



RESEARCH PAPER

A Study on Decision Making of Head Teachers at School Level

¹Zafar Iqbal Anjum * ²Dr. Jam Muhammad Zafar

1. Ph. D Scholar, Department of Education, KFUEIT, Rahim Yar Khan, Punjab, Pakistan
2. Assistant Professor, Department of Education, KFUEIT, Rahim Yar Khan, Punjab, Pakistan

***Corresponding Author:** zafariqbalanjum17@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Educational leaders play key role to execute policies and to plan in time decisions for day to day issues. This study is an investigation about the present practices of school-heads about their decision making. Another core objective of the study was to compare the decision styles of school-heads with regard to their gender and locality. This study was descriptive in nature and quantitative research approach was used to conduct it Questionnaire developed by the researcher on five point Likert Scale was used as tool to collect data from the twenty school-heads selected as sampled participants by applying simple random sampling technique from the population of the study. Finally, findings of the study showed that behavioural decision style was used by the majority of heads with 53% while directive was on second with 47%.

KEYWORDS Decision Making Styles, Public School, Secondary Level

Introduction

Decision making is a socio-human process in which all the data are arranged in an organized way. It is a course of action for a specific purpose which is selected from a set of alternative decisions. It is a reaction to some questions or the choice between two or more alternatives (Westwood, 2015). Decision making is a selection of that option which is more appropriate amongst the multiple options and as a final available option in the process, it makes clear for the decision makers to think quickly as possible and through systematic process the analysis is made with the deep reflection because of individual opinions which are always different from one another (Abubakar, Elrehail, & Alatailat, 2017).

Decision making is a challenging task in some undefined situations where school heads are deciding what to do and what not to do and how to do.

Armone (2009) declared that decision making makes clear the course of action because every decision needs background knowledge and experience and without proper planning and procedure decision making cannot establish effective school policies for the organizational growth and development. It is further added that decision making reduces doubts in management and facilitate managers to go further without any fear and in case of avoiding decision making process, they have to face adverse and alarming situations.

Decision making is a systematic process where different analyses are needed. Browning, Bigby, and Douglas (2014) identified that decision making needs vision, clear thinking, ideas, and experience. A mindful and thoughtful manager makes plan for their decisions. For the fulfillment and formulation of plans, it is necessary to make consultations with everyone like parents, students, teaching and not teaching staff and even with the shopkeepers or householders who are living around the school area to ensure community participation in decision making process.

Every situation has two aspects as we know the coin has two sides. Similarly, Calnin (2016) stated that the school head does not decide until the dark and bright sides are not brought before him or her. In school based decisions, it is imperative to make consultations

with those who are trusted, hardworking, punctual, experienced, and dutiful in work; their fruitful suggestions improve the school performance and personnel duties.

According to Wallace (2012), decisions are made in the results of some unexpected and alarming situations, where school heads neither to decide nor is to leave the matter as it. In some cases, school heads have no clear vision about something. It is obvious that decision making has a key role in school management and administration for the implementation of policies and staff direction for the assigned task which they have to perform on daily basis with vigilant enthusiasm and zeal.

Westwood (2015) suggested that sometimes decision making is made in a democratic and a normal way but it depends on the staff members that how they cooperate with their school head or sometimes staff members show their irresponsibility or carelessness, and in the said situations the matter to be handled by school heads with the iron hands without caring of staff excuses and pretention.

Litvaj, Ponisciakova, Stancekova, Svobodova, and Mrazik (2022) argued that decision making comprises theory and practice. Theory deals with the ideological implications of decision making and practical implications are away from the ground realities owing to some obstacles which are undefined in theory. If both theory and practical applications of decision making are aligned with one another that produces quality management for managerial functions. Theoretical decisions are linked with knowledge management while practical decisions are dealt with the use of procedures, and methods for attaining quality in school management.

Decision making depends on area to area and situation to situation because in every situation new style to be adopted. In this case, we do not say that decision making is a stereotype mechanism but to some extent mold in the direction of situation.

The matter of decisions occurs when there is chance of challenge, a new situation, a problem occurs, a matter to be managed and reorganized and even decision making process is used in every small and big situation. Betsch and Kunz (2008) stated that decision making needs proper planning, running towards achieving goals, a preferable suggestion to be carried out. Parents and community handling is also the part of big decisions where school environment and students' performance is a leading goal of school heads. In loose environment, staff needs some bold decisions without involving any staff members and the school heads implement his or her orders by force.

School heads have to perform their roles as school leaders, supervisors, and educational administrators. They want to achieve school goals successfully and ponder eyes on every element that makes the institution reputed as compare to other institutions in the surrounding areas. In this case, the school heads have no way save for decision making to overhaul all these discrepancies because decision making is imperative for improving school environment, discipline, morning assembly, classroom management, students' studies, games, curricular and co-curricular activities, teaching ethics and religion studies like the teachings of Quran and Hadith, internal examination system, admission and struck off policies, school timings, and parents meeting time and other issues and problems which are the part of school decisions.

School heads can run the school organization in every thick and thin. Fallesen (2000) indicated that school heads face challenges and make strategies to protect their schools through integrated knowledge, thinking power, decision making process and decisional analysis. However, Klein (2008) further explained that it is effective for the school heads to learn and manage all the managerial styles including decision making styles for controlling the school staff. In this respect, check and balance and proper evaluation of every teacher is necessary and school heads know who is fit for which job and responsibility.

Decision making is a powerful tool to run the institution and without good decisions no institution can develop and achieve their goals. In this regard, it is obvious that school heads may know the art of different decision making styles to be followed. They may adopt different decision making styles according to the situation one by one to learn their impact on the staff and institutional progress and performance in order to know which style is more effective for the educational institutions improvement.

It is in our knowledge that different decision making styles are developed by the educationists and the field experts but by the passage of time different modes of management and administration are being changed and now these existing styles need more modification to be in line for their improvement. In this respect, the existing models of decision making may be evaluated and analyzed and find room for their improvement for making new models.

Therefore, it was attempted to develop a new decision making model that encompassed all the areas of school management along with the roles and responsibilities of school heads in decision making for the progress and development of educational institutions. In this regard, it was determined to choose the approaches that are related to school management to improve the efficiency of school heads for playing their role as persuasive decision makers.

Literature Review

Review of literature is the crucial part of research because it is the backbone of the study. It encompasses all the relative areas of the study and works as a guide for the researcher to follow it. It clears ambiguities in research studies for the researcher. It is one of the sources to study the work of the past researchers to know how they used research approaches like research methodology, hypothesis, data analyses, findings, conclusions, and recommendations (Cronin, Ryan, & Coughlan, 2008).

The secondary data that helps the researchers in their studies are: books, research articles and the sources of other national and international journals, published and unpublished theses and dissertations, access to digital libraries, links of the different blogs and websites, magazines, newspapers and conference papers (Lawrence, 2011).

However, in this chapter literature related to decision making, decision making styles with comparison that helps the researcher to establish relationship between them is here by discussed.

Concept of Decision Making

Decision making is a mental process which is pre-planned for doing any action to achieve any desired goal. The process of decision making is made everywhere in the society either it is a family matter, addressing community problems, organization and management of any company or institution especially in educational institutions where upcoming generation to be produced. School heads are responsible for school related matters and decision making is backbone to make strong the foundation of education (Child, Elbanna, & Rodrigues, 2010).

Decision making makes easy the tasks of the school heads where their innovative ideas and visions are involved and they can produce well qualified and talented students and would have time to work with the weak students to enhance their learning efficiency. The decision depends on the nature of situation for taking initiative on real grounds. It means that the purpose of decision making is different in different circumstances and situations (Elbanna, 2006).

The definition of the term *decision* is very simple to understand. This concept is presented by Row and McGrath in 1984 with a view that decision making is a reaction to

some questions or a choice between two or more alternatives. Basically, it is the capacity to make a decision is linked with picking the best one from a group of substitutions. (Hammond, 1999)

Need of Decision Making

Decision making is an important element of research and across the globe all the activities are done in the organization under the umbrella of decision making. On account of its significance, in the last century, the maximum number of research work was done on decision making and its styles; either the study belonged to the field of education, psychology, philosophy, leadership, management, cognitive domain. Driver and Streufertn introduced a model for decision making in 1969; the idea behind individual's information dealing procedure and the talent to answer the issues. The advancement of this research was on the foundation of previous studies which were executed in psychological cognition.

We human beings find some thrilling opportunities in life where we are struck to do or not to do or what to do and what not to do and that is the point where we need guidance and supervision in the form of decision making. Therefore, the need and importance of decision making cannot be ignored. All the companies, business environment, institutions are kept on the mercy of decision making because the institutional heads know if they go further without planning and decision making, their all efforts would be vain and they could have to face great loss. So, decision making is the demand of every field, either the issue is individual based or company or institutional based (Dowling, Welch, Festing, & Engle, 2008).

School-Heads

School-heads are the key figures in the institution and their role commences with facing stress and responsibilities. It is necessary for the school heads that they would be professional in their managerial and administrative responsibilities. It is imperative that they face the challenges in their course and reach the schools positions to the highest level with endeavor efforts and devotion of work (Bedi & Kukemelk, 2018). Darmody and Smyth (2011) viewed that active and energetic school heads may progress in school goals with the cooperation of teaching and non-teaching staff. It is in their minds to run the institution successfully by forgetting past unsuccessful goals and usher efforts with new zeal and enthusiasm. Their eye on every staff member is imperative in respect of their duties and performances and it is possible when they visit classes and monitor ongoing school and class activities.

Huma (2005) argued that it is the duty of the school heads to maintain the quality of their schools. They need to ensure the progress and performance of their staff on one hand and students on the other hand. She added that committed school heads keep attention to inside and outside the class environment and if find any discrepancy in teachers, avoid to talk with them before students and share with them in isolation. It is also inevitable that school heads appreciate the efforts of the teachers and give them respect and motivate them continually for the progress of the schools and there must be no vacuum between the teachers and school heads.

Othman and Abd-ur- Rauf (2009) identified that school heads have to follow these steps for educational institutions development which are: changing the nature of work, encouraging students for competitions, taking initiatives specific areas, inducing students for earning prizes, re-thinking on organizational roles, working for outdoor activities for school improvement, utilizing discretionary powers, and introducing information technology in school related work.

Role of School-Heads in Decision Making

Decision making is that process where vision, thinking, innovative ideas and creative steps are required for good decisions. Trimmer (2011) stated that pre-planned mode in decision making works for the academic career of the students and if the heads have this ability they make schools successful and the local community and education department appreciate their efforts. Some of the heads are successful and some of the heads are unsuccessful and it is due to proper planning and decision making.

Gharajedaghi (2011) indicated that variations in decision making are clear for the school heads. It means that they reach to the conclusion in some of the matters and they decide about them as quickly as possible and this rapid approach of school heads systematically works for correct decisions whereas in some of the complicated matters, they do not reach to the conclusion, and in these matters, they need time, deep thinking, and analysis to verdict about and for resolution of these matters, they have to face stress, depression, and tension along with mental fatigue.

Decision making Styles

Decision making styles are the important components of management. Rowe and Mason had developed a model in 1987. In this model, decision making styles were introduced with reference to their particular types with the idea that management has to adopt decision making styles in different situations and grounds. Every style helps the managers in running the institution. These styles were composed after thorough study and analyses. It was Scott and Bruce (1995) who assembled numerous researches and theories to create a universal perception about decision making styles. They defined that decision making style is as the scholarly typical reaction design revealed by a person whenever faced any decision condition. They further refused to accept it as personality attributes rather than a conventional tendency to respond in any situation. They further added with certain conclusions about belief system that the domain of decision making research needs really an accurate theoretical outline. They tried to combine the already present research by expressing four decision making styles which includes; rational, intuitive and dependent with avoidant which are grounded on human behaviour. Relating a lot of investigations, they finally concluded that these decision making styles were although independent in a sense, but not reciprocally elite. Keeping in view the significant role and meaningful relation with running of school, it was recommended that administration is decision making

It is evident by the above debate that decision making has durable impact on the progress and well-being of school and its related shareholders including students, teachers, parents and school community. Two decision making models got much importance and acceptance in history; the rational model and the bounded rationality model (March, 2010).

There are four types of decision making styles comprising:

- Analytical Style
- Conceptual Style
- Behavioural Style
- Directive Style

Analytical Style

This style is characterized as a tool to solve problems at all levels and scholarly coordination. The people who opt this decision style show lenience and for uncertainty. Technicalities are primarily emphasized in this style which required completes replacements.

Conceptual Style

This style is associated with positive as well as social able bearings. The people who use this style are typically soft human beings who believe in communication with others.

Behavioral Style

The people who intend towards this style have sense of creativity. They also show patience for vague situations but societal elements are preferred.

Directive Style

Autocracy is linked with this decision style as the people who use this style have less easiness for others. Technical queries are focused to increase speed and performance.

Row and Mason’s Decision Style Inventory

This comprehensive inventory would facilitate the researcher in this study to develop questionnaire for the identification decision styles of school-heads. Although the researcher considered only two decision styles i.e. behavioural and directive, in this study.

Description of Row and Mason’s Decision Making Styles

Tolerance For ambiguity	<p>Analytical Enjoys problem solving Wants best answers Wants best control Uses considerable data Enjoys variety Is innovative Uses careful analysis</p>	<p>Conceptual Is achievement-oriented Has a broad outlook Is creative Is humanistic/artistic Initiates new ideas Is future-oriented</p>	Thinking (Ideas)
	<p>N-ACH, needs challenges</p>	<p>N-ACH, is independent and wants recognition</p>	
Cognitive Complexity	<p>Directive Expects results Is aggressive Acts rapidly Uses rules Uses intuition Is verbal</p>	<p>Behavioural Is supportive Uses persuasion Is emphathetic Communicates easily Prefers meetings Uses meetings Uses limited data</p>	Doing (Action)
Need for Structure	<p>N-POW, needs power</p>	<p>N-AFF, needs affiliation</p>	

Research Design

This study was quantitative in nature as any research study about the investigation of present scenario like this is called descriptive research. Glass and Hopkins (1984) explained that descriptive research involves gathering data that define events and then organizes, tabulates, depicts and describes that data.

Delimitation of the Study

Due to limitation of time and resources, this study was delimited to the public secondary schools of Rahim Yar Khan District located in the southern part of Punjab. The study was further delimited to the followings:

1. Only public schools of Sadiq Abad Tehsil.
2. Only secondary schools.
3. Only school heads.

Population

The population of this study was consisted of public schools of Rahim Yar Khan District. There are three hundred and two (302) public schools in this district including one

hundred and eighty four (184) male/boys and one hundred and eighteen (118) female/girls schools. The detail of population is as:

**Table 1
Detail of Population**

Sr#	Tehsil	Male (Boys)	Female (Girls)	Total
1	Rahim Yar Khan	58	47	105
2	Khan Pur	39	25	64
3	Sadiq Abad	42	25	67
4	Liaquat Pur	45	21	66
	Grand total	184	118	302

Sampling and sample

Sampling is a process in which particular number of persons/participants is selected with the help of some sampling technique from population. First of all, one Tehsil (Sadiq Abad) amongst four was selected and then all schools were separated into their relevant gender and finally twenty heads of school were selected as sample with equal ratio of gender. All this selection process of sample was done by using simple random sampling method.

Research tool

The tools or instruments used in any research for the purpose of data collection from the participants are called research tools. It is essential to select suitable tool in research because the data collected through this tool is used to address the objectives and reply the research questions in that study. The researcher used questionnaire, developed on five point Likert Scale having fifteen questions/items for the purpose of data collection in this study. These items covered the operational dimensions of decision styles. To ensure the validity of the tool, experts’ opinion and pilot testing were used. When the opinion and results was obtained, then the tool was finalized by incorporating them.

Data Collection

The researcher collected data by administering the research tools i.e. questionnaire. For this purpose, the researcher visited Sadiq Abad Tehsil and contacted public secondary school heads. The behavior of school heads during this process was positive which made it comfortable for the researcher to collect it time data.

Data Analysis

The collected data were entered in the computer software known as Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). To investigate the decision making style of schools-heads, frequency, percentage, means and stander deviation was calculated. By this, the mean score of options of all heads was compared. In this way, high mean score showed their tendency for that particular type of school heads.

Presentation of data

**Table 2
Head-teachers’ opinions about behavioural decision making style**

Statements	Least Preferred	Little Preferred	Moderately Preferred	Most Preferred	Mean	S.D
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)		
Rural	22.0	33.1	25.2	19.7	2.43	1.024
Urban	40.2	15.7	22.0	22.0	2.26	1.125

Table shows head-teachers' opinions about behavioural decision making. It is clear from the data that male heads' opinion for this decision style was least preferred by 22% heads, little preferred by 31.1% , moderately preferred by 25.2% and most preferred by 19.7 % respondents. Forty percent urban heads responded least option, 15.7% heads rated it little, 22% heads rated it moderately and 22% heads rated it high with most preferred. The mean score (2.43) is higher for rural heads which indicates their more inclination towards behavioural decision making style.

Table 3
Head-teachers' opinions about behavioural decision making style

Statements	Least Preferred (%)	Little Preferred (%)	Moderately Preferred (%)	Most Preferred (%)	Mean	S.D
Male	37.0	40.2	15.0	7.2	1.94	0.915
Female	17.3	22.0	40.9	19.7	2.63	0.990

Table shows head-teachers' opinions about behavioural decision making. It is clear from the data that male heads' opinion for this decision style was least preferred by 37% heads, little preferred by 40.2% , moderately preferred by 15% and most preferred by 7.2 % respondents. Seventeen percent urban heads responded least option, 22% heads rated it little, 40.9% heads rated it moderately and 19.7% heads rated it high with most preferred. The mean score (2.63) is higher for female heads which indicates that they were more inclined towards behavioural decision making style.

Table 4
Head-teachers' opinions about directive decision making style

Statements	Least Preferred (%)	Little Preferred (%)	Moderately Preferred (%)	Most Preferred (%)	Mean	S.D
Rural	38.6	38.6	13.4	9.4	1.94	0.949
Urban	20	30	17.3	33.8	2.66	1.135

Table shows head-teachers' opinions about directive decision making. It is clear from the data that rural heads' opinion for this decision style was least preferred by 38.6% heads, little preferred by 38.6% , moderately preferred by 13.4% and most preferred by 9.4% respondents. Twenty percent urban heads responded least option, 30% heads rated it little, 17.3% heads rated it moderately and 33.8% heads rated it high with most preferred. The mean score (2.66) is higher for urban heads which indicates that urban heads were more inclined towards directive decision making style.

Table 5
Head-teachers' opinions about directive decision making style

Gender	Least Preferred (%)	Little Preferred (%)	Moderately Preferred (%)	Most Preferred (%)	Mean	S.D
Male	31.5	26.0	22.8	19.7	2.31	1.116
Female	33.1	22.0	26.8	18.1	2.30	1.115

Table V shows head-teachers' opinions about directive decision making. It is clear from the data that male heads' opinion for this decision style was least preferred by 31.5% heads, little preferred by 26.0% , moderately preferred by 22.8% and most preferred by 19.7% respondents. Thirty three percent female heads responded least option, 22.0% heads rated it little, 26.8% heads rated it moderately and 18.1% heads rated it high with most preferred. The mean score (2.31) is higher for the male heads with minor difference by female heads (2.30) which indicates that male heads were more inclined towards directive decision making style.

Table 6
Comparison of head-teachers' decision making style

Decision Style	N	Mean
Behavioural	20	53
Directive		47

Above table shows mean score of school heads' responses for both decision making styles; 53 % school heads showed their opinion for behavioural with most preferred and 47 % for directive. It means that behavioural decision making style is mostly used by school heads with 53%.

Findings

By the results derived by data analysis, following findings are established:

1. Majority of the rural school heads uses behavioural decision making style as compare to urban heads to the extent of this decision style.
2. Majority of the female school heads uses behavioural decision making style as compare to male heads to the extent of this decision style.
3. Majority of the urban school heads uses directive decision making style as compare to rural heads to the application of only this decision style.
4. Majority of the male school heads uses directive decision making style as compare to female heads to the application of only this decision style.
5. Overall, majority of school heads with 53 %, use behavioural decision making style when both decision styles were compared.
6. Forty seven percent school heads use directive decision making style with 47 % ratio.

Conclusion

The researcher tried to discuss collected data results to know the presently working school-heads tendency towards their decision attitude and action. According to Hussain (2011), the head of the school performs a decision-making role by making numerous choices and delegating choices to teaching and nonteaching employees in order to accomplish the intended goals. It is evident by the results and findings of this study that majority of school heads are democratic in their decision making and have consultative aptitude with clear margin of 53 % as compare to 47 %. It is positive hope for the future as many research studies concluded with the results that educational institutions where heads have democratic behavior and follow these norms showed better results and high motivated staff as compare to those educational institutions where heads are directive or dictator in their styles.

Recommendation

The findings of this study showed variation in decision making patterns of school-heads. It is pertinent for heads of schools to have sound knowledge about the process of decision making as they have to decide the fate of the nation by dealing students for their learning needs. This aspect of the research highlighted its inclusion with emphasis in the policy making level of management. It is highly recommended for future researchers to

conduct research study on this variable with broader population to increase and ensure its generalization. The findings of this study may be incorporated with school heads training manuals and training institutions may also be asked to get guidelines by these findings to develop more training material for future training programmes of school heads.

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