

Leaders' Styles of Decision Making and Their Influence on Educational Organization Effectiveness

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Abstract

This paper aims to study which styles of decision making approaches in resource allocations influence the perceived organizational effectiveness. From the study, we can conclude that rational/collegial style of decision making positively influences organizational effectiveness. Conversely, autocratic/political style of decision making negatively influences organizational effectiveness.

Keywords: leadership, decision making, effectiveness

1.0 Introduction

Leadership is a process in influencing between leaders and their followers in order to achieve the organizational goals. The successful of the organisation in order to achieve its goals and objective are depends on the leaders and their leadership styles. And the success of a group, organization and even a whole country is dependent on the effectiveness of a leader (Fielder, 1996).

Academic staff is the key of success for educational settings. They are the backbone or core of good learning outcomes. In school organisation, the head teacher is responsible and have the authority for all major decisions; curriculum and instruction, management of student discipline, school organization and staff personnel matters, financial matters, school and community relations among others are centered on his/her office (Ministry of Education, 1975).

Bachelor (1980), Armstrong (1984), Dwivedi (1988) and Maritim (1988), observe that involving subordinates in decision making improves the quality of the decision and the effectiveness of the organization which leads to achievement of the organizational goals

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Definition of decision making

Decision can be defined as “an answer to some question or a choice between two or more alternatives” (Rowe, Boulgarides, & McGrath, 1984). We need to make decision for everyday and task in our life from at a very fundamental level to the hardest task level. The ability to make a decision relates to making choices within a pool of alternatives (Hammond, 1999). Traditionally, decision making theory has focused on the cognitive process by which an individual makes a decision.

Decision-making style has been defined as a habitual pattern individuals use in decision making (Driver, 1979) or individuals' characteristic model of perceiving and responding to decision-making tasks (Harren, 1979).

Cameron and Tschirhart (1992, p.89) define decision processes in organizations as “internally focused patterns that relate to the information gathering, analysis, and choice activities of managers inside the enterprise”.

2.2 Effectiveness of leaderships

Leadership researchers recognized from the late 1940s to the mid-1960s that traits alone were not sufficient for identifying effective leaders (Robbins, Coulter, & Vohra, 2010). And, this dissatisfaction to trait approach stimulates to behavioral theories of leadership. These theories propose that leaders' success depends the style of their action and reaction. There are several approaches to leadership behavior have been suggested such as: the autocratic, the democratic, and the laissez-faire style; the initiation structure and consideration; employee oriented and production oriented and managerial grid (Robbins et al., 2010).

Cameron (1978) identified nine dimensions for measuring effectiveness of Higher Educational Institutions, these are: “student education satisfaction, student academic development, student career development, student personal development, faculty and administrator employment satisfaction, professional development and quality of the faculty, systems openness and community interaction, ability to acquire resources, and organizational health”.

Levine, Rubin, and Wolohojian's (1982) argued that in their study that political decision processes hindered organizational effectiveness, while Pfeffer (1981) contended that political decision making approaches boosted performance. However, there is general agreement presents in theory that participative decision making approaches are associated with enhanced organizational effectiveness in the long run (e.g., Chaffee, 1973; Meyer, 1979; Peters, 1987; Sutton, & D'Aunno, 1989).

2.3 Types of decision making

Driver, Brousseau, and Hunsaker (1990) postulated that individuals have a primary decision-making style and a

secondary style. That is, while an individual's approach to a given decisional task may be characterized by one predominant style, elements of other styles can be present (Harren, 1979).

However, none of the leadership behaviour styles is appropriate in all situations. A style also can be accepted and adopted according to suitability of the situation. This statement was argued by Fiedler (1997), Hersey and Blanchard (1974) and House (1971).

Among of many different taxonomic classifications for decision making styles, rational (making decisions deliberately and logically), intuitive (based on feelings and emotional satisfaction), and dependent (based on the expectations and other's opinions), was the most recognized (Phillips, Friedlander, Pazienza, & Kost, 1985). These three styles represent different sets of attitudes and behaviours in doing decision making tasks and vary as a function of the degree to which individuals take personal responsibility for decision making and the extent to which they use logic as differentiated from emotional decision-making approaches.

Additionally, in organizations, some of literature suggests six different styles of decision making of resource allocation. For instance, collegial or participative which urges on consensus building; rational characterized by supporting data; bureaucratic values structured administrative patterns; political concentrating by conflicting self-interest and power; organized anarchy grounded on serendipity, and autocratic dependent upon the preference of a single, powerful individual (Cameron & Tschirhart, 1992; Chaffee, 1983; Smart et al., 1997).

Smart et al., (1997) working on these six styles of decision making by factor analytical procedure into two broad categories as rational/collegial and autocratic/political. The rational/collegial style of decision making of resource allocation are based on "group discussion and consensus", directed by the use of "a standard set of procedures" and criteria reflecting "what objectively seems best for this institution overall".

For rational decision making style, the effectiveness may be situational, depending on the personal or cultural factors and on the decisional tasks under study (Mau, 1995). Based on Harren (1979), he stated that rational style the most effective decision making styles, however, the studies have been indecisive. For example, a rational decision-making style has been found to be associated with career maturity (Blustein, 1987; Dille, 1965), planning and information gathering (Jepsen, 1974), ego identity (Blustein & Phillips, 1990), career decisiveness (Lunneborg, 1978; Mau, 1995), problem solving efficacy (Heppner, 1978; Phillips, Pazienza, & Ferrin, 1984a), and occupational certainty (Mau & Jepsen, 1992).

The collegial or participative which urges on consensus building; rational characterized by supporting data; bureaucratic values structured administrative patterns; political concentrating by conflicting self-interest and power; organized anarchy grounded on serendipity, and autocratic dependent upon the preference of a single, powerful individual (Cameron & Tschirhart, 1992; Chaffee, 1983; Smart et al., 1997).

The autocratic/political style of decision making of resource allocation predominated by one individual at a particular organization, decisions are made in a political manner "based on the relative power of those involved" and without any "particular pattern" characterizing the criteria used (Smart et al., 1997, p.263). However, some researchers found that centralized or autocratic decision making approaches were inversely related to organizational effectiveness (Bibeault, 1982; Huber, 1990; Rubin, 1979; Singh, 1986). That statement was supported (Smart et al., 1997), based on their study autocratic/political style of decision making of resource allocation negatively influenced organizational effectiveness and vice versa in case of rational/collegial.

Besides, it also supports theoretical perspective that style of rational/collegial in decision making escalate the effectiveness of organizations in positive direction, contrarily to autocratic/political style which inversely influence organizational effectiveness (e.g., Chaffee, 1973; Meyer, 1979; Peters, 1987; Sutton, & D'Aunno, 1989).

Rational/collegial as most important in comparison to autocratic/political decision making approaches in explaining organizational effectiveness. This means that if an institution is able to nourish rational/collegial decision making approach in resource allocation, it can enhance its effectiveness and vice versa if it nurtures autocratic/political style.

At school level the changes in education are a challenge to head-teachers and other educational administrators who might be harbouring the traditional approaches to administration which according to Jones (1985) are autocratic and bureaucratic in nature. Teachers who are encouraged to participate democratically in decision making process are reported to be more positive and committed to the school as an organisation (Manga 1996).

2.4 Influences

There are many factors that can effects people decision making styles. Several strategic choice studies stated that the personal characteristics of the strategic decision maker influence the decision they make (Brouthers, et al., 1998).

The studies on cognitive style also have indicated that individuals from a culture whose child-rearing practices encourage obedience in the child and conformance to parental authority are associated with the field-

dependent cognitive style (Witkin, 1979).

Previous studies also have reported that decision maker's demographic characteristic, and in particular the person's educational level, can affect the strategic decisions (Gibcus, et al., 2009). For example, cultural also can influence the decision making styles. From the previous study, it indicated the Asian-Americans tend to be less autonomous, more dependent, and more conforming and obedient to authority (Abbot, 1970; Sue & Kirk, 1972).

Rationality and intuition are also the result of the decision-maker personality. There are other competences that are the direct result of the experiences and the background of the decision maker, like the training and the international experience. The experience by Hitt and Tyler (1991) showed that the bundle of experiences can affect both the strategic choice made and the processes adopted in making those decisions.

Conclusions

From the study, we can conclude that rational/collegial style of decision making positively influences organizational effectiveness. Conversely, autocratic/political style of decision making negatively influences organizational effectiveness.

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