order when viewed in relation to the age of the teacher. This is probably reflective of current emphases in teacher education in which commercially prepared materials are viewed as support for the program rather than as the program.

Differences between teachers with Bachelors' Degrees and teachers with Masters' Degrees were not apparent. However, the recency of the coursework seemed to reflect a difference. Teachers who had taken a course in 1978 indicated a significantly higher mean impact on decisions of what parents want and upon cultural and economic composition of the class. Again this finding is consistent with current emphases in teacher preparation programs.

Some differences were found when the subjects' college majors were considered. Those with undergraduate majors in Elementary

Education had higher mean impact scores on the following items: Teachers' Guides, desires and expectations of administrators, preparing children for testing, location of the classroom in relation to the rest of the school, and coordination with specialists. It must be noted that all other majors were grouped into a classification called "other." This included a wide variety of majors.

At the graduate level, the "other" category consisted primarily of Early Childhood Education majors. Fewer differences existed at this level with Elementary Education majors having higher mean impact scores for demands for accountability, desires and expectations of administrators, and lack of materials.

A closely related variable which was examined was the department in which most of the work in Early Childhood Education was completed. While the variables were closely related, they were not exact parallels, as Early Childhood programs in several New Mexico institutions are housed in another department, primarily Home Economics. The data showed that teachers whose coursework had been taken in an Elementary Education Department were more likely to view demands for accountability as a high impact item. Teachers whose coursework was in another department were more likely to indicate a high impact of the following items: preparing children for testing, availability of adult assistance, location of classroom, and coordination with specialists.

When the last three analyses were considered, no clear patterns emerged. There was some evidence that those teachers with backgrounds

in Elementary Education may have a greater tendency than other teachers to emphasize accountability and administrative demands when making decisions.

The impact of only one item was found to be significantly different when the factors impacting on decisions were compared according to the number of courses which a teacher had completed in human development. Teachers with fewer courses were more likely to place a high emphasis upon the funding which was available to the program. When compared according to the number of courses in Early Childhood Methods, differences were found in the degree of impact of parental desires and needs of children based on knowledge of child development. In each case, teachers with three or more courses had the higher means.

Several significant differences were found to exist when the factors impacting on decisions were compared with variables relating to the teacher training program. This points out a need for a content analysis of teacher education programs in an effort to identify those factors which are related to more effective decision making.

When decision-making behavior was examined according to characteristics of the program, only one significant difference was found. It was found that the mean power score for teachers employed in half day programs was significantly greater than for those teaching in full day programs. This can possibly be explained by the fact that most full day programs were in very small schools and the distance between the teacher and the central office was less, both in terms of physical distance and in terms of personal relationships. Teachers may, therefore, be more likely to make decisions in conjunction with central office personnel.

Though no differences were found when satisfaction, power, and dissonance were compared according to the type of program supervision which was available to the teacher, two significant differences were found regarding the factors which impact on decisions. Teachers who worked most directly under a kindergarten specialist were more likely to view coordination with specialists as a high impact item. This group had the lowest mean score in regard to the impact of Teachers' Guides with commercially prepared materials.

Analysis of data in regard to dissonance and satisfaction showed highly significant differences in the subjects' dissonance scores when compared with the degree to which they felt satisfied with the number and type of decisions which they made. Teachers who indicated general satisfaction showed significantly lower dissonance scores. This would indicate fewer discrepancies between the impact which they felt the specified factors should have on their decisions and the impact that the factors actually had. While this finding was not surprising, it is important in furthering understanding in regard to those factors which contribute to teacher satisfaction.

Significant differences were also found in power scores when compared according to the teachers' expressed levels of satisfaction. Teachers, who indicated that they were generally satisfied with the amount of decisions which they had the opportunity to make, also had higher mean power scores.

A significant, negative relationship was found to exist when power and dissonance were compared. As would be reasonable to expect, as teachers' mean power scores increased, mean dissonance scores decreased.

Recommendations

The following recommendations for further research and for teacher and administrative training are made based upon the findings of this study.

Recommendations for Further Research

1. In order to develop a more complete understanding of the total process by which classroom decisions are made, a similar study should be conducted using a sample of school administrators.
2. There is a need to replicate this study with other populations of teachers in order to determine if findings regarding behaviors among New Mexico teachers are consistent with behaviors of teachers in programs of longer duration.
3. There is a need to further test the instruments for validity by following-up teachers' written responses with a series of interviews and classroom observations.
4. There is a need for a content analysis of programs for teacher preparation in order to identify those factors which are related to effective decision making.
5. There is a need for a study which will examine the relationship between teacher effectiveness and decision-making behavior.
6. There is a need for research which will examine teacher training programs in an effort to determine the most effective means of acquainting teachers with human development theories and principles and with procedures involved in making decisions consistent with these principles.
7. There is a need to examine the role of a teacher's personal value system in determining the decision-making behaviors of the teacher.

Recommendations for Teacher and Admin-
istrative Preparation

1. Training in rational decision making should be included in the programs designed for preparing both teachers and administrators. This training should include attention to an appropriate theoretical base plus the skills involved in the process.
2. In view of the fact that teachers identified "needs of children" as the factor having the greatest impact on decisions, it is important that all teachers have an accurate understanding of these needs. As such, a vital component of a decision-making program should be an emphasis upon generally accepted principles of child growth and development.
3. The role of ideologies and personal value systems should be emphasized in training for decision making. The fact that teachers identified "personally formulated goals and objectives" as the factor having the second greatest impact on decisions provides support for this recommendation.
4. Training for administrators should focus upon the process of determining decision-making policy, including who is to make the decisions and how the decisions are to be made.
5. As significant differences were found in teachers' expressed satisfaction levels when compared to dissonance, there is a need to help teachers develop skills which will reduce this dissonance. Skills involved in communicating decisions and rationale for decisions, in achieving a satisfactory level of compromise, and in coping with varying opinions and ideologies would be important in this respect.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

TEACHER INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Code _____

TEACHER INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Directions: Place an X on the blank which corresponds to the most appropriate response for you.

Part I: Teacher Training and Experience

1. How long have you been employed as a teacher?
 - a. 20 years or more _____
 - b. 15-19 years _____
 - c. 10-14 years _____
 - d. 5-9 years _____
 - e. 3-4 years _____
 - f. Less than 3 years _____
2. What is your age?
 - a. 60 or over _____
 - b. 50-59 _____
 - c. 40-49 _____
 - d. 30-39 _____
 - e. 20-29 _____
3. What is your highest college degree?
 - a. Masters' Degree with additional hours _____
 - b. Masters' Degree _____
 - c. Bachelors' Degree with additional hours _____
 - d. Bachelors' Degree _____
 - e. Other (specify) _____
4. In what year did you last receive credit for a college course?
 - a. 1978 _____
 - b. 1975-1977 _____
 - c. 1972-1974 _____
 - d. 1969-1971 _____
 - e. 1966-1968 _____
 - f. Before 1966 _____
5. What was your college major?

	Undergraduate	Graduate
a. Elementary Education	_____	_____
b. Family Relations and Child Development	_____	_____
c. Early Childhood Education	_____	_____
d. Home Economics	_____	_____
e. Other (specify) _____	_____	_____
6. In what department (or division) did you receive most of your coursework in Early Childhood Education?
 - a. Elementary Education _____
 - b. Home Economics _____
 - c. Other (specify) _____

7. How many college credit courses have you had in human growth and development (i.e., Child Development, Child Psychology, etc.)?
 - a. 0 courses _____
 - b. 1 course _____
 - c. 2 courses _____
 - d. 3 courses or more _____
8. How many college credit courses have you had in Early Childhood methods and/or materials?
 - a. 0 courses _____
 - b. 1 course _____
 - c. 2 courses _____
 - d. 3 courses or more _____

Part II: Current Program Information

9. What is the length of your kindergarten session?
 - a. 5-6 hours _____
 - b. 3-5 hours _____
 - c. 2½-3 hours _____
10. How many children do you have in each session which you teach?

	A.M.	P.M.
a. 15 or less	_____	_____
b. 16-20	_____	_____
c. 21-25	_____	_____
d. 26 or more	_____	_____
11. What type(s) of adult assistance do you use in your classroom? (Check all appropriate responses.)
 - a. Full time paid aide _____
 - b. Part time paid aide _____
 - c. Regularly scheduled parent volunteers _____
 - d. Parent volunteers only as needed _____
 - e. Student help _____
 - f. No adult help _____
 - g. Other (specify) _____
12. Which of the following personnel, at the administrative level, are available in your school to assist you with program implementation and evaluation? (Check all appropriate responses.)
 - a. Elementary principal _____
 - b. Elementary curriculum specialist _____
 - c. Kindergarten specialist _____
 - d. Other (specify) _____
13. Which of the following statements most nearly represents your feelings in regard to the number and type of program-related decisions which you make?
 - a. I am generally satisfied with the number and type of program-related decisions which I have the opportunity to make. _____
 - b. I would like to be able to make more program-related decisions. _____
 - c. I would like to make fewer program-related decisions. _____

APPENDIX B

DECISION-MAKING INPUT SURVEY

Code _____

DECISION MAKING INPUT SURVEY

Directions: Indicate by checking (✓) in the appropriate column the amount of input which you feel that you have into each of the following program-related decisions. Please use the following scale for reporting your responses:

- 4 Teacher has sole responsibility for decision
 3 Teacher has the major amount of input into the decision
 2 Teacher has some input into the decision
 1 Teacher has no input into the decision
 N/A Not applicable

Decision	4	3	Scale 2	1	N/A
1. Determining broad, long range program goals	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Determining short term objectives	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Selecting a basal program, i.e., reading or math program	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Planning the daily schedule of activities	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Arranging the classroom	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Selecting paid, paraprofessional aides	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Purchasing supplies (paper, paste, scissors, etc.)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Replacing or adding classroom equipment	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. Selecting procedures for reporting to parents	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. Passing or retaining children	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
11. Determining procedures for placement of children in morning or afternoon sessions	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
12. Setting policies, i.e., attendance, discipline, retention, etc.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
13. Scheduling field trips	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
14. Determining procedures other than standardized testing for evaluation of children	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
15. Determining whether or not to administer standardized tests	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
16. Selecting instruments for standardized testing	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
17. Use(s) to be made of scores derived from standardized tests	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

APPENDIX C

INVENTORY FOR ASSESSING IMPACT ON DECISIONS

INVENTORY FOR ASSESSING IMPACT ON DECISIONS

Code

Directions: Consider each factor listed below in terms of its impact upon decisions which you make affecting the program which you provide for the children whom you teach. Rate each factor in two ways: (1) The degree of impact which you feel that the factor should have upon the decisions which you make and (2) The degree of impact which you feel that the factor actually has upon the decisions which you make. Use the following scale to respond to the items:

5--items with the highest degree of impact
4--items with a high degree of impact
3--items with a moderate degree of impact

2--items with little impact
1--items with no impact

Circle the numbers which best correspond to your answers.

Degree of impact which factor should have on decisions					Factors	Degree of impact which factor actually has on decisions				
5	4	3	2	1	1. Desires and expectations of parents	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	2. Pupil/teacher ratio	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	3. Needs of children based on your knowledge of child development	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	4. Availability of materials	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	5. Length of class day	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	6. Desires and expectations of other teachers	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	7. Teachers' Guides with commercially prepared materials	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	8. Guidelines set by local school administration	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	9. Space available for activities	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	10. Guidelines from State Department of Education	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	11. Demands for accountability	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	12. Personally formulated goals and objectives	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	13. Lack of available materials	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	14. Funding provided for program	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	15. Desires and expectations of administrators	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	16. Availability of adult assistance	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	17. Preparing children for standardized testing	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	18. Location of classroom in relation to rest of school	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	19. Coordination with specialists (art, music, physical education, etc.)	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	20. Cultural and/or economic backgrounds of children	5	4	3	2	1

APPENDIX D

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

November 14, 1978

Dear

As a part of my graduate work at Oklahoma State University, I am carrying out a study designed to add insights into the processes which kindergarten teachers use when they make decisions regarding the curriculum which they provide for the children whom they teach. You have been randomly selected to participate in the study.

Enclosed are the instruments which are being used to collect the information. Will you please complete the forms and return them to me in the stamped, self-addressed envelope by December 1? Directions for completing each of the instruments are included on the forms.

The information will be summarized by code number only. No teacher or school district will be identified. All information will remain confidential throughout the analysis and reporting of the study. It is vitally important that each group of forms be returned. It should take only about 15 minutes to complete the process.

I sincerely appreciate your cooperation in completing and returning the questionnaires by the designated date.

Sincerely,

Janet Malone
Department of Family Relations
and Child Development
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74074

Frances Stromberg
Adviser

Enclosures

VITA²

Janet Lorraine Malone

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: DECISION-MAKING BEHAVIOR OF KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS

Major Field: Home Economics - Family Relations and Child Development

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Lincoln, Nebraska, January 14, 1937, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Fred E. Malone.

Education: Attended elementary and secondary school at Waverly Consolidated School, Waverly, Nebraska; graduated from Waverly High School, 1955; received Bachelor of Science in Home Economics degree from the University of Nebraska in June of 1959; received Master of Home Economics degree in Child Development and Family Relations from Colorado State University in May of 1968; completed additional coursework at Eastern New Mexico University, University of New Mexico, University of Northern Colorado, and California State/Fullerton; completed requirements for Doctor of Philosophy degree in Home Economics in May of 1979.

Professional Experience: Home Economics teacher, Callaway, Nebraska; Fullerton, Nebraska; and Loveland, Colorado, 1959-1967. Assistant Professor, Director of Child Development Center, and Project Manager for Head Start Supplementary Training, Eastern New Mexico University, Portales, New Mexico, 1968-1974. Early Childhood Specialist, New Mexico State Department of Education, 1974-1977. Graduate teaching assistant, Department of Family Relations and Child Development, Oklahoma State University, September, 1978 - May, 1979.

Professional Organizations: Delta Kappa Gamma, Phi Kappa Phi, Omicron Nu, Phi Delta Kappa, National Association for the Education of Young Children, Southern Association on Children Under Six, American Home Economics Association.