



A Conceptual Framework for Effective Decision-Making in Education Systems

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Abstract

This paper explored effective decision making in educational systems, examining the theories, concepts, and frameworks that influence decision-making processes. The paper discusses various decision-making models, including rational, normative, and bounded rationality theories, and their applications in educational settings. It examined the various steps to make sound decision and the types of decision making. It also described the role of teacher participation, collaboration, and communication in decision-making processes and its impact on academic performance of students. The paper highlighted the importance of informed decision making and well as the characteristics of a good decision making. It provided a comprehensive and nuanced 'understanding' of the complex factors that influence effective decision making. The conceptual framework developed in this paper can inform educational leaders, policymakers, and practitioners in their efforts to improve decision making and ultimately enhance student outcome and gave a comprehensive understanding of the barriers to effective decision making, including personal biases, political factors, and religious constraints.

Keywords: Effective Decision Making, Theories, Concepts, Types, Barriers, Characteristics, Importance, Implications.

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INTRODUCTION

Decision making is one of the most important activities in which school administrators engage in in a daily basis. The success of a school or school district is critically linked to effective decisions. Because decision making is so important and can have such significant effects on the operations of schools, it has been suggested that administration is decision making. It would be a mistake however to include that only administrators make decisions. Important decisions are being made by non-administrative personnel. While decision making is a crucial administrative process, it is fundamentally a people process (Lunenburg, 2010).

Decision making is considered to be very significant in educational leadership, as it directly impacts on the quality of education and the overall school environment. Just like every other organization, whether formal or informal, schools have set goals and are faced with making choices regarding their operations and assessing means to achieve them thereby making choices that will aid them to successfully realize these objectives (Agi & Adiele, 2015).

Decision making is central to all the aspects of management which involves planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting and budgeting. Every management process according to Okorie and Oluwuo (2004) cited in Agi and Adiele (2015) involves decision making to achieve a given objective. Effective decision making has to do with sampling various opinions, analyzing them, and selecting the best out of the various options. Decision making is a process that equally means to an end but not an end in itself (Robert-Okah, 2005). Decisions are made at all levels of school organization. The superintendent makes decisions concerning a school district's goals and strategies. Then principals make tactical decisions concerning those goals and strategies to accomplish them in relation to their own buildings. Department heads and team leaders then make curricular and operational decisions to carry out the day-to-day activities of a department or unit. And, finally, classroom teachers make decisions in their classrooms. Consider the following decisions that need to be made at different organizational levels:

- How much inventory should be carried in the school district warehouse?
- Where should the newly proposed elementary school be located?
- Should the school district renovate the old high school or build a new one?
- How many classes of freshman English should our department offer next?
- What textbook series should the mathematics department adopt?
- Should all of our principals attend the conference on the use of technology?
- What minimum rules should I adopt in my classroom?

THEORIES OF DECISION MAKING

The Normative Theory

The normative model is one which asks what the answer to a problem should be. A normative model answers an optimization question if you are trying to solve a problem, what is the optimal way to solve it? For example, traveling from one point to another is the fastest way to take a straight line. Every normative model is an optimization under assumptions. Those assumptions are often not stated but they still pertain. This every normative model says something about the underlying process. Normatively, you can ask, what is the fastest way between two points in

space (a straight line) but the fastest way from earth to Pluto is not actually a straight line because it is possible to swing your spaceship around Jupiter. The process of going past Jupiter changes the normative option path to Pluto. The original straight line answer includes the hidden assumptions that there are no planets to slingshot around.

The Satisficing Model Theory

Satisficing model theory was formulated by H.A. Simon and I G. March (1963) as cited in Ololube (2011). According to the theory, there are limitations in the knowledge of alternative courses of action and of the consequences of these courses of actions. Hence the decision maker does not examine all possibilities at once but rather handles one thing at a time in peace meal manner due to organizational and social environment in which the decision maker finds himself determines what consequences he will anticipate. It is therefore contingency and situational oriented that saves time and keeps decision within limits (Ololube, 2011).

Satisficing model specified as an incidence/policy that endeavors for satisfactory decision making. This model intended to take decisions that are satisfactory enough to undertake certain circumstances, but this decision is not the best promising decision. Satisficing means, deciding on or choosing an alternative which will satisfy to achieve a particular goal with minimum requirement (Ololube, 2012). This is not the optimal solution but is a good enough solution. This solution is acceptable or reasonable over optimal solutions because optimal solutions require more time, effort and capital. But the satisfactory solution is good enough to accomplish the suitable range of performance.

Satisficing is simply a strategy that represents choosing the acceptable alternative that satisfies the minimum criteria for decision making in responding to problem situation that poses danger, rather than waiting for the best decision that may be constrained by bounded rationality.

The Bounded Rationality Theory

The Bounded Rationality Model by Herbert Simon challenged the concept of rational fellow and contends that the sanity of a person is delimited by sure restrictions. Simon derives that for fixing hypothetical issues, normal thoughts, suitable reasoning, and logic are favorable. For solving practical problems this model is not suitable. Here the performance of the decision maker and his mental power, information that are accessible and the problem solving time may generate a situation where the decision making performed under the conditions of bounded rationality. In authentic scenarios, Simon argued that decisions taken by human beings are mainly based on heuristics but not by any optimization method. This model describes the situation where there are boundless alternatives required by a decision, and information that becomes difficult to assess and evaluating all. Bounded rationality theory implies that heads of organizations or schools have limited ability, limited access to information and alternatives to solving problems.

Rationality of individuals is restricted by the information they possess, the subjective constraints of their brain and the limited amount of time to take decision. Simon advocated the model of bounded rationality to clarify that within the environment of decision making, why boundaries exist to rational decision. The decision making process is described by Simon as the alternative courses of action. He states that decision making is spread through the entire organization that means each level of the organization decisions are made. Therefore, he supposed that the organization is the construction of decision makers.

Regardless of personal level of intelligence, the idea of bounded rational decision making having the following:

- Simply partial usually untrustworthy information is obtainable concerning possible alternatives and their results.
- Human brain has finite capability to estimate and process the information as per their availability.
- Time limitation is there to make any decision flop.

As a result in actuality, the person who recommend rational selection are bound to create Satisficing before overestimating or optimizing alternatives in complex conditions.

Economic Rationality Model (ERM)

In ERM, the decision maker is perfectly and totally rational in every way. This model belongs to the classical economist models. It holds the following conditions:

- The final sense that decisions must be entirely rational.
- The system of performances must be complete and consistent which permits choice among alternatives.
- Probability computations are neither terrifying nor puzzling.

To determine the best alternative, there are no boundaries for the complex computation that can be performed on the alternatives.

Recognition Primed Decision

Recognition Primed Decision (RPD) model describes when people encountered with action is generated by the DM; it is compared to the restrictions compelled by the difficult circumstances how they make fast, efficient decisions. Here, a possible course of situation, and among the strategies that are not rejected chooses the first strategy. RPD formerly explained in diverse groups including whitewater kayaking trauma nurses, fire ground commanders, chess players, commercial whitewater river guides and stock market traders.

It works fine in situations like time demands, and where information is incomplete and objectives are weakly described. The constraints of RPD failure and modeling in abnormal or in embarrassed situations. This model emerges as a suitable model for decision making among human decision makers.

Casual Decision Making Model

Numerous theories have been proposed by philosophers that are keen to casual structure. To find out expected utilities all these theories use other suggested conditional utility. As a substitute, they take the casual consequences of option into consideration. The impact of causality has been identified in decisions of probability and has been the vital subject in applications of credits and clarification. There is some proof that people are influenced by casual thoughts in the area of

decision making. People like to construct casual model to stimulate the consequences of a possible action and if the results are convincing then continue.

Studies have found that while making decisions, people have a tendency to ignore alternative casual models and occasionally trust only one. Some evidence shows that in their decisions, people move away from the favorable use of casual knowledge which misleads them. This study lodges these findings and identified boundary, condition for the use of casual models in decision making. Hagmayer and Sloman (2005) cited in Devi et al. (2020).

Group Decision Making Model

Here the decision makers are provided with dissimilar preferences and assessments due to fluctuating knowledge about the domain and cultural ethics in the group decision making problems. A greater degree of heterogeneity is predictable when the decision makers are large which is hard to interpret the varied information into one uniform preference with no loss of context. The major challenges of group decision making model are:

- From a large number of decision makers how to generate unified heterogeneous information and based on unification method how to provide optimal solutions. So an aggregate of individual priority based aggregation mechanism is found in the new group decision making model, which is capable to utilize flexible techniques for determining individual priority of each decision maker and keep away from the information loss caused due to unified varied information which is used to combine the preferences of each individual.
- To accomplish an agreement competently, that is, to reward or penalize the supportive/ non supportive decision makers, respective various correction plans are employed. To guide the revision process, provisional group option helps very much at each round of revision which is resulted by accumulating the nonconflicting options. A position based dissimilarity measure is developed to handle the agreement in a robust manner. In processing heterogeneous information, this new model is more efficient and flexible in comparison with existing group decision making models. This method is capable of handling information of different types having dissimilar levels of granularity and also



indicates that the location based dissimilarity measure is able to beat possible deformations of the results in large scale Group Decision Making problems (Zhang et al., 2015).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The Concept of Effective Decision Making and Policies in Educational System

Decision making as a key element of management has been defined by various authors. Decision can be known as resolution, conclusion, settlement, choice, option, selection, verdict, ruling, recommendation, judgement, pronouncement, etc. A decision could be referred to as conclusion or resolution of making relevant decision. Psychologically, decision-making is regarded as the cognitive possibilities. It is the process of identifying and choosing alternatives. Decision making process enables school administrators solve problems by examining alternative choices and deciding on the best route to solving problem. Decision-making process is continuous and indispensable component of managing educational institutions. Decision-making is central and significant to all aspects of management. Decision-making comprises the selection of alternatives in order to achieve the desired result. Not the end itself. It is vital to realizing school goals and objectives.

Decision-making in schools is a panacea in the improvement of human resources management. School head must involve or inculcate the idea of the teacher's giving them the sense of belonging and thereby accelerating the efficiency of the school system. Decisions are made and implemented every day in schools. However, to ensure that rational decisions are made and double standard are not applied in decision-making, all the school stakeholders should be allowed to make decision as and when especially the teachers in the school. School as an institution has a structure. For example, in Secondary schools, the Principal is the head, followed by the Vice Principal, Administration and Vice Principal, Academics, heads of Department, teachers, non-teaching staff and students. For a free flow and streamlining of authority and duties, the principal oversees the affairs of the school, assign responsibilities to other subordinates. The students also allotted with position such as Senior Prefect, Deputy Senior Prefect, Sports, Labor, Punctuality prefects and other, this structural arrangement in a school system helps in effective decision-making and policy formulations in the system. This arrangement (structure) in a school system like Secondary School, necessitated the principle of delegation of power and authority to lowest possible always fail if it is not followed by a determine effort to improve the abilities and capabilities of local decision makers. Every institution or organization such as school has a guiding principle upon which operations are regulated and assessed. These principles are commonly regarded to as policies. Wali (2018) maintained that policy is a statement of principle(s) with supporting rules and actions, guidelines, laid down rule in general and specific terms that govern the achievement of goals to which a business is directed. This implies that policies are the machineries through which school goals and objectives are realized.

Mmejin (2018) also stipulated that a policy is a general guide to action that helps in management. That means that no decision will be made outside the stipulated policy. Policy gives birth to decision, that is, school administrator makes decision in line with the laid down policies in education, however, and school administrator sometimes makes some minor policies that guide the decision of the subordinate in case of delegation of authority. School systems are guided to enhance the realization of their set goals by policies.

Anderson (2010) opined that public policy is a purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of action in dealing with a problem or matter of concern. Policy implementation is an important and inevitable state of policy in realizing its objectives. It is the execution of the action that decisions are taken towards the actualization of the goals and objectives of the school system. A policy can be mere statement when it is not implemented and it becomes effective statement when it is fully implemented and the objectives or achieved.

Decision Making by Various Authors

Decision making (decision from Latin *decidere* “to decide, determine,” literally “to cut off,” from *de-* “off” and *caedere* “to cut”) can be regarded as the intellectual processes resulting in the selection of a course of action from among several alternative scenarios. Hoy and Miskel in Igwe 2020, defined decision making as a complete cycle of event by which an organization makes and implements decisions. Igwe in Okoroma (2007) opined that decision-making is purposive act intended to achieve a desired outcome which is usually envisaged by the decision maker. That implies that in decision-making, there is the relationship between the action and the outcome. He further opined that all other activities are subordinated to this process of administration. That means that, all other administrative jobs are dependent upon administrative decisions.

Decision making according to Nwachukwu in Robert-Okah (2014), it is the selection of alternative course of action from available alternatives in order to achieve a given goal. Decision making by Jones and George in Agi and Adiele (2015) perceived decision making as the process by which managers responds to the opportunities and threats that confronts them by analyzing the options and making determinations or decisions about specific organization goals and courses of action. James et al. (2000) defined decision making as the process of identifying and selecting a course of action to solve a specific problem. Griffin in Agi and Adiele (2015), define decision making as choosing one alternative from several. Also, Ololube (2017) defined it as a process of identifying problems and opportunities and then resolving them. Decision making according to Robert-Okah (2014), it is a process which one goes through in order to be able to pass judgement and terminate controversy. Daft (2000) described decision as a choice among the existing alternatives. Decision-making is the process of identifying problems and opportunities and then providing solutions to them (Ololube, 2017). Drucker who is regarded as the guru of management science, stated that the decision is a judgment and that in very rare cases a decision is a choice between right and wrong (Druckler, 2005). Wiig described decision making as one of the most important activities that people can engage in. According to him, decision making is the identification and determination of a given situation and what to do in this context. Wilg stated that decision making involves the following three functional tasks: (1) Simple decision making, (2) Complex decision making and (3) Specific decision making (Wiig, 2004).

Domains of Decision-Making

Domains of decision-making can be seen as the very angle in which decision-making originate from. That is, where the need originates. Therefore, Okai (2013) identified three domains of decision-making as follows:

- Institutional or Policy Domain;
- Management Domain;

- Technical or Operational Domain

Institutional or policy Domain

Basically, decisions from this domain with the objective of vis-à-vis the mission of the organization, issues such as the policy that governs the nations educational system originates from either National Assembly or House of Assembly (in the time of the military they were described as decrees and edicts) Therefore, decision that originate from the policy domain are intended to deal with issues that concern general objectives and national policies.

Managerial Domain

These are decisions that may be returned to the manager to implement, and may take the form of intermediary decisions and appellate decisions. Such decision has a short-term plan than those decisions that may originate from institution or policy domain. For instance, decision on issues such as: Motivation of subordinates; Procurement and allocation of resources; Co-ordinate or internal administrative activities.

Technical or Operational Domain

Ololube (2017) explained that technical or operational decision come from people who possess expert knowledge about organizational tasks and also the ways through the tasks are carried out in order to promote productivity, efficiency and effectiveness. In the system teacher are closer to the students so that they are in good positions to understand students' problem and are best equipped to solve these problems.

DECISION MAKING PROCESS

Decision making process is an analysis of a cycle of awareness, initiatives, preferences, choices and actions. In order to manage a school effectively and efficiently, the school leader must follow the decision-making process. The classical decision making approach has six major steps which include:

Identifying and defining the Problem

Schools exist to achieve certain goals, such as educating students. Within the school, each department or subunit has goals, such as increasing test scores, reducing dropouts, and/or developing new approaches to teaching. Establishing these goals becomes the basis for identifying problem areas, deciding on courses of action, and evaluating the decision outcomes. A decision is said to be effective if it helps a school administrator to achieve a specific objective or set of goals for the school or school district. Failure to achieve a desired goal becomes a problem, and the school administrator is ultimately responsible for solving it.

Effective decision makers are keenly aware of the importance of properly identifying the problem and understanding the problem situation. Kepner and Tregoe (2005) developed a method of problem analysis that suggests that the first step in decision making, identifying the

problem, is the most important step. According to these authors, providing a good definition of the problem affects the quality of the decision.

Their method suggests that it is often easier to define what the problem is not, rather than what it is. Also, the problem and its solution are prioritized with other problems, to clarify its relative importance. The final step is searching for cause-effect relationships, their method of problem analysis includes: (1) Problem identification, (2) definition of what the problem is and is not, (3) prioritizing the problem, and (4) testing for cause-effect relationships (Kepner & Tregoe, 2005).

The process of identifying problems requires surveillance of the internal and external environment for issues that merit attention (Verschaffel, 2011). School administrators scan the world around them to determine whether the school is progressing satisfactorily toward its goals. For example, school administrators survey students, teachers, parents, and community members using instruments to measure satisfaction, organizational climate, and the like. Other information may come from formal information systems, such as periodic accounting reports, Management Information System (MIS) reports, and organizational plans designed to discover problems before they become too serious. Or the information may be gathered informally by talking over the situation and by personal observation. A principal, for example, might discuss a school performance problem with teachers, the superintendent, or other principals to obtain ideas and information. The school administrator must be plugged into an information system, whether formal or informal, that gathers these data as a means of identifying problems.

In addition to identifying problems, school administrators must also define the situation, which is partly a matter of determining how a specific problem arose. This is an important stage, because the situation definition plays a major role in subsequent steps. Suppose, for example, that a school has had decreasing test scores for the last two years. One principal might define this situation as the result of a changing student population in the school attendance area and begin to search for new approaches to teaching these students, who come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Another principal might define the situation as a case of an inappropriate match between what is taught and what is measured that is, placing the blame on the achievement test being used. The problem declining test scores is the same in both cases, but the two different definitions of the situation call for two different solutions.

Generating Alternatives

Once the problem has been identified, the second step in the decision-making process is to generate alternatives to the problem. In developing these alternative solutions, school administrators first must specify the goals that they hope to achieve through their decision. Are they trying to reduce the dropout rate, improve the quality of instruction, increase test scores, or something else? Once school administrators have determined their goals, they can search for alternative means of reaching them. Information must be collected regarding each of the alternatives and their likely consequences. More specifically, the school administrator must seek to learn as much as possible concerning the likelihood that each alternative will result in the achievement of various outcomes, and the extent to which those outcomes will contribute to the achievement of the goals and objectives being sought.

Ideally, the school administrator should seek to generate as many alternatives as possible and should attempt to ensure that the alternatives are relatively diverse that is not highly similar to one another. The extent of the search for alternatives is limited by the importance of the

decision, the cost and value of additional information needed to evaluate alternatives, and the number of people affected by the decision (Zopounidis, 2011a,b).

The more important the decision, the more attention is directed to developing alternatives. For example, if the decision involves where to build a new multimillion dollar high school, a great deal of time and effort will be devoted to identifying the best location. On the other hand, if the problem is to select a color to paint the classrooms in the new high school, less time and effort will be devoted to the activity. The length and thoroughness of the search for alternatives depends on the cost of evaluating additional alternatives (Narayanan, 2005). For example, a 2% improvement in the solution of a \$10 million problem may produce a profit margin of \$200,000.

However, if the cost of evaluating an additional alternative is \$250,000, the evaluation costs \$50,000 more than the possible savings. As a rule of thumb, the increase in the improvement of a solution should always be more than the cost of performing the additional evaluation of an alternative. Moreover, the greater the number of people affected by a problem, the more likely the organization will conduct a lengthy and thorough search for alternatives (Ehrgott, 2011). However, when dealing with complex school problems affecting numerous people, it is often necessary to compromise on some points. Human benefits cannot be measured in dollars and cents (Schoenfeld, 2011).

Evaluating Alternatives

The third step in the decision-making process is evaluating each of the alternatives generated in step 2. In evaluating an alternative, school administrators must ask the following three questions:

- Is the alternative feasible?
- Is it a satisfactory alternative?
- What impact will it have on people? (Grant, 2011).

The first question whether the alternative is feasible simply means: Can it be done? For example, if one alternative requires a general layoff of school faculty but the school district has a collective bargaining agreement that prohibits such layoffs, that alternative is not feasible. Similarly, if a school district has limited capital, alternatives that require large capital outlays are not feasible, unless funds can be borrowed to meet the capital-outlay requirements.

The second question concerns the extent to which the alternative is satisfactory that is, the extent to which it addresses the problem. For instance, suppose a principal wants to expand the curriculum by 25%. One alternative is to implement a trimester schedule. On closer examination, however, the principal may discover that the plan would expand the curriculum by only 15% and that such a modest expansion may also negatively affect the quality of the program. The principal may decide to implement the trimester plan anyway and search for other ways to achieve the remaining 10% expansion in the curriculum and find ways to maintain the quality of the program. Or he may decide to drop the alternative from consideration entirely.

The third question addresses the impact of an alternative on school personnel. The alternative that is chosen must be acceptable to those who must live with the consequences of the decision. Failure to meet this condition is the single most likely reason for failure of the decision-making process to solve problems (Hastie, 2010). For this reason, questions of acceptability of a proposed alternative should be of great concern to the principal. On the one hand, even a

mediocre solution to the problem may prove effective if it is implemented with enthusiasm and commitment. On the other hand, a technically correct alternative may fail to succeed if implementation is halfhearted.

Choosing an Alternative

Once the administrator has evaluated all of the alternatives, he attempts to choose the best alternative. The evaluation phase will have eliminated some of the alternatives, but in most cases two or more will remain. How does a school administrator decide which alternative is the best? One approach is to select the alternative that is feasible, satisfactory, and acceptable to the work group (Gilboa, 2011). Because most situations do not lend themselves to sophisticated mathematical analysis, the school administrator uses this available information in combination with judgment and intuition to make the decision (Mendel, 2011). The basis of judgment should be how close the outcomes or consequences of the alternatives come to achieving the desired goals of the school. For example, if the original goal was to decrease the dropout rate as much as possible, regardless of the costs, the school administrator might choose an alternative that will decrease the dropout rate significantly but that carries a high cost, rather than an alternative that would reduce dropouts only moderately at a minimal cost. However, if the original goal was to reduce the dropout rate by a moderate amount and if that goal is more desirable now, the second alternative might be a better choice.

The school administrator may be able to choose several alternatives simultaneously. Suppose, for example, a school principal is hiring an English teacher and has two strong candidates for the position. One strategy that is frequently used is to offer the position to one candidate and keep the other candidate on hold. Should the first offer be rejected, the principal still has an acceptable alternative to filling the position.

Implementing the Decision

After choosing an alternative, the school administrator faces the challenge of implementing the decision. A sound decision can fail if implemented poorly. It is useful, therefore, to consider some suggestions for successful implementation (Olorube, 2017).

- School administrators need to make sure that the alternative is clearly understood. This is accomplished by communicating the decision to all involved staff. Effective communication is necessary.
- School administrators need to encourage acceptance of the alternative as a necessary course of action. Committees can help a school administrator achieve commitment. If the people who must carry out a decision participate in the process, they are more likely to endorse enthusiastically the outcome. Thus, the degree to which persons have or have not been involved in prior steps may substantially affect the success of the total decision-making process.
- School administrators need to provide enough resources to make the alternative succeed. School administrators set up budgets and schedules for the actions they have decided to undertake. Specifically, the decision may require acquiring office space, hiring staff, procuring funds, and the like.

- School administrators need to establish workable timelines. The school administrator now faces a "how much" and "how soon" decision. As part of the process of implementation, he must ask himself whether to move forward step by step or whether to take the entire action at once.
- School administrators need to assign responsibilities clearly. In other words, what should be done by whom? Because the solution of most administrative problems requires the combined effort of many school members, each person should understand what role he or she is to play during each phase of the implementation process.

Evaluating Decision Effectiveness

The fifth and final step in the decision-making process is evaluating the effectiveness of the decision. When an implemented decision does not produce the desired results, there are probably a number of causes: incorrect definition of the problem, poor evaluation of alternatives, and/or improper implementation. Among these possible causes, the most common and serious error is an inadequate definition of the problem. When the problem is incorrectly defined, the alternative that is selected and implemented will not produce the desired result. Evaluation is important because decision making is a continuous, never-ending process. Decision making does not end when a school administrator votes yes or no. Evaluation provides school administrators with information that can precipitate a new decision cycle. The decision alternative may fail, thus generating a new analysis of the problem, evaluation of alternatives, and selection of a new alternative. Some experts suggest that many large problems are solved by attempting several alternatives in sequence, each providing a modest improvement (Hicks, 2005). Evaluation is the part of the decision-making process that assesses whether a new decision needs to be made.

Characteristics of Good Decision-making

Every decision cannot be a good one; therefore every good decision requires special efforts. In order for a decision to be good, it must possess certain attributes that can enable it stand the test of time. Such attributes include:

- A good decision must consider and confine itself to available resources. It is obvious that the essence of any good decision is to bring about development. Decision must relate and reconcile the scale and pace of the desire development with available resources. This is necessary in order to avoid non-implementation of decision in the school system.
- A good decision must be geared towards school goals and objectives. Every good decision must reflect the predetermined educational objectives.
- A good decision must be capable of identifying options. In trying to solve a problem through making a decision, it is important to note that there can be more than one way of bringing a solution. An educational administrator must be capable of identifying various possible options or alternatives through a better understanding of the issues and trends associated with the educational system.

Furthermore, Ololube (2017) maintained that decision-making should demonstrate the following characteristics:

- It must focus on the vital issues;
- It must be logical and consistent;
- It should be subjective, objective and analytical with intuitive thinking;
- Decision-making requires a lot of information and analysis to solve a problem. NOUN module (2016) in Olejurulo (2018) stated thus: That a good decision-making requires the gathering of relevant information and opinions;
- It should be concerned with the morale and satisfaction of the employees and students. NOUN module (2016) explained that since decision-making is about problem solving; it therefore, requires that educational institutional leaders and managers should make intelligent, appropriate and effective decision to achieve the set of goals of the institution.

Importance of Effective Decision-making and Policies in Educational system in Nigeria

The importance and the reason for effective Decision-making and policies in the school system are identified below (Olejurolo 2018:139):

- To achieve growth and development of the institution;
- To solve the multi-faceted problems of the institution especially manpower needs;
- To give direction to all managed activities and persons involved in the institution through the implementation of the policies;
- To achieve maximum result by making rational, informed and productive decisions in the institution without any interference of time pressure and personal emotions;
- To sustain management activities and enhance institutional functions;
- It enhances the leadership skills and abilities of the institutional leader as useful decision maker;
- To reduce high risk, losses and opportunity cost in management activities due to wrong, weak, or insufficient information and creating a stable academic environment; and
- To check balance the success of all managerial activities and maintain focus in the institution.

Types of decision making

There are different types of decision-making as identified by Gatzimos in Ololube (2013) and these include:

Authoritative Decision Making

According to Ibara (2010) authoritative decision-making are decisions made in response to authoritative communication from a superior officer. This implies that the decision flows from the superior to the subordinate like the teachers and any other categories of staff are bound to follow these decisions regardless of whether it is beneficial to the organizational goals.

Consultative

This has to do with decisions that are made in consultation with subordinates. That is seeking the consent of teachers before carrying out decision. A wise leader is one who consults subordinates when he thinks that they have valuable expertise to offer (Ololube, 2013).

Delegative

Delegative decision-making has to do with delegating the responsibility of making decisions to one or more subordinates. For example, when the Principal assigns the duty of decision-making to teachers. This type of decision-making is usually adopted by a leader who is confident of the capabilities of his or her subordinates (Ololube, 2013).

Facilitative

This is when the Principal or school head collaborates with the teachers (subordinates) or work together to arrive at a viable decision. The expertise and contributions of subordinates are inculcated and regarded in decision-making. It is regarded as all-inclusive or participatory in nature. The risk of making wrong decision is often very low or minimized. Furthermore, Ololube (2013) highlighted six types of decision-making which a school head can adopt to solve management challenge in educational system or in institutions. They include:

- Programmed
- Non-programmed decisions;
- Routine and strategic decisions;
- Tactical and operational decisions;
- Organizational and personal decisions;
- Major and minor decisions.

Programmed and Non-programmed Decision

Programmed decisions are decisions that are adopted by lower echelon managers to solve routine problems or challenges which the manager (School head) had solved before using specialized or standard procedures. They are usually a structured, repetitive and routine in nature. Have a definite rules and procedures on how they can be processed and handled. It's the best type of decision for teachers and school administrators. They are guided by rules and regulations. For example, granting leave to subordinate (employees) assigning students to faculty/departments and many more. Simon in Olejurulo (2018) explained that Non-programmed decisions involve more difficult issues in management made by higher echelon manager. For instance, opening a branch business or an affiliate campus of the university, curriculum planning, budgetary planning are institutional leader's decisions. In other words, non-programmed decisions are complex and deserve a special treatment. Unlike the structured and repetitive, this is entirely new with high risk. There are no laid down procedures to handle them. It requires creativity, initiatives, tolerance and a sense of judgement.

Routine and Strategic Decision

These are decisions that are every day and often made decision in school management. These kind of decision are often repeated and sometimes delegated to the school management team or lower echelon managers to tackle within the limit and the structural arrangement of school or school policy or policies. It is strategic or basic because it has to do with the objectives and policy matters of the school, strategic decision, according to Ebrary (2018) is more difficult decision as it affects the goals and objective plan layout, production and the entire future of the organization in the school system. Strategic decision would be concerned with the admission of students, budgetary planning, and execution of educational policies for the growth and development of school. This has to do with high level institutional decisions, it requires a lot of caution, analysis and reasoning of all options before the leader of school head makes them.

Tactical (Policy) and Operational Decisions

This has to do with top echelon decisions; the reason is that it can affect the entire school system. In this kind of decisions, there must be compliance to the functional rules, policies and procedures of the school, Operational decisions involves everyday operations and function of the school decisions taken by lower or middle echelon managers, for example, calculation of teacher or staff's bonuses (Ololube, 2017).

Organizational and Personal Decision

Organizational decisions are made in the official capacity. It has to do with release of money to execute a project. Personal decision is a kind of decision that has to do with the personal life of decision-maker. This is personal to the decision maker. He takes the decision for his personal purpose.

Major and Minor Decision

Major decision is a kind of decision that when made, can affect the entire school holistically. Minor decision is a kind of decision that has no much influence in the entire organization. Example of major decision for a school system is starting an affiliate campus, by university institutions.

Other styles of decision making

- Reversible decision
- Irreversible decision
- Delayed decision
- Quick decision
- Experimental decision
- Trial and error decision
- Conditional decision.

BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE DECISION MAKING IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

There are several factors that can pose as a barrier to decision making in schools. Hoy and Miskel in Agi and Adiele (2015) identified the following barriers to decision making in schools as:

- Political factor; Political consideration not only affects how decisions should be made but also what decisions are made. Take the University recruitment and admission for example, there is usually political influence. The school has no autonomy to recruit or admit the qualified candidates. Politics plays major part in these acts of decision making.
- Personal bias of decision makers; The sentiments, bias, personal consideration, cultural views are strong influenced that can also be a hindrance to effective decision making.
- Lack of consultation by school heads. Having to make decision without involving the teachers can fault an already decision made by the principal alone.
- Lack of communication; When you make decisions without having a good knowledge of the problem. In other to make appropriate and standing decisions, there must effective communication.
- Environment of the decision maker: A community with educated and rich people are likely to affect the decision making differently from a community with ignorant, illiterate and poor people.
- Ethnic and religious consideration: Greediness and selfish interest has become the order of the day making it difficult for rationale decision to stand.
- Existing laws and regulations; All organizations have existing laws so during the process of decision making, school administrators should recognize existing laws and regulations as the springboard for proper and legitimate take off.

Implications of teacher participation in decision making in schools

There has never been consensus on the specific teacher factor that influence student's academic achievement (Rivkin & Kain, 2005). Studies have shown that when teachers participate in decision making in schools, the following results:

- Teachers', who participated in decision making, perform better in their job (Omobude & Igbudu, 2012).
- Participating in decision making enable teachers to be motivated in attaining the goals of the school.
- Teacher participation in decision making have an impact on student's discipline.
- Teacher participation in decision making also helps to improve the academic performance of the students
- Participation of teachers in decision making also have impact on the drop out rate of students.

CONCLUSION

An effective decision determines the success of every educational system. Decision making is a significant activity that a school leader must be engaged in on a daily basis for the goal of

education to be achieved. This paper explored the concept of effective decision making in educational systems, with a focus on the theories of decision making, the meaning of decision making, the decision making process, the types of decision making, the characteristics of a good decision making, the importance of effective decision making and the impacts of teacher participation in decision making. By examining the theories, concepts, and frameworks related to decision making, this paper has provided a comprehensive understanding of the factors (barriers) that influence effective decision making in educational settings. This paper would contribute to the development of a conceptual framework for effective decision making in educational systems. The insights gained from this study can inform educational leaders, policymakers, and practitioners in their efforts to improve decision making and ultimately enhance student outcomes.

Suggestions

- School heads ought to learn and be conversant with the processes involved in making decision to be able to arrive at effective decision making in their schools.
- Educational policy makers should be mindful of the kind of decisions they make because the success of every school depends on the quality of decision made by decision makers.
- No principal is a monopoly of wisdom. Hence the need for consultation and integration of staff in decision making. There are times you would run out on good options, this is the point you involve your teachers/staff to suggest ideas that will be effective and yield results.
- Educational decision makers should take cognizance of the factors that influences effective decision making and devise capable means to manipulate them.
- School heads should form the habit of involving their teachers in making decisions that borders on the school. It lessens the burden on the principal while giving the teachers a sense of belonging. When school heads involve their teachers in making effective decisions, it helps relieve them of the burden of bearing the problem alone.
- School heads should try to reduce the rate of drop out by allowing teachers to participate in decision making since the teachers are the ones closer to the students.
- When assigning subjects, principals should involve the teachers and not make the decision alone. If the teachers participate, it will enable them choose the right subject that they are perfect in handling to achieve better student's academic performance.

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