

Chapter Four

RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter presents the result of the survey. A total of 27 respondents out of a population of 30 teaching staff responded to the questionnaire representing a response rate of 90 per cent. The Principal was given a separate questionnaire. The responses are tabulated in terms of simple percentages and subsequently analysed. The results are presented in tables, figures and charts.

The first section of the chapter provides a demographic profile of the respondents. The second section summarises the responses of the Principal and teachers regarding the relevant aspects of human relationships. The final section analyses and interprets the results of the findings.

4.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The demographic profile of the 28 respondents, including the Principal are presented in Figures 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5. Please refer to Appendix C.1 to C.5 for a summary of the detailed responses. As shown in Figure 4.1, the majority of the respondents are between 25 to 34 years old. About 33 per cent of them, the second largest group of respondents, are between the age of 35 and 44 years. An equal number of respondents, less than 4 per cent, are below the age of 25 years and above the age of 45 years.

Figure 4.1

Respondents by Age Group

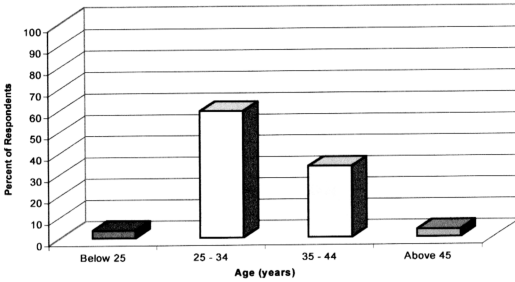


Figure 4.2 shows that there were more female respondents than their male counterparts. They accounted for slightly below 60 per cent of the sample.

Figure 4.2

Respondents by Sex

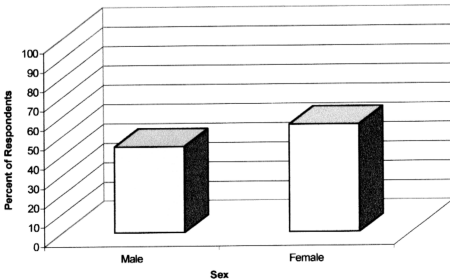
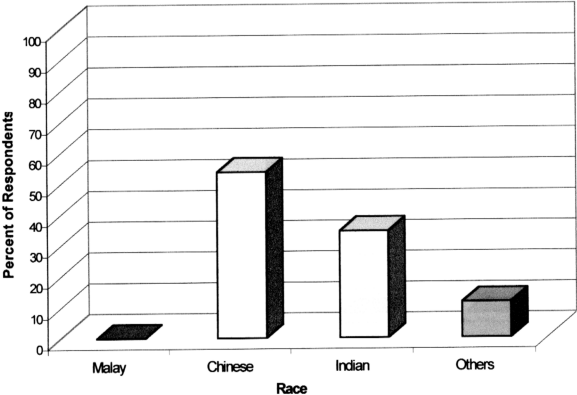


Figure 4.3 shows the respondents by race. Most of the respondents, about 54 per cent, are Chinese. The Indian respondents make up about 35 per cent while others constitute 11 per cent. There were no Malay respondents in the sample.

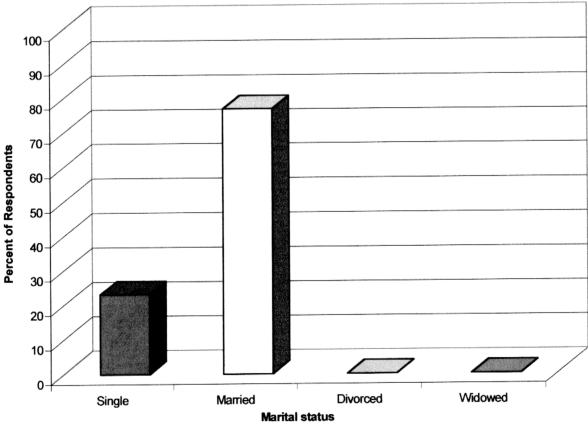
Figure 4.3
Respondents by Race



About 77 per cent of the respondents are married and 23 percent are single. There were no divorced or widowed respondents (see Figure 4.4).

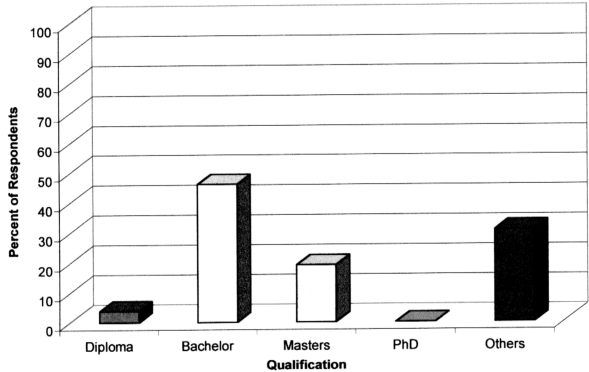
Figure 4.4

Respondents by Marital Status



As can be seen in Figure 4.5 below, there were no doctorate or Ph.D. holders among the respondents. The highest number of respondents, about 46 percent, possess a Bachelor's degree. A total of 19 percent of the respondents possess a Masters degree while four per cent hold a Diploma qualification. Respondents with other qualifications accounted for the remaining 31 per cent.

Figure 4.5
Respondents by Academic Qualification



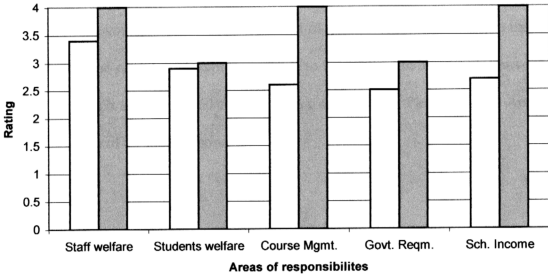
4.2 Summary of Responses on Human Related Activities

The Principal and teachers were asked to rank five important areas of the Principal's responsibilities which covers staff welfare, students welfare, course management and promotion, governmental requirements and income, expenses and profitability. They were asked to rank each of these category by indicating 1 as 'least important', 2 as 'slightly important', 3 as 'moderately important' and 4 as 'most important'. The results were tabulated based on the average value of the ratings of the respondents. The results are shown in Figure 4.6 below and further details are given in Appendix C.6.

Figure 4.6 shows the ratings of the Principal and the teachers regarding the important areas of the Principal's responsibility. The teachers rated staff welfare as between moderately important to most important and the following areas of responsibility as of slightly important to moderately important : students welfare, course management, governmental requirements and the income, expenses and profitability of the college. Both the Principal and the teachers rated students welfare as moderately important. The Principal ranked governmental requirements as moderately important, although, the teachers rated it as between slightly important to moderately important. The difference between the ratings of the Principal and the teachers is also seen in items on staff and course management, and the college's income, in which the Principal rated them as most important while the teachers rated staff welfare as between moderately important and most important and course management and college income as between slightly important and moderately important.

Figure 4.6

**Principal-Teacher Responses to Importance
of Principal's Areas of Responsibilities**



Key

□ Teacher

■ Principal

1: Least Important

2: Slightly Important

3: Moderately Important

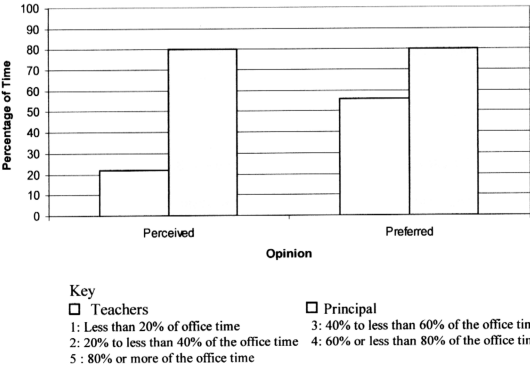
4: Most Important

Both the Principal and teachers were asked to give their responses on how much time they perceive and prefer the Principal during an average working week to devote her time on human relations related matters. A box indicating the various percentages of the amount of office time was provided in the questionnaire. The average amount of the Principal's time normally spent or preferred to be spent on human related matters were computed (please refer to Appendix C.7). For the purposes of computation 1 refers to 'less than 20% of the office time', 2 to '20% to less than 40%', 3 to '40% to less than 60%', 4 to 60% to less than 80%' and 5 to '80% or more'.

Figure 4.7 shows the Principal and teachers responses to the Principal's time spent on human relations matters. The results shows that the amount of time the Principal should spend on the said items vary between the Principal and the teachers. Teachers perceived that the Principal devoted 20 to 40 per cent of her time on such items although they preferred her to devote between 40 to 60 percent of her time. The Principal, on the other hand, perceived and preferred or expected herself to be involved in human relations-related matters for as much as between 60 to 80 per cent of her time. Please refer to Appendix C.7 for a summary of detailed responses.

Figure 4.7

**Principal-Teacher Responses to Principal's Time Spend on
Human Relations Matters**



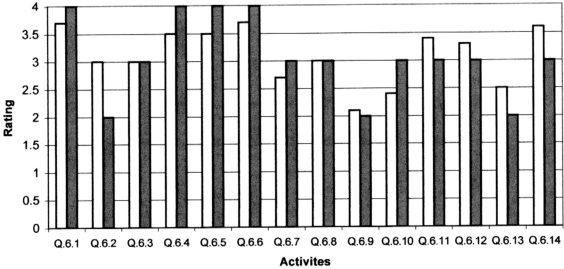
The survey also intended to find out to what extent the respondents actually perceive and prefer the Principal to be actually involved in a list of activities: attendance at meetings and discussions on group issues, external college social functions, liaison with government authorities, conducting meetings and discussion on new directions for the college, conduct motivation or information sessions, conduct meetings with senior staff such as Heads of Departments, classroom observation, conduct skills training for teachers, working together with teachers on teaching aids, conduct one-to-one discussions with teachers on academic matters and students feedback, and also staff disciplinary and grievance matters, attendance at college functions and staff's private social functions, and publicly acknowledging teachers' excellent achievements.

The respondents were requested to circle a number which best indicate their responses to question (A) Extent they perceive the Principal to be actually involved in and (B) Extent they prefer the Principal to be involved in the above activities. The number 1 indicate 'no involvement', 2 as 'slight involvement', 3 as 'moderate involvement' and 4 as 'major involvement'.

The results shown in Figure 4.8 were based on computed average values (see Appendix C.8 for details). They showed perceived and preferred ratings of the importance of the Principal's involvement in these activities.

Figure 4.8

**Perceptions of Principal-Teacher Rating on
Involvement of Principal in Specific-Focus Activities**



Key

□ Teacher

1: No Involvement

3: Moderate Involvement

■ Principal

2: Slight Involvement

4: Major Involvement

The findings show that the Principal perceived herself to have major involvement in the following areas of activities: attending meetings or getting involved in discussing group issues future plans, and developing courses; conducting meetings with staff to discuss, plan and/or implement new courses, projects, goals, and other related aspects for the college; conducting formal meetings with staff to motivate and/or inform staff of latest college achievements and problems; and conduct meetings with senior staff for updates and provide directions. Of these four items mentioned, the teachers ratings were quite similar to those of the Principal's. In these items, the teachers perceived the Principal as between moderately involved to having a major involvement in the said activities. However, both

the Principal and the teachers share similar perceptions in terms of the Principal’s moderate involvement in the following activities: liaising with government authorities regarding official matters/permits and attending seminar on education; and conducting training sessions for teachers on improving teaching techniques and performance.

Figure 4.9

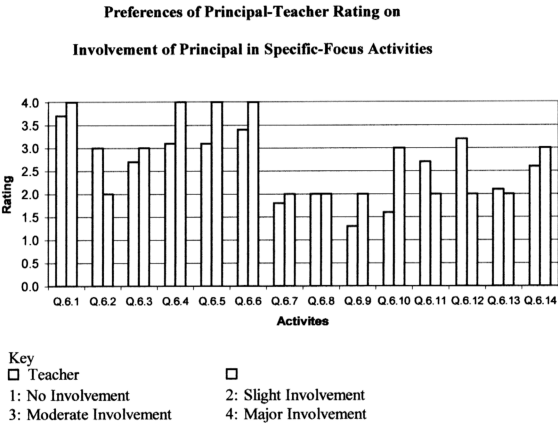


Figure 4.9 shows that the Principal and the teachers were similar in their preferences on conducting training sessions for teachers on improving in teaching techniques and performance. (for details see Appendix C.9). The Principal and the teachers preferred the Principal to have moderate involvement to major involvement in the following activities: attendance at meetings or discussions involving group issues, conduct meetings with staff to discuss, plan and/or implement new courses, projects, goals etc for the college, the

conduct of formal staff meeting to motivate and to inform them of latest college achievements and problems, and the conduct of meetings with senior staff (Head of Department etc) for updates and to provide directions. The next five items of slight involvement to moderate involvement include liaison with government authorities, external college social functions, engagement in one to one discussion with problematic teachers and publicly recognise excellent work done by teachers and their achievements; and to attend staff private social functions. The items having no to slight involvement concerns working with teachers on teaching aids, notes, handouts, lesson plans and others for effective classroom teaching and classroom-teaching observation. The Principal and teachers have diverse views on times related to conducting one-to-one discussions with lecturers on academic matters and students feedback and attend college functions organised by teachers, students or college.

Further analysis of the teachers’ perception of the Principal’s areas of responsibilities by sex, age group and teachers’ qualification are shown in Table 4.1, Table 4.2 and Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.1
Teachers’ Perception of the Areas of the Principal’s Responsibilities
According to Sex

TYPE OF RESPONSES			
SEX	MODERATELY & MOST IMPORTANT	LEAST & SLIGHTLY IMPORTANT	TOTAL
MALE (n = 12)	41.70%	58.30%	100%
FEMALE (n = 15)	53.30%	46.70%	100%

Table 4.2**Teachers' Perception of the Areas of the Principal's Responsibilities****According to Age**

AGE (YEARS)	TYPE OF RESPONSES		
	MODERATELY & MOST IMPORTANT	LEAST & SLIGHTLY IMPORTANT	TOTAL
BELOW 25 (n = 1)	0%	100%	100%
25 – 34 (n = 16)	43.80%	56.20%	100%
35 – 44 (n = 9)	66.70%	33.30%	100%
45 AND ABOVE (n = 1)	0%	100%	100%

Table 4.3**Teachers' Perception of the Areas of the Principal's Responsibilities****According to Qualification**

QUALIFICATION	TYPE OF RESPONSES		
	MODERATELY & MOST IMPORTANT	LEAST & SLIGHTLY IMPORTANT	TOTAL
DIPLOMA (n = 1)	100%	0%	100%
BACHELOR DEGREE (n = 13)	53.80%	46.20%	100%
MASTER DEGREE (n = 3)	66.70%	33.30%	100%
PhD/DOCTORATE (n = 0)	0%	0%	100%
OTHERS (n = 9)	22.20%	77.80%	100%

It can be seen that a slightly higher proportion of female teachers (53.3%) than male teachers (41.7%) perceived the areas of Principal's responsibilities to be moderately and most important. On the other hand, a larger proportion of male than female teachers perceived the areas of Principal's responsibilities to be of least or slightly important. It is also observed that only 43.8% of the teachers in the 25 - 34 age group perceived the Principal's areas of responsibilities to be moderately or most important whereas 66.7% of the teachers in the 35 – 44 age group perceived the Principal's responsibilities likewise. It

appears that older teachers place greater importance on the areas of responsibilities of a Principal. The data also indicate that larger proportions of teachers with Bachelors and Masters degrees than those under “other” qualifications place greater importance on the Principal’s areas of responsibilities.

The questionnaire also requested the principal to indicate the hindrances which prevent her from having sufficient time or means to carry out her responsibilities in specific-focus activities. Chart 4.1 shows the list of specific-focus activities of the Principal.

Chart 4.1

List of Principal's Specific-Focus Activities

- A. Attend meetings or getting involved in discussing Group issues, future plans and developing new courses, etc.

- B. Attend dinners and social functions organized by foreign universities, professional bodies, etc.

- C. Liaising with government authorities regarding official matters/permits and attending seminars on education, etc.

- D. Conduct meetings with staff to discuss, plan and/or implement new courses, projects, goals, etc. for the college.

- E. Conduct formal meetings with staff to motivate and/or inform staff of latest college achievements and problems.
- F. Conduct meetings with senior staff (Head of Departments, etc.) for updates and to provide directions.
- G. Observe individual teachers at work and discuss with the respective teacher about the observations.
- H. Conduct training sessions for teachers on improving teaching techniques and performance.
- I. Work with teachers on teaching aids, notes, handouts, lesson plans, etc. for effective classroom teaching.
- J. Conduct one-to-one discussions with teachers on academic matters and students' feedback.
- K. Conduct one-to-one discussions with problematic teachers on disciplinary/personal issues and staff grievances.
- L. Attend college functions organized by teachers, students or college.
- M. Attend staff's private social functions, eg. Weddings, birthdays, etc.

N. Publicly recognize excellent work done by teachers and their achievements.

Chart 4.2 provides a list of hindrances which may obstruct the Principal from carrying out her responsibilities in the specific-focus activities mentioned above.

Chart 4.2

**List of Hindrances to the Principal's Ideal
Involvement in Her Duties/Responsibilities**

- A. Lack of clerical/administrative help.

- B. Having to teach regular classes.

- C. Need to complete more urgent activity.

- D. Inadequate preparation for job.

- E. Ministry of Education demands.

- F. Overcrowded building.

- G. Campaigns and drives.
 - H. Failure to see activity as important.
 - I. Parents demands
 - J. Lack of office space.
 - K. Lack of co-operation from teachers.
 - L. Lack of trained teaching personnel.
 - M. Lack of finance.
 - N. Others.
-

The respondents were asked to indicate the two main hindrances in each of the 14 group of specific-focus activities which prevent the Principal from achieving the level of ideal involvement in the specific-focus activities. The Principal's and teachers' responses to the two hindrances obstructing her specific-focus activities are shown in Table 4.4 and Table 4.5 respectively.

The Principal has identified the following responses to be hindrances that obstruct her from achieving the level of ideal involvement in her duties and responsibilities. Family commitments and the failure to see activity as important have prevented her being involved in the second activity - attendance at social functions outside the college. For the seventh activity - teacher observations and feedback - she identified the hindrances as the need to complete more urgent activity and the failure to see the activity as important. She contended that the lack of finance and the need to complete more urgent activity as obstructing her from her level of ideal involvement in the eighth activity, that is, conducting training sessions on improving teaching techniques and performance. As regards the twelfth and thirteen activity - attending college functions and staff's private social functions respectively - the Principal identified the hindrances as the failure to see such activities as important, and the demand of family commitments.

Table 4.4

Principal's Responses to Two Main Hindrances
Obstructing Her Specific-Focus Activities

	Activities	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
1	7.01			*											
2	7.02								*						*
3	7.03					*									
4	7.04			*											
5	7.05			*											
6	7.06			*											
7	7.07			*					*						
8	7.08			*										*	
9	7.09			*											
10	7.10			*											
11	7.11			*											
12	7.12								*						*
13	7.13								*						*
14	7.14			*											

Key	
A Lack of clerical/administrative staff	H Failure to see activity as important
B Having to teach regular classes	I Parents demands
C Need to complete more urgent activity	J Lack of office space
D Inadequate preparation for job	K Lack of cooperation from teachers
E Ministry of Education demands	L Lack of trained teaching personnel
F Overcrowded buildings	M Lack of finance
G Campaigns and drives	N Family Commitments
* Refer to hindrances	

In Table 4.5 below shows the responses of the teachers on the two major hindrances that obstruct the Principal from achieving her level of ideal involvement in her duties and responsibilities (Please refer to Appendix C.10 for detailed responses). Their responses reveal the following results:

1. Lack of clerical/administrative help and the need to complete more urgent activity were seen as the major obstacles to the first activity (see Chart 1 above for a complete list of the activities arranged in sequential order).
2. The need to complete more urgent activity and the failure to see the activity as important were identified as the two major hindrances to the second activity.
3. For the third activity, the major hindrances observed were the need to complete more urgent task and the lack of clerical/administrative help.
4. For the fourth activity, the perceived hindrances were the need to complete more urgent activity and the failure to see the importance of the activity.

5. The major hindrances identified for the fifth activity were the need to complete more urgent task and the lack of co-operation from the teachers.
6. The need to complete more urgent task and the lack of clerical/administrative assistance together with the failure to see the importance of the activity were cited as major hindrances to the Principal's ideal involvement in the sixth activity.
7. For the remaining activities, the seventh to the fourteenth, the major obstacles identified were similar. They were the need to complete more urgent activity and the failure to see the activity as important.

Table 4.5

Teachers Responses to Two Main Hindrances
Obstructing the Principal's Specific-focus Activities

	Activity	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
1	7.01	*		*											
2	7.02			*					*						
3	7.03	*		*											
4	7.04			*					*						
5	7.05			*								*			
6	7.06	*		*					*						
7	7.07			*					*						
8	7.08			*					*						
9	7.09			*					*						
10	7.10			*					*						
11	7.11			*					*						
12	7.12			*					*						
13	7.13			*					*						
14	7.14			*					*						

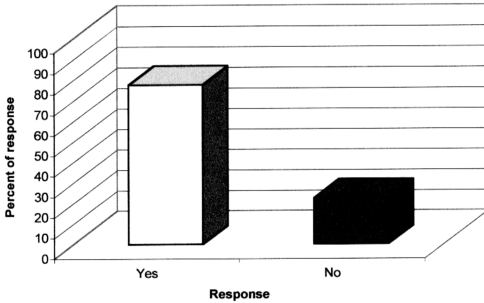
Key	
A Lack of clerical/administrative staff	H Failure to see activity as important
B Having to teach regular classes	I Parents demands
C Need to complete more urgent activity	J Lack of office space
D Inadequate preparation for job	K Lack of cooperation from teachers
E Ministry of Education demands	L Lack of trained teaching personnel
F Overcrowded buildings	M Lack of finance
G Campaigns and drives	
* Refer to hindrances	

The respondents were asked whether they agree that it is very difficult for the Principal to decide which of her areas of responsibilities are more important and therefore should have priority. They were asked to indicate with either a “Yes” or “No” answer.

The responses of the teachers to the difficulty of the Principal in ranking the importance of her decisions (see in Figure 4.10 below) show that 77.7 per cent of the respondents admitted that indeed sometimes it was difficult for their Principal to rank the importance of her decisions. The remaining percentage of respondents thought otherwise.

Figure 4.10

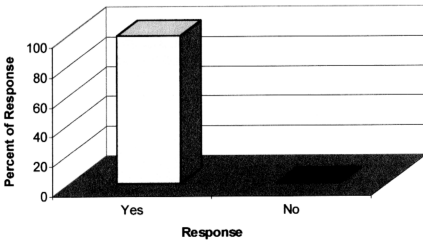
Teachers' Responses to Principal's Rating of Her Decisions



The Principal concurred with the majority of her teachers that it was difficult to rank the importance of her activities. Her responses are shown in Figure 4.11 below and the details are to be found in Appendix C.11.

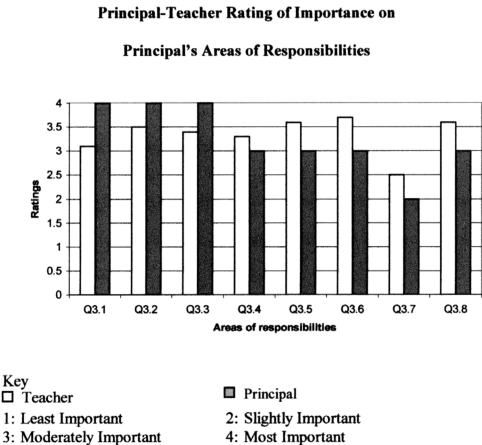
Figure 4.11

**Principal's Response to Difficulty in
Rating Her Decisions**



The Principal and teachers were also asked to ranked eight areas of responsibilities of the Principal that is related to human relations matters as provided in Question 3: discussion or communicating ways that will build positive relationships, motivating teachers and enhancing growth and camaraderie among staff, projection nurturing and caring demeanor towards teachers, discussing academic issues and feedback, demonstrating equality and fairness, correction and reprimand, personal issues and staff consultation. The respondents were asked to circle the number under the category provided which best indicate their opinion. 1 indicates ‘least important’, 2 as ‘slightly important’, 3 as ‘moderately important’ and 4 as ‘most important’. The average of the responses were tabulated and the result are shown in Figure 4.12 below and in Appendix C.12.

Figure 4.12



The Principal considered it moderately important to spend time with teachers to discuss academic issues, feedback and complaints, to demonstrate equality and fairness in dealing with all staff, to correct and discipline problematic staff and to consult staff before implementing new ideas or policy. The Principal opined that three areas of responsibilities are very important. They regard spending time with teachers to discuss and communicate ways that will build positive relationships, motivating teachers and enhancing growth and camaraderie among staff and projecting a nurturing and caring demeanor to establish trust and confidence among staff as very important. The teachers considered it moderately important to most important for the Principal to display fairness and equal treatment of staff, correcting and disciplining staff and consulting them before implementing new ideas and policies, discussions or communication with them to build positive relationships, motivating them to enhance individual growth, developing staff camaraderie, and projecting a nurturing and caring demeanor and to spend time with teachers to discuss academic issues, class evaluation/feedback and students' complaints. The teachers considered it slightly important to moderately important for the Principal to spend time with them to discuss their personal concerns and family problems.

Further analysis of the teachers' perception and preference of the Principals' involvement in a list of activities according to sex, age group and qualification is shown in Table 4.6, Table 4.7 and Table 4.8 below.

Table 4.6

Extent the Teachers Perceive and Prefer the Principal to be Involved in a List of Activities According to Sex

TYPE OF RESPONSES					
SEX	MODERATELY & MOST IMPORTANT		LEAST & SLIGHTLY IMPORTANT		TOTAL
MALE (n = 12)	58.30%	83.30%	41.70%	16.70%	100%
FEMALE (n = 15)	40.00%	93.30%	60.00%	6.70%	100%



Teacher perceptions



Teacher preference

Table 4.7

Extent the Teachers Perceive and Prefer The Principal to be Involved in a List of Activities According to Age

TYPE OF RESPONSES					
AGE (YEARS)	MODERATELY & MOST IMPORTANT		LEAST & SLIGHTLY IMPORTANT		TOTAL
BELOW 25 (n = 1)	0%	100%	100%	0%	100%
25 – 34 (n = 16)	50%	87.50%	50%	12.50	100%
35 – 44 (n = 9)	55.60%	88.90%	44.40%	11.10%	100%
45 AND ABOVE (n = 1)	0%	100%	100%	0%	100%



Teacher perceptions



Teacher preference

About (83.3%) of the male teachers and (93.3%) of the female teachers perceived their Principal to have moderate or major involvement in the list of selected activities. They preferred their Principal to be less involved. In general this preference for lesser involvement holds true for the other sub-groups by age and by qualification, except those with Masters degree.

Table 4.8

Extent the Teachers Perceive and Prefer The Principal to be Involved in a List of Activities According to Qualification

TYPE OF RESPONSES					
QUALIFICATION	MODERATELY & MOST IMPORTANT		LEAST & SLIGHTLY IMPORTANT		TOTAL
DIPLOMA (n = 1)	100%	100%	0%	0%	100%
BACHELOR DEGREE (n = 13)	38.50%	100%	61.50%	0%	100%
MASTER DEGREE (n = 3)	100%	66.70%	0%	33.30%	100%
PhD/DOCTORATE (n = 0)	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
OTHERS (n = 9)	33.33%	77.80%	66.70%	22.20%	100%



Teacher Perception

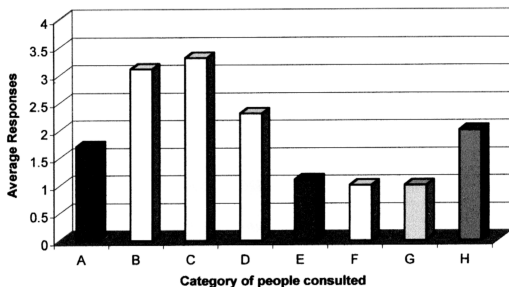


Teacher preference

The survey also intended to find out who the respondents normally consulted when they have problems or matters related to their work. There were eight categories of people listed in which the respondents are asked to indicate the level of frequency— 1 refers to 'never', 2 as 'not often', 3 as 'often' and 4 'very often'.

Figure 4.13

Teachers' Responses to Work-related Consultations



Key

A: A more junior colleague	E: Director of Studies
B: Another teacher	F: Chairman/Managing Director
C: Immediate Head/Senior/Supervisor	G: State Education Department
D: Principal/Manager	H: Others

1 = Never 2 = Not often 3 = Often 4 = Very often

The results of the teachers' responses to work-related consultations are shown in Figure 4.13. The teachers rated their head/senior/supervisor as the most frequent person they consulted when in doubt about matters or problems related to work. This was followed by consulting their peers or colleagues. However, they also consulted the principal or manager, and even a junior colleague. They never consult the Chairman/Managing Director nor the State Education Department, and the Director of Studies. On the other hand, the Principal herself indicated that she consulted the Director of Studies very often (see Figure 4.14 below and further details in appendix C.13).

Figure 4.14

Principal's Responses to Her Work-related Consultations



Key

A: A more junior colleague

B: Another teacher

C: Immediate Head/Senior/Supervisor

D: Principal/Manager

E: Director of Studies

F: Chairman/Managing Director

G: State Education Department

H: Others

1 = Never

2 = Not often

3 = Often

4 = Very often

The respondents were also requested to indicate the number of years they have been working against eight sets of working background and experiences. The results were presented in Figures 4.15 and 4.16. Further details are also found in Appendix C.14.

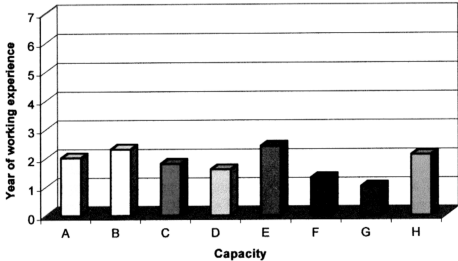
The number of years of working experiences is categorised as 1 for 'never' to 7 for 'above 25 years' (see key below the figure 4.15 and 4.16.)

Figure 4.15 below summarises the responses regarding the work experiences of the teachers. The results show that all the teachers have had a number of years of experiences except they have never been in a Principal's position before. On the other hand, see Figure 4.16, the Principal herself has been in her position for between one and five years, and she

has had between six and 10 years of experience as a teacher before becoming a Principal. Moreover, she has been working outside the education sector for less than five years before she decided to become a teacher. She has been in different positions as a staff member of her college for between 10 and 15 years.

Figure 4.15

Teachers' Work Experiences



- Key

A: In industries other than education/teaching

B: Teacher (total years in different colleges)

C: Teacher (before becoming an Officer/a Head)

D: Teacher (before becoming a principal)

E: Teacher in this current college

F: Officer/Head in this current college

G: Principal of this current college

H: Staff in this current college (all positions)
- 1: Never

2: 1 – 5 years

3: 6 – 10 years

4: 11 – 15 years

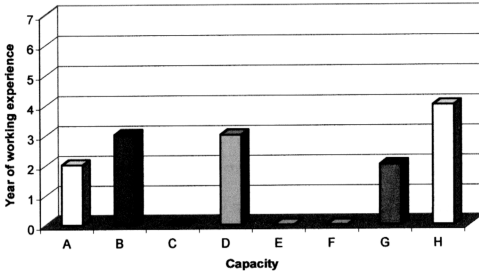
5: 16 – 20 years

6: 21 – 25 years

7: Above 25 years

Figure 4.16

Principal's Work Experiences



Key

- A: In industries other than education/teaching
- B: Teacher (total years in different colleges)
- C: Teacher (before becoming an Officer/a Head)
- D: Teacher (before becoming a principal)
- E: Teacher in this current college
- F: Officer/Head in this current college
- G: Principal of this current college
- H: Staff in this current college (all positions)

- 1: Never
- 2: 1 – 5 years
- 3: 6 – 10 years
- 4: 11 – 15 years
- 5: 16 – 20 years
- 6: 21 – 25 years
- 7: Above 25 years

4.3 Analysis of Findings

From the demographic data, it is clear that the respondents in the survey were predominantly Chinese and Indians. This feature is quite typical of a college in the private higher education system in Malaysia.

In terms of qualifications, the college has a predominance of first-degree teaching staff although Masters degree-holders are quite conspicuous. The latter suggests that, like other private colleges in the Federal Capital and Selangor, there is a growing trend for teachers to have more than just a Bachelor's degree while on the job today.

On the issue of the Principal's decision-making areas of responsibilities, the majority of the respondents suggest that it is difficult for the Principal to rank the importance of each of her tasks. Indeed, her priority should be to ensure that the operational matters of managing and implementing college policies and programmes are fulfilled effectively and productively. In this regard, the findings of Gmelch and Gates (1998) are helpful in providing some insights into why it is difficult to prioritise each of the Principal's task due to the perpetual change of the urgency and importance of the job in the college.

Allison (1996) and Fallon (1981) acknowledged the changing context of the Principal's job as reflecting the school life becoming increasingly complex, tendered the following observations:

- a. School principals face very busy and highly unpredictable working days with many individuals and groups competing for their time (Allison, 1996). The Principal is expected to devote her time to many urgent and important matters.
- b. There are many confrontations, conflicts and compromises, which are constraints principals face on a daily basis. (Fallon, 1981) It is difficult to have rigid prioritising of responsibilities because in reality, principals have to make many adjustments and compromises.

On the findings related to the principal-teacher perceptions and preferences of the Principal's specific-focus areas of activities (see Chart 1), the preferences or expectations are usually higher than the perceived reality, especially in areas of communication, participation and sharing information. The survey showed that the teachers considered it moderately important to very important for the Principal to be unbiased and just in her interaction or dealings with her staff and to reprimand those who are problematic to the organisation. In short, the teachers expected the Principal to avoid favouritism and preserve the reputation of the teachers and the college. They did not expect the Principal to be self-righteous or ignore the need to consult with them in matters pertaining to college policies and affairs. In this regard, it is interesting to note the findings of Karen Oterman (1993) based on a compilation of studies on communication skills, which indicate that school leaders who focus on communicating their own "rightness" often become isolated and ineffectual.

Another significant finding on specific-focus activities of the Principal is the need to encourage principal-teacher dialogue as well as discussion and motivation, either on a human relations dimension or an interpersonal relationship context, more frequently so as to foster *esprit de corp*, co-operation and nurture a friendly and caring environment in the college. In line with this, Heller, Drenth, Koopman and Rus (1988) observed that increased participation in decision-making by lower-level members of the organisation has been found to have positive effects on the decision-making process. And research has also shown that employees who participated in decisions involving them have higher levels of organisational commitment (Boshoff and Mels, 1995).

Also, the findings in this study suggest that the teachers expected the Principals to share information, new ideas, and policy/operations requirements with them to develop an “open climate” of interaction and to sustain an enduring network of interpersonal relationships in the interest of the college and the students. In this regard, Lawler (1989) had observed that sharing information is one of the easiest and most effective ways that managers can foster employee involvement within the organisation. Vann (1994) noted that principals could earn staff respect by articulating a clear vision of their school mission, and working collegially to accomplish consensus goals and objectives.

On the whole, the sum total of the Principal’s specific-focus activities suggest the importance of principal-teacher human relations or interpersonal relationships that can either make or break the institution in which they work. And the main thrust of this complex network of interpersonal relationships is communication, without which an

organisation is condemned to a host of difficulties and plagued by a series of recurring problems, with conflicting opinions often unresolved. The survey showed teachers perceived that the Principal devoted 20 to 40 per cent of her time on human relations-related matters whereas the Principal perceived she devoted 60 to 80 per cent of her time on such matters. In this regard, Crampton, Hodge and Mishra (1998) found that management perception of how well it is communicating does not match employee perceptions. A national survey found that 60 per cent of top management respondents indicate that they communicated frequently with their employees, yet only 30 per cent of non-management employees agreed with them. Indeed, 35 per cent of the non-management employees perceived that top management did not really communicate with them as frequently as they had claimed (Baron, 1990; David, 1979; and Allport and Postman, 1947). It is important that the problems related to communication in particular and human relations in general (whether real or imagined) be resolved if staff commitment and efficiency are to improve.

On matters pertaining to human relations, the teachers perceived the Principal as spending only between 20 to 40 per cent of her time on such issue. They would prefer their Principal to double her effort so that she becomes more visible and more accessible to her staff, and is therefore seen to be more actively involved in promoting their welfare. This finding is interesting as Zimmerman, Sypher and Haas (1996), in the context of their identification of communication meta-myth and the assumption that more communication is better, observed that regardless of how much information employees are given, they always want more. Nevertheless, as Irmsher (1996) had observed, for every interaction

the Principal should be aware that the employees usually seek relational acknowledgement and a sense of esteem from their work. Hence, communication experts normally recommend the use of sincere praises whenever possible to create a more constructive atmosphere for job and professional interaction.

In view of the intimate ties between meaningful interpersonal relationships and effective communications in any organised activity within a given contextual frame of reference, Rodwell, Kienzle and Shadur (1998) observed that a good communication system is the “oil of the company engine”. Invariably, when building interpersonal relationships between the Principal and the teachers, Irmsher (1996) emphasizes the need for leadership to be more accessible and approachable. This suggests that leadership must extend itself beyond the precinct of formal organisational requirements, and certain aspects of interpersonal interactions can be personalised to create an informal atmosphere for teamwork that diminishes the atmosphere of superior-subordinate interaction. While formal meetings are important, informal ones are also invaluable to diffuse tension-centred circumstances and conflict-prone situations, both of which are common mosaic of principal-teacher human relations.

Lastly, the study also highlights another significant finding about the perceived and preferred involvement of the Principal in specific-focus activities. Many of the teachers expected their Principal to be more involved in job-related activities such as attending staff meetings and being involved in group issues, meeting senior staff for updates and to provide directions, and motivating teachers and updating job-relevant

information/materials for professional development and organisational performance respectively. This suggests the importance of intensive interpersonal interaction and the need for frequent reinforcement of acceptable attitudes and behaviour at work and in informal settings inside and outside organisational life. This is in line with what Brody (1989) had observed that socialisation and informal communication could help make work-groups develop more cohesion and provide desired opportunities for human contact. According to Galpin and Smythe (1995), these situations can help identify impending problems, provide early warning signals for organisational change, and become bases for creating a common organisational culture.

Bulach (1997) contended that teachers believe that many principals do not know how to motivate their staff except through position, reward and coercion. The Principal, when responding to teachers about their job assessments, should give plenty of positive feedback. Finally, according to Sim (1994), the popular perception of the role of the Principal remains one of being the primary conduit for open and integrative communication processes within an organisation. This implies that, the teachers view their Principal as a key personnel in their organisation for this integrative communication process.