# Perceived Teacher Empowerment among secondary school teachers: Influence of School Leader Behavior

**Abstract:**

Quality of education is highly related to the empowerment of teachers, since it is the teachers' who teach and shape the children. If the teachers are not empowered, students cannot be inspired. So teachers spark student's inspiration and drive them towards excellence. Perceived teacher empowerment is teacher's perception regarding liberty to perform and carry out their professional job with autonomy. Teachers' empowerment can be ignited or sparked by the school leader behavior. Keeping this in view, study was conducted to explore school leader behavior as perceived by secondary school teachers and to analyze its relationship with perceived teacher empowerment of teachers. The study was descriptive survey in nature and random sampling technique was used for selection of the sample. The participants in the study included 160 secondary school teachers selected from two districts, Paro and Thimphu (80 from each district) of Western region of Bhutan (40 teachers from each type of school i.e. government schools and private schools, out of each school 10 teachers, 5male teachers and 5 female teachers). For analysis of data, parametric statistical techniques were used. The study revealed that teachers in private and government secondary schools had similar perceived teacher empowerment. Private and government secondary school teachers had similar perception with respect to school leader behavior. Male and female secondary school teachers of Bhutan had similar perceived teacher empowerment. Male and female secondary school teachers of Bhutan had similar perception with respect to school leader behavior. Significant positive relationship was found between perceived teacher empowerment of secondary school teachers with school leader behavior.

**Key words:** perceived teacher empowerment, school leader behavior

## Introduction

### Perceived Teacher Empowerment

Quality of education is highly related to the empowerment of teachers, since it is the teachers' who teach and shape the children. If teachers stop functioning in isolation and start collaborating or working collectively, the culture of the school will definitely change significantly (Marks and Louis, 1997). If the teachers are not empowered, students cannot be inspired. So teachers spark students inspiration and drive them towards excellence. Perceived teacher empowerment means how much teachers perceive that they are empowered, that is their own perception. Perceived Teacher empowerment refers to teachers perception with respect to their participation in school decision making, influence and impact of teachers on the school life, their presence or absence in the work place and its effect on school life; status and sense of self-esteem ascribed to teachers by students, parents, community, subordinates, peers and superiors of the school; freedom to control certain aspects of school life; provisions of opportunities for professional growth; a sense of self-efficacy that is, they are competent enough to bring desired outcomes. It refers teacher's perception regarding liberty to perform and carry out their professional job with autonomy. Teachers feel and experience their involvement in decision making and avail the opportunity to act upon their ideas, innovations and creativity.

Teacher empowerment is a basic element of school reform (Blase and Blase, 2002 and Short, 1992).Teacher empowerment is a professional development process including professional knowledge base, higher teaching efficacy and promotes decision-making to meet the requirement of education (Short,1992). Teacher empowerment is a process in which teachers take control of their own progress in order to develop their competencies to tackle their own problems and offered

chances to showcase these capabilities in the school leading towards overall improvement in the educational process (Short, 1992). Teacher empowerment is giving powers to the teachers (Vaidya, 2010). In view of Zembylas and Papanastasiou (2005) teacher empowerment is shared responsibility, offering quality in professional learning and accepting the teacher's impact on students' achievement. Empowered teachers believe they have autonomy and opportunities to participate in decisions that affect their students and schools (Lightfoot, 1986; Short & Rinehart, 1992). The empowered teachers also believe they possess the knowledge and skills or can access professional growth opportunities to expand their knowledge and abilities in performing their daily teaching tasks and to have a greater impact in their workplace. In a school setting a teacher who has the liberty in administering ones ideas, creativity and power in their professional roles can be referred to as teacher empowerment. Teacher empowerment does not imply that teachers must challenge authority consistently or that school leaders give up authority and control (Prawat, 1991). Teacher empowerment is not only giving professional autonomy over their responsibilities but to effectively enable them to be motivated and inspired, unleashing their potentials in various decision making situations in their works. Moreover, the school leader or the principal must not administer unnecessary authority over his or her teachers. Instead teachers should feel psychologically and sociologically safe and secure in their professional operations. However, the major role is played by the principals who can meet their individual needs for empowerment. Therefore, teacher's empowerment can be ignited or sparked by the school leader and his behavior. Teachers who are empowered, works in collaboration with other teachers in the school, share their ideas, discuss problems and pave solutions to those problems and disparities, thus lead to shared decision making, togetherness or unity, a sense of 'we' feeling or team learning and creates a very professionally sound and just school environment. Sweetland and Hoy (2000) found a positive correlation among teacher empowerment and student achievement indicating the former as the predictor for student achievement. Meher, Ummulbanin and Lalwani( 2003) and Bogler and Somech (2004) found significant relationship among teachers' perceptions of their level of empowerment to their feelings of commitment towards their organization, profession and to their organizational citizenship behaviors. Moreover Zembylas and Papanastasiou (2005) found that status and professional growth affects teacher's sense of empowerment. Lintner (2008) found that principal use of expert and referent powers has the highest significant relationship to teacher empowerment. The least power bases discovered are coercive and reward power bases that have significantly less impact on teacher empowerment. Sharp (2009) found significant relationship between the principal effectiveness and teacher empowerment. Lee, Zhang and Sung (2012) found professional growth, a school-level teacher empowerment factor, as a significant and positive predictor of school-level means of teacher efficacy. Wall (2012) found that maximum teachers identify themselves as functioning from the scale of self-efficacy empowerment, whereas the principals were perceived using genuine power base. Teacher empowerment is, therefore, perceived as a crucial factor that affects school effectiveness (Wall & Rinehart, 1998).

**School Leader Behaviour**

Since teachers play an important role in the education of children, it's equally important for the school leader or principal to ensure that teachers are intrinsically empowered, where teachers should feel that they are of great importance in the success and achievement of the school as a learning organization. School leader behavior is the behavior of the principal/ head of the school, how he/she conducts towards others, or responds to a particular situation or stimulus in the school environment. School leader behavior implies the behavior of school leader or principal/head that is, the knowledge, skills, attitude and leadership qualities possessed by school leader. So school leader behavior constitutes not only of physical aspect, but also the innate qualities of a leader. School leaders must shoulder multiple roles in order to foster inspiration, leading to empowerment and clear direction for the achievement of the school's target and goals. The term school leader behavior is mostly described in terms of democratic, laissez-faire, collegial, autocratic and custodial approach. There are leader behavior that are inspiring, encouraging, motivating and constructive yet behaviors like autocratic and laissez-faire are also seen in the organizations. School leader behavior refers to school leader's emotional stability, team building abilities, performance orienting skills, social skills, value inculcation, adequacy of communication and abilities to build constructive relationship in the

organization. It's the ability to contribute and co-operate, collaborate with specific message with the team members in order to lead them towards shared vision, dedication and commitment. The ability to transform according to opportunities and situations; possession of the potential and skill to instill values in employees through their personality and behaviors, the ability to ensure the advancement of one's institution consciously towards achieving the need to serve the community better. A good school leader's behavior ensures the optimum utilization of the skills and talents, abilities and professional capabilities, innovations and creativity, commitments and cooperation of the human resources to achieve the desired targets. It's the school leader behavior that encourages the smooth functioning of the school and in attaining the highest possible outcomes. School leaders and their leadership are observed to be more capable in creating work conditions which could enhance teachers' psychological empowerment, which in turn could result in teachers being more innately and professionally inspired and committed towards their respective roles and responsibilities in their work (Bogler and Somech 2004).

The school leader's behavior should be such that the teachers avail the freedom or autonomy and liberty to exercise their individual strengths and capabilities to the maximum including that of intellectual, psychological, moral and sociological aspects. It's the role of the principal that ensures maximum utilization of teacher's potential and at the same time inspire and influence them to put in their unconditional effort and skills, knowledge and ideas through creativity and innovative professional responsibilities. Otherwise, the education system will suffer consistently, if the school leaders behave in a way to control their teachers, which may subsequently degrades the organizational effectiveness and efficiency. Several researches agree that principal leadership styles and principal effectiveness affect teachers' morale and performance, teachers' job dimensions, school efficiency and student accomplishment (Venadine, 1997; Hallinger and Heck,1998; Barker,2001; Moffit ,2007; Zhang and Bartol,2010; Sagnak, 2011; Advin, Sarier & Uysal, 2013; Jay, 2014). However Yu, Leithwood and Jantzi (2001) found that the principal-leadership effects were weak and insignificant but teacher-leadership effects proved to be significant on student engagement. Blase and Blase (2002) found that several mistreatments by principals like denying resources to teachers, damage and public criticism, and in its most hostile forms, from fiery and threatening acts to compelling teachers in their jobs, led to humiliation and lowered self-esteem, persistent fear, severe hopelessness, complications in one's home life, as well as on classroom instruction and the school as a whole. School leader behavior was found to be the determining factor for the success of the school, improving the quality and outcome of the school.

During the past few decades, much research has been undertaken to search variables that determine the teacher empowerment. However the influence of school leader behavior on perceived teacher empowerment could hardly be found in the literature. It is important to know how school leader behavior influences perceived teacher empowerment. Keeping this in view the study was conducted so as to fulfill the following objectives:

**Objectives**
**Following objectives were framed in the study:**
- To explore perceived teacher empowerment of secondary school teachers of Bhutan.
- To explore school leader behavior as perceived by secondary school teachers of Bhutan.
- To compare the private and government secondary school teachers of Bhutan with respect to –
  - Perceived teacher empowerment
  - School leader behavior
- To compare male and female secondary school teachers of Bhutan with respect to –
  - Perceived teacher empowerment
  - School leader behavior

- To find out the relationship of perceived teacher empowerment with school leader behavior as perceived by secondary school teachers of Bhutan.

## Hypotheses

1. There exists no significance difference in perceived teacher empowerment of private and government secondary school teachers of Bhutan.
2. There exists no significance difference in school leader behavior as perceived by private and government secondary school teachers of Bhutan.
3. There exists no significant difference in perceived teacher empowerment of male and female secondary school teachers of Bhutan.
4. There exists no significance difference in school leader behavior as perceived by male and female secondary school teachers of Bhutan.
5. There exists no significant relationship of perceived teacher empowerment with school leader behavior as perceived by secondary school teachers of Bhutan.

## Method and Procedure

Descriptive survey method was used in the study. Data collection was done from secondary school teachers in eight secondary schools (4 government and 4 private schools) of each district (Paro and Thimphu) of Western Bhutan by employing random sampling technique. The sample comprised of 160 secondary school teachers selected from two districts, Paro and Thimphu (80 from each district) of Western region of Bhutan (40 teachers from each type of school i.e. government schools and private schools, out of each school, 10 teachers, 5male teachers and 5 female teachers). Two psychological tests were used to collect the data, one was "perceived teacher empowerment scale" and the second tool, was "school leader behavior scale", both tools were developed by investigator. Parametric statistical techniques were used for analysis of data. To explore the current status in terms of perceived teacher empowerment of secondary school teachers and school leader behavior as perceived by them, mean and standard deviation were calculated and for testing the significance of difference between means of perceived teacher empowerment of secondary school teachers and school leader behavior, t-test was applied. To analyse the relationship between perceived teacher empowerment of secondary school teachers of Bhutan with school leader behavior coefficient of correlation was calculated.

## Results and Discussion

**Analysis of data, result and interpretation of findings have been done variable wise keeping in view the objectives of the study.**

- **Results relating difference between private and government secondary school teachers in perceived teacher empowerment**
  The below given table shows the differences in mean scores of perceived teacher empowerment of private and government secondary school teachers

Table 1
MEAN SCORES OF PERCEIVED TEACHER EMPOWERMENT OF PRIVATE AND GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

| Perceived Teacher Empowerment | Private Schools | | Government Schools | | t-value | Level of significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | S.D | Mean | S.D | | |
| | 179.5 | 14.17 | 180.5 | 16.05 | 0.43 | Insignificant |

A look at the above table 1 reflects mean scores and standard deviation of perceived teacher empowerment of private and government secondary school teachers. Further, the t-value calculated with regard to perceived teacher empowerment of private and government secondary school teachers was found to be insignificant at 0.05 level. It can further be explained that teachers in private and government secondary schools had similar perceived teacher empowerment. On the basis of above mentioned findings, it can be stated that the hypothesis no.1 i.e. "there exists no significance

difference in perceived teacher empowerment of private and government secondary school teachers" is thus accepted.

- **Results relating to school leader behavior as perceived by private and government secondary school teachers**
  The below given table shows the difference in mean scores of school leader behavior as perceived by Private and Government secondary school teachers
  **Table 2**
  **MEAN SCORES OF SCHOOL LEADER BEHAVIOR AS PERCEIVED BY PRIVATE AND GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS**

| School Leader Behavior | Private secondary school teachers | | Government secondary school teachers | | t-value | Level of significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | S.D | Mean | S.D | | Insignificant |
| | 246.76 | 40.7 | 255.46 | 39.03 | 1.369 | |

A look at the above table 2 reflects mean scores and standard deviation of school leader behavior as perceived by private and government secondary school teachers. Further, the t-value calculated with regard to school leader behavior as perceived by private and government secondary school teachers of Bhutan was found to be insignificant at 0.05 level. It can further be explained that school leader behavior as perceived by private and government secondary school teachers was similar. On the basis of above mentioned findings, it can be stated that the hypothesis no.2 i.e. "there exists no significance difference in school leader behavior as perceived by private and government secondary school teachers" is thus accepted.

- **Results relating difference between male and female secondary school teachers in perceived teacher empowerment**
  The below given table shows the difference in mean scores of perceived teacher empowerment of male and female secondary school teachers

**Table 3**
**MEAN SCORES OF PERCEIVED TEACHER EMPOWERMENT OF MALE AND FEMALE SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS**

| Perceived Teacher Empowerment | Male Secondary School Teachers | | Female Secondary School Teachers | | t-value | Level of significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | S.D | Mean | S.D | | Insignificant |
| | 179.4 | 16.29 | 180.6 | 13.88 | 0.50 | |

The above table 3 reflects mean scores and standard deviation of perceived teacher empowerment of male and female secondary school teachers. Further, t-values calculated with regard to perceived teacher empowerment of male and female secondary school teachers was found to be insignificant at 0.05 level. It can further be explained that male and female secondary school teachers had similar perceived teacher empowerment. The male and female secondary school teachers are equally empowered as perceived by them. On the basis of above mentioned findings, it can be stated that the hypothesis no.3 i.e. "there exists no significant difference in perceived teacher empowerment of male and female secondary school teachers" is thus accepted.

- **Results relating difference in school leader behavior as perceived by male and female secondary school teachers**
  The below given table shows the difference in mean scores of school leader behavior as perceived by male and female secondary school teachers

**Table 4**
**MEAN SCORES OF SCHOOL LEADER BEHAVIOR AS PERCEIVED BY MALE AND FEMALE SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS**

| School Leader Behavior | Male secondary school teachers | | Female secondary school teachers | | t- value | Level of significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | S.D | Mean | S.D | | Insignificant |
| | 255.27 | 40.72 | 246.95 | 39.13 | 1.31 | |

A look at the above table 4 reflects mean scores and standard deviation of school leader behavior as perceived by male and female secondary school teachers. Further, the t-value calculated with regard to school leader behavior as perceived by male and female secondary school teachers was found to be insignificant at 0.05 level. It can further be explained school leader behavior as perceived by male and female secondary school teachers was similar. It infers that male and female secondary school teachers had similar perception with respect to school leader behavior. On the basis of above mentioned findings, it can be stated that the hypothesis no.4 i.e. "There exists no significance difference in school leader behavior as perceived by male and female secondary school teachers" is thus accepted.
.
**Results relating to relationship of perceived teacher empowerment with school leader behavior as perceived by secondary school teachers**
**Table 5**

| Variables | Mean | S.D | N | R | Interpretation | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| School Leader Behavior | 251 | 40.5 | 160 | 0.15 | Level of significance | |
| | | | | | 0.05 | 0.01 |
| Perceived Teacher Empowerment | 180 | 15.15 | | | 0.138 | 0.181 |

The above table 5 shows the relationship of perceived teacher empowerment with school leader behavior as perceived by secondary school teachers. The coefficient of correlation found was significant at 0.05 level. The result shows the calculated value of coefficient of correlation of perceived teacher empowerment with school leader behavior as perceived by secondary school teachers is positive. This indicates that school leader behavior influences the perceived teacher empowerment of secondary school teachers. This can further be explained that that there exists a positive relationship between perceived teacher empowerment and school leader behavior as perceived by secondary school teachers. If secondary school teachers are provided with better school leader behavior by heads/ principals then teachers are likely to show greater perceived teacher empowerment. On the basis of above mentioned result hypothesis 5, "there exists no significant relationship of perceived teacher empowerment with school leader behavior as perceived by secondary school teachers" is thus rejected.

**Conclusions**
**The study documents the following conclusions:**
- Teachers of private and government secondary schools did not differ significantly with respect to perceived teacher empowerment. Teachers in private and government secondary schools had similar perceived teacher empowerment.
- Teachers of private and government secondary schools did not differ significantly with respect to their perception of school leader behavior. Private and government secondary school teachers had similar perception with respect to school leader behavior.
- Male and female secondary school teachers did not differ significantly with respect to perceived teacher empowerment. Male and female secondary school teachers had similar perceived teacher empowerment. The male and female secondary school teachers of Bhutan are equally empowered as perceived by them.

- Male and female secondary school teachers did not differ significantly with respect to their perception of school leader behavior. School leader behavior as perceived by male and female secondary school teachers was similar. Male and female secondary school teachers of had similar perception with respect to school leader behavior.
- School leader behavior affects perceived teacher empowerment of secondary school teachers. If secondary school teachers are provided with better school leader behavior then teachers are likely to show greater perceived teacher empowerment.

### References

I. Aydin, A., Sarier, Y. & Uysal, S. (2013).The Effect of School Principals' Leadership Styles on Teachers' Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction. Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice, 13(2), 806-811

II. Barker, B. (2001). Do Leader Matter? Educational Review, 53(1), 65 - 76. [Online] Available: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00131910120033664?journalCode=cedr20

III. Blase, J., & Blase, J. (2002). Teachers' Perspectives on Principal Mistreatment. Teqjournal. [Online] Available: teqjournal.org/Back%20Issues/Volume%2033/.../20blase&blase-33_4.pd.

IV. Bogler, R. (2004). Influence of teacher empowerment on teachers' organizational commitment, professional commitment and organizational citizenship behavior in schools. Teaching and Teacher Education, 20, 277-289.

V. Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. H. (1998). Exploring the Principals Contribution to School Improvement. School Effectivess and School Improvement Journal, 157-191. [Online] Available: philiphallinger.com/old- site/papers/SESI_review_reprint.pdf

VI. Jay, A. (2014).The Principals' Leadership Style and Teachers Performance in Secondary Schools of Gambella Regional State.  [Online] Available: https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/handle/123456789/5557 Journal of Education, 63(3), 9-28.

VII. Lee, John Chi-Kin; Zhang, Z. & Song, H. (2012).Effects of Teacher Empowerment on Teacher Efficacy and Organizational Commitment: A Chinese Perspective. Education and Society, 30, 3, 5-22(18). DOI: https://doi.org/10.7459/es/30.3.02

VIII. Lightfoot, S. L. (1986). On goodness of schools: themes of empowerment. Peabody Journal of Education, 63(3), 9-28.

IX. Linter, J. (2008). The Relationship between Perceived Teacher Empowerment and Principal use of Power. [Online] Available: https://etd.auburn.edu/handle/10415/106

X. Marks, H. M., & Louis, K. S. (1997). Does teacher empowerment affect the classroom? The implications of teacher empowerment for instructional practice and student academic performance. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 19, 245–275.

XI. Mason, N. (2010). Teacher-Perceived Characteristics of successful professional development program: [Online] Available: http://las.sinica.edu.tw:1085/search~S0?/d0310/d++++0310/97%2C-1%2C0%2CE/frameset&FF=d++++0461&104%2C%2C117

XII. Meher, R., Ummulbanin, A., & Lalwani, F. (2003). Teacher Empowerment. In Impact: Making a difference (244-252). Karachi. [Online] Available: http://ecommons.aku.edu/book_chapters/50/

XIII. Moffit, J. R. (2007). What Works: Principal Leadership Behaviors that positively Impact Student Achievement in Elementary Schools. Electronic Theses and Dissertations, 264. [Online] Available: digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article...etd

XIV. Prawat, R. S. (1991). Conversations with self and settings: a framework for thinking about teacher empowerment. American Educational Research Journal, 28(4)

XV. Sagnak, M. (2012). The empowering leadership and teachers' innovative behavior: The mediating role of innovation climate.  African Journal of Business Management 6(4), 1635-1641.  [Online] Available: http://www.academicjournals.org/journal/AJBM/article- abstract/3D916DA22970

XVI. Short, P. M. (1992). Dimensions of Teacher Empowerment. [Online] Available: http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED368701.pdf

**XVII.** Short, P. M., & Rinehart, J. S. (1992). School participant empowerment scale: Assessment of level of empowerment within the school environment. Educational and Psychological Measurement, 52(6), 951–960.

**XVIII.** Somech, A., & Bogler, R. (2002). Influence of teacher empowerment on teachers' organizational commitment, professional commitment and organizational citizenship behavior in schools. Teaching and Teacher Education 20, 277–289

**XIX.** Sweetland, S. R., & Hoy, W. K. (2000). School characteristics and educational outcomes: Toward an organizational model of student achievement in middle schools. Educational Administration Quarterly, 36(5), 703–729.

**XX.** Vaidya, F. K. (2010). A Study of the relationship between Empowerment of Secondary School Teachers and their Perception about the Leadership qualities of School Principals. [Online] Available: shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/6400/1/01_title.pdf

**XXI.** Venadine, T. (1997). What Research Says about Administrators' Management Style, Effectiveness and Teacher Morale. [Online] Available: files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED411569.pdf

**XXII.** Wall, L. A. (2012). An Exploratory Study of Teacher Empowerment and Technical Education in Kentucky. TopScholar. [Online] Available: http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1037&context=diss

**XXIII.** Wall, R., & Rinehart, J. S. (1998). School-based decision making and the empowerment of secondary school teachers. Journal of School Leadership, 8, 49–64.

**XXIV.** Yu, H., Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (2002). The Effects of Transformational Leadership on Teacher's Commitment to change in Hong Kong. Journal Of EducationalAdministration: [Online] Available: https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/13444/1/NQ53883.pd

**XXV.** Zembylas, M., & Papanastasiou, E. C. (2005). Modeling teacher empowerment: the role of job satisfaction. Educational Research and Evaluation: An International Journal on Theory and Practice, 11(5), 433-459.

**XXVI.** Zhang, X., & Bartol, K. M. (2010). Linking Empowering Leadership and Employee Creativity: The Influence of Psychological Empowerement, Intrinsic Motivation and Creative Process Engagement. Academy of Management Journal. [Online] Available: https://engagementresearch.wikispaces.com/.../%5BAMJ%5D+Zhang.pdf

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

**Dr. Anshu Narad**
Assistant Professor
Department of Education
Lovely Professional University
Punjab

**Sonam Tobgay**
Research Student
Department of Education
Lovely Professional University
Punjab