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DECISION MAKING IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL:
A STUDY OF THE CONSTRUCTS OF
THE TEACHER USING
THE REPERTORY
GRID

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the
requirements for the award of the
degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

from

THE UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

by

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Department of Education

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ABSTRACT

The rate of change is generating problems in society. Technological development is profoundly affecting social life, in particular, employment and leisure.

Educational planning is being influenced by the increasing rate of change. Pressure is being felt of criticisms of existing practice and of the development of technology.

Traditionally the school has modelled its structure on hierarchical principles which maintain that the main decisions are made by those of higher rank. Uncertainty, however, exists in the locus of certain decisions and it has been suggested that decisions should in any case, be shared.

If change is required in the structure of decision making a suitable strategy for change may be required. Organization Development, a recently developed strategy for effecting change in organizations, has been used extensively in the United States and Canada.

Measurement of the effectiveness of Organization Development is still unclear but it has been suggested that an improved approach to Organization Development in schools would involve the study of how relationships are 'coupled'.

This study proposes that a major coupling mechanism in schools is the decision-making relationship that links organization roles and organization functions. There is evidence that role ambiguity, conflict and stress exist in school situations but few studies probe the decision-making role of the teacher in relation to school functions. The principle of hierarchical decision making may not be applied strictly in schools. Who does share in decision making and who should share is an open question.

Based on the theory developed by G.A. Kelly, testable hypotheses were developed relating to the perceptions of the teacher in relation to school decision making. A modification of Kelly's Repertory Grid Technique was used to investigate these hypotheses.

The results of hypotheses testing were found to have implications for school planning. A number of strategies for change were suggested by the results. Furthermore, an overall pattern of involvement in decision making appears to have emerged. Further research was suggested.