

Decision-Making Styles of the Principals of High Schools

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Abstract : The aim of the study was to evaluate the decision-making styles of the principals of high schools with respect to their type of Institution, religion and administrative experience. A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted amongst the principals of High schools of Barmer district from the Rajasthan State. The sample for the present study consisted of 60 Principals from various High Schools of Barmer District. The data was collected using the decision-making style scale which comprised of 48 items with a maximum score of 48. Statistically, no significant difference in the decision-making styles of Principals of High schools with respect to the type of institution, religious background and administrative experiences were noted. The study revealed that all the Principals from both Government and Private High Schools adopts same type of decision-making styles to handle different problems. Decision-making is considered as situational or contextual. Being the leader of the school i.e., Principals make various decisions which decides their style of decision-making as these are nothing but the habitual patterns of an individual. It can be concluded that decisions are made continually by school administrators. Thus, decision-making is an important part of the school.

Keywords: Decision-making styles, Principals, Leadership, High school.

Introduction - Principals as leaders wield significant influence in shaping the direction and priorities of their schools. However, the principals confront diverse situations where they have to make apt decisions for enhancing the quality of teaching-learning activities in their schools. They take decisions aligned with the vision, mission and value system of the school; and play a key role in promoting the academic excellence and nurturing a positive learning environment. It is their leadership skills and abilities to involve the stakeholders in making wise decisions that impact on the students, teachers, and the entire school community in a positive manner. Therefore, making effective decisions by the Principals signifies their leadership style. Similarly, the pattern or ways in which decisions were made by the Principals become their decision-making style. Effective decision-making by the Principal serves as a guiding force for positive outcomes, ultimately contributing to enhance academic performance and school effectiveness. The need of the present study arise out of the context that how the Principals' decision-making styles play a vital role in making effective schools. From the literature review, it was found that very few studies on Principals' decision-making and its impact on school effectiveness were conducted in India. The present study was intended with an aim to examine the decision-making styles being executed by the Principals of the Effective Government Higher Secondary Schools (GHSS) of Barmer

District; and to study the involvement of teachers in different domains of school decision-making by the Principal.

Objectives of the Study: The objectives of the study are as follows-

1. To examine the various decision-making styles being executed by the principals of Government Higher Secondary Schools of Barmer.

Design of the Study: An explanatory sequential research design has been used in the present study. It is a design that follows a particular pattern of data collection i.e., from quantitative to qualitative data. An explanatory sequential design according to Dawadi & Giri (2021) consists of first collecting quantitative data and then collecting qualitative data to explain or elaborate on the quantitative results. The rationale for employing this approach is that the quantitative data and results provide a general picture of the research problem; more analysis, while qualitative data collection is needed to refine, extend, or explain the general picture of the research problem.

Sample Size and Data Collection: The sample of the present study consists of 197 Government Higher Secondary Schools in the Barmer District. The sample of the study further comprises 60 Principals and 274 Teachers of Government Higher Secondary Schools in the Barmer District.

Tool: The decision-making style scale developed by Dr. Noorjehan N. Ganihar (2005) was used for the present

study. Statements in the tool were specifically designed to evaluate the decision-making styles reflected by the principals of High schools. The scale comprised of 48 items with a maximum score of 48 and the following 4 subscales: Entrepreneurial problems (12 items), Administrative problems (12), Academic problems (12) and Personal problems (12). The responses of the principals of schools to the 48 items were collected and 12 frequencies of Routine, Compromise and Heuristic were calculated. Each item has 3 responses. The response to first alternative is scored as routine, the second as compromise and the third as heuristic for all the 48 items. Each response by the respondent is scored as 1 since there is no question of right or wrong answer.

Statistical Analysis: The Statistical Package for Social Sciences, (SPSS) was used to analyse the collected data. Descriptive statistics (mean, frequency and average) were calculated to show the average scores of individual items and subscales for principal's overall decision-making styles. The data for each variable (type of institution, religion and administrative experience) were analysed using either t-test or one way ANOVA. All values were found to be significant at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 1.1 Decision-making styles of the principals (N=60)

Decision-Making Styles	Decision-Making Styles	Percentage of Responses
Intuitive	380	23.6%
Rational	613	37.8%
Spontaneous	260	16%
Dependent	355	21.9%
Avoidant	12	.7%
Total	1620	100%

Table 1.1 depict that the majority (37.8%) of principals follow a rational decision-making style while making decisions which means that they rely on strict procedures of utilizing logic and objectivity whereas 26.3% of principals rely on an intuitive decision-making style while making school-related decisions. Intuitive decision making refers to the way in which people make decisions based on their gut feelings or instincts. It is just like “trusting your conscience”, or using your sixth sense. It is mostly used when the evidence is not available to rely on. Additionally, it was also revealed that 16% of principals make immediate decisions based on their experiences and 21.9% follow a dependent decision-making style which means that the principals do not make a decision unilaterally instead they consider the opinion of others (stakeholders) whereas negligible (0.7%) percent of principals have avoidant decision-making style while dealing with the school related situations where a decision needs to be taken. Therefore, it can be concluded that usually, very few numbers of principals avoid delaying the situation where they have to make a decision.

Table 1.2. Demographic information of the participants

Participant's Characteristics	N	%
Gender		
Male	33	55%
Female	27	45%
Locality		
Rural	28	46.6%
Urban	32	53.4%
Professional experience		
1-5 years	31	51.6%
6-10 years	17	28.4%
11-15 years	12	20%
Total	60	100%

Table 1.2, reflects the demographic information of the principals gathered through the Decision-Making Style Scale. It can be perceived that the majority (55%) of the principals were male whereas the female principals were only 45%. Concerning the locality, it has been found that the majority of the principals belong to urban areas (53.4%) whereas 46.6% of the principals belong to rural areas. As far as the professional experience of the participants was concerned, it can be seen that principals having 1-5years of professional experience were 51.6% whereas, 28.4% of the principals had 6-10 years of professional experience and only 20% were having 11-15 years of professional experience.

Decision-Making Styles of the Principals of Effective Government Higher Secondary Schools with respect to their Gender (male and female)

The obtained results of decision-making styles for various groups are given in the tables 1.3 & 1.4

Table 1.3. Decision-making styles of the male principals of government higher secondary schools (N=33)

Decision-Making Styles	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Intuitive	185	21%
Rational	613	37.8%
Spontaneous	260	16%
Dependent	355	21.9%
Avoidant	12	.7%
Total	1620	100%

Table 1.3, depict that the majority (38.20%) of the male principals follow a rational decision-making style while making decisions related to the school. It means that they rely on making decisions by applying logic to arrive at a solution. In addition to this, 21% of the male principals rely on an intuitive decision-making style which implies that the principals employed accumulated past experiences, unconscious patterns, and heuristics. Moreover, it was also found that 16.60% of the male principals rely on making immediate decisions which means they make decisions without taking much time. Moreover, 23.60% of the principals follow a dependent decision-making style while making various decisions in the school which implies that

male principals require support, advice, and guidance from others while making decisions. Besides this, a negligible (0.60%) percentage of principals follow an avoidant decision-making style. Hence, it can be concluded that the majority of the male principals preferred a rational decision-making style while making decisions in the school. Male principals may prefer this approach because it allows them to assess situations objectively, weigh the pros and cons of different choices, and arrive at a solution that aligns with the school's goals and objectives.

Table 1.4-Decision-making styles of the male principals of government higher secondary schools with respect to the curriculum of the school (N=33)

Decision-Making Styles	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Intuitive	86	21.7%
Rational	144	36.3%
Spontaneous	60	15%
Dependent	102	26%
Avoidant	4	1%
Total	396	100%

Table 1.4, shows that the majority (36.3%) of the male principals follow a rational decision-making style while making decisions related to the curriculum of the school however, 21.7% of the male principals follow an intuitive decision-making style while making various decisions in the school. Further, it was also revealed that 15% of the male principals make immediate decisions and 26% of the male principals follow a dependent decision-making style which means they seek advice from other stakeholders while dealing with the situations related to the curriculum. However, it also shows that only 1% of the male principals follow an avoidant decision-making style. To conclude, male principals adopt a rational decision-making style in the majority as it is based on evidence, data, and research to inform curriculum choices. Principals may prioritize this approach to ensure that instructional materials, teaching methods, and learning experiences are based on proven best practices and pedagogical principles, enhancing the quality and effectiveness of education.

Table 1.5 Decision-making styles of the female principals of government higher secondary schools (N=27)

Decision-Making Styles	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Intuitive	1895	26.7%
Rational	273	37.4%
Spontaneous	112	15.3%
Dependent	144	20%
Avoidant	5	.6%
Total	729	100%

Table 1.5, show that the majority (37.4%) of the female principals follow a rational decision-making style while

making decisions in the school. Whereas, 26.7% of the female principals prefer an intuitive decision-making style. Moreover, it was also revealed that out of the total, only 15.3% of the female principals rely on spontaneous decision-making. In addition to this, a dependent decision-making style is followed by 20% of the female principals which implies that they consider the opinions or choices of others before reaching any conclusion whereas a negligible (0.6%) percentage of female principals follow an avoidant decision-making style.

In a nutshell, Female principals may prefer a rational decision-making style in the majority while making decisions as it allows them to make informed decisions based on empirical evidence rather than subjective opinions or biases, thereby enhancing the quality and credibility of their decisions.

Table 1.6. Decision-making styles of the female principals with respect to the curriculum (N=27)

Decision-Making Styles	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Intuitive	98	30%
Rational	116	36%
Spontaneous	33	10%
Dependent	75	23%
Avoidant	2	1%
Total	324	100%

In Table 1.6, the decision-making styles of the female principals concerning the curriculum are analysed. It was revealed that 36% of the female principals take decisions rationally while dealing with the curriculum. Moreover, 30% of the female principals follow the intuitive decision-making style and 10% of the female principals follow the spontaneous decision-making style. In addition to this, 23% of the female principals take suggestions from others while making any decision. Moreover, a negligible percentage of female principals (1%) avoid situations when they have to make decisions regarding the school curriculum which means that instead of avoiding the situation, they take decisions whenever necessary.

In a nutshell, we may say that female principals maybe prefer to take decisions rationally regarding curriculum to adapt curriculum plans in light of new information, feedback, or emerging educational trends, ensuring relevance and responsiveness to students.

Discussion: Based on the findings of the study, it was revealed that the majority (37.8%) of the principals follows a rational decision-making style whereas 26.3% of principals rely on an intuitive decision-making style while making various decisions in the school. Additionally, it was also revealed that 16% of principals take immediate decisions, whereas, 21.9% follows dependent decision-making styles. In addition to this, 0.7% of principals prefer avoidant decision-making style while dealing with school-related decisions. These findings are supported by Qamar and

Rashid (2020) who found that principals moderately used all the decision-making styles as per the situation arrives. Koutouzis and Malliara (2017) also found that the rational decision-making style was followed by the principals at the highest in number followed by dependent, intuitive, avoidant, and spontaneous decision-making styles. Olcum and Titrek (2015) also revealed that administrators mostly use a rational decision-making style and rarely rely on an avoidant decision-making style. Azeska et al. (2017) found that a rational decision making style was used by the principal as it contributed to the selection of the most appropriate alternative for the school curriculum. It was further added that a rational approach is essential for school administrators because it provides objectivity, eliminates the influence of emotion and bias, and helps make the best but not just satisfactory and sufficient decisions. Further, they added that they involve teachers in the decision-making which means they also rely on a dependent decision-making style. To conclude, we may say that in schools, it is important for principals to rely more on rational DMS as it is a step-by-step thinking process to weigh the pros and cons of choices. Making rational decisions is important to eliminate emotions in the decision-making process. Its main purpose is to ensure logic is used at every step of the process to come up with the best rational solution. Sometimes, a purely logical mind moves in a rigid, linear, and logical 227 sequence of thought. But the intuitive mind which is in direct contact with the universal consciousness of nature follows the cyclic rhythms of nature. Therefore, the principal has to make decisions in a certain way, depending upon the situation, which in turn shapes the pattern of their decision-making style.

Conclusions : In a nutshell, we may say that the results of the present study indicated that the most preferred decision-making style adopted by the principals of government higher secondary schools is rational decision-making style, and numerous strategies are there which have been implemented by the principals to make their school effective or improved in various contexts. Thus, we may say that rational decision-making is crucial for principals because it ensures that their choices are well-informed, data-driven, and aligned with the educational mission of the school. This approach helps create a positive learning environment and promotes the overall success of the school community. It is essential for effective administration, resource allocation, and overall school improvement.

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