Leadership and Decision-Making in Schools the Concept of Leadership

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Introduction

To lead is to guide, conduct, direct and preside. Leaders act to help a group achieve objectives with maximum application of the group's capabilities. A leader is within the group, facilitating progress and inspiring the group to accomplish organization's goals. A leader supplies the organization with the information necessary for persons to perform their roles. Thus, leading according to Collins (2023) is the ability to influence the activities of others without any form of threat towards realization of common goal. The followers must be influenced to work willingly towards achievement of stated goals. The aim of leading is to elicit the desired form of behavior on the part of the members of the group. Function of a leader should always be to induce, persuade and influence all followers to contribute willingly to the goal of the organization in accordance with their maximum capabilities. Leader-follower relationship is reciprocal and it is a two-way process. Therefore leadership occurs in an organization where a person influences others to do something of their own volition not because they fear the consequences of non-compliance. It exists when followers voluntarily comply because of something the leaders have done (Collins 2008).

What is Leadership?

Leadership is the process of guiding the conduct and influencing people so that they strive willingly towards the achievement of group goals. Leadership has to do with inspiration and capability of guiding the conduct of others. Various definition of leadership are: -

Leadership is the ability to influence others to behave in a certain way. (Vernon and Eugene 1981).
Leadership is a relationship through which one person influences the behavior of other people. (Laurie Mullins 1998)
Montgomery (2009) defined leadership as the capacity and will to rally men and women to a common purpose which inspires confidence.
Leadership is a relationship between two or more people which one (the Leader) attempts to influence the other(s) towards accomplishment of some organizational effectiveness. (Szilagyi et al 1980).

Above definitions reflect such words as influencing, directing, controlling, guiding etc. which contain the idea of leadership. Thus, leadership is simply defined as the art or process of guiding people so that they work enthusiastically towards achieving group goal.

Leadership and Management

There is difference between the two terms Leadership and Management because every leader must not be a manager. Leaders are found wherever there are groups of people and they may not also be managers. A leader may be imposed upon people. They may be elected or chosen informally on

wish of the group. Leadership is an inspirational process. It is how the leader influences the actions of the followers. Typical examples are Martin Luther, Mahama Ghandi and others who are all past great leaders. Leadership does not take place within the hierarchical structure of the group. Many people operate as leaders without their roles being clearly /formally established or defined.

On the other hand, Management is related to people working within a structured organization and with prescribed roles. Management is concerned with procedure and results. A Manager is more concerned with solving the problems of the organization. A manager may react to some specific situation and enforce compliance to laws and orders of the organization. Therefore, a manager might not be seen as in a Leadership role to people outside of the organization.

Distinguishing Factors between Leadership and Management are as follows: -

1.A manager has a position in the organizational structure unlike the leader, who on personal traits and styles influences the followers.

2.Mangers tend to adopt impersonal attitude towards goals while leaders adopt a more personal attitudes in attempt to achieve the common goal.

3.Mangers maintain low level of emotional involvement in their relationship with people whereas leaders have emotions and empathy while giving attention to people or followers.

4.Mangers see themselves as regulators of existing orders in the organization thereby tend to be conservative while leaders search for opportunities for better results.

Classes of Leadership

Glanz (1999) classified leadership as follows: -

1.Symbolic Leader: - The leader is seen here as a person with well-defined and importance personality. The leader is usually associated with vague defined traits like friendliness, endurance, dependability, enthusiasm, etc. This class of leadership maintain that "leaders are born not made"

2.Formal Leader: - Here the leader is recognized formally in a post. The individual occupies a given post or holds a specific title of office or place in a special authority to lead. This recognition disappears when the person vacates office.

3.Functional Leader: - Here the leader emerges from a group as a function essential in the organization. He does not exist in isolation but as an interpersonal relation in group operations. The leader does a lot to help the group define its goals, achieve the objectives and maintain the strength as a body.

Styles of Leadership

This is the way in which functions of leadership are carried out as well as the way in which the leader typically behaves towards members of the group. According to Glanz (1999) Leadership styles can be categorized into three:

Democratic, Autocratic and Laissez-faire.

1.Democratic Leadership Styles: -This style recognizes the feelings and opinions of others. The leader assists group to the target goals by giving information, suggestions and alternative courses of actions, and try to stimulate self-directions in the members. He influences without dominating the thinking and behaviors of the group. He gives the followers some sense of belongings by encouraging group discussion and participative management. He offers both praise and criticism in his relationship with the members. This style is referred to as participatory management style because members have a say in implementations and procedures.

2.Autocratic Leadership Styles: - Here the leader remains aloof from the group. He dishes orders, instill fear, threat and force on the followers in order to secure compliance. He determines policies and assigns duties without consulting the subordinates beforehand. All interactions move towards him. Focus of power is with him. He commands and expects compliance, no group inspired decisions. He makes workers depend on him alone. He cares less about worker's opinions and feelings and is only interested in getting things done in his own ways. Workers carry on activities because of fears and blames.

3.Laissez-Faire Leadership Style: -Under this style, the leader is passive and docile. He uses his power very little or not at all. Followers are allowed to behave the way they deem necessary. This style gives subordinates-high degree of independence and free reign in the operations of the organization. It grants complete freedom to individual

decision without leader directions. The role of the leader is merely to supply materials and makes no attempt to participate or interfere with the course of events determined by others. Organization in this kind of leadership style is characterized by truancy, flippancy and disorder therefor lacks direction and control. The consequence is total reduction in production, efficiency and performance.

The implication is that a leader should not stick to one style of leadership in all situations, instead he should master all styles and use them effectively. Styles of leadership employ should be related to the situation a leader finds himself. The three variables should always be combined properly and applied each based on the situation at hand. Good combination of leadership styles will enhance leadership effectiveness. When a leader is dynamic, and well-armed with all the styles, he would be able to solve the problem and have alternative ways of dealing with his subordinates. In leadership, extreme position should be avoided and a middle course adopted to ensure that neither the needs of people nor the goals of the organization are neglected. It means maintaining a balanced leadership. Different institutional settings determine different leadership styles.

Major forces that determine a leader's choice of style are:

1.   The nature of the leader himself

2.   The group to be led

3.   The organizational environment

Therefore, leadership style is a function of three factors:

The leader, the led and the situation in which they operate. Therefore, the concern of an Administrator is not just selecting a style of leadership, but selecting one that will be effective. Effectiveness is determined by group output, moral and satisfaction. A good leader sets high goals, motivate staff and yet reckons achievement. The style is appropriate when people inter-depend and interact with one another. Before choosing a style of leadership, the leader thinks about the characteristics of his subordinates-whether they are ready to assume responsibilities, participate in decision making, competent in terms of skills and knowledge, interested in the common problem and ready to identify with the set goals. Again, characteristics of environment affect how a leader operates. The nature of the problem to be solved; whether simple or complex also affected the style to be used. Thus, the leader, the lead, the job and the environment are part of the situation. These factors interact to determine whether the leader will be cling to one basic style or the other. It is the situation that determines whether a leader will expect influence on group or not.

The two extremes are labeled thus:

- ❖ Authoritarian – task-oriented goal achievement, nomethic, etc.
- ❖ Democratic – employee oriented, group maintenance, ideographic etc.

Leadership Skills
Barrett et al (2005), highlighted leadership skills to include:

1.Technical Skills: - This is ability to achieve competency in human management and proficiency in a particular activity-through possession of specialized knowledge and understanding in methods, processes, procedure and techniques.

2.Human Relation Skill: -This refers to achievement of proficiency in human relations, enabling the Manager to work effectively with group members and building team work among them. It enables leaders create organizational conditions and control the environment in such a way that causes employee to strive willingly for better performance.

3.Administrative Skill: - This is a conceptual skill which enables a leader see the organization as an integral unit and perceives the inter-relatedness of the departments, functions and activities.

4.Relational Skills: -With these basic skills, the organizational leader is sure to perform a genuine leadership role.

Qualities common to successful Leaders: -

Hyner et al (2002) enlisted qualities of successful leader to include the following: -

1.Willingness to assume responsibilities
2.Courageous in risking a career that turns to merit.

3.Ability to communicate effectively-harness power of speech, define purpose of talk and slant it to motivate the audience in the business.

4.Art of making sound business decisions, dispatches work precisely on schedule, turns promptly from one problem to the next, concentrates completely on each, analyze data swiftly and takes appropriate actions definitely.

5.Concentrates; maintains and sustains attention promptly and fully to the task of the day.

6.Thinks clearly; learn things with precision, analyzing ideas.

7.Good memory; fixing information in mind for ready and accurate recall.

8.Builds reputation for effective productivity in the organization.

9.Balances personality, avoid extreme with humility.

10.Be human in dealing with worker, honest and honorable.

11. Practice some personal publications-attain goodwill, favorable recognition and not eye service to get recognition. One must do things to deserve it.

12.Create opportunities for innovations, making you accomplish things worthy of note. Note that it is important to develop people but more important to develop oneself.

Approaches to Leadership

Green (2013) in his book *Practicing the act of leadership*, discussed two approaches to leadership, thus:

1.Trait Approach: - This approach has to do with leaders who have emerged due to their personal qualities and character. These qualities could be inborn (innate) or acquired through education and experiences. It is believed that such

personal traits as honesty, objectivity, initiative, decisiveness, drive, maturity, persuasiveness, etc., could enhance the success of a leader. Thus, this approach assumes that a leader is born not made. It sees leadership to consist of the inherited characteristics or personality traits which distinguishes him from the followers. This approach focuses attention on the man in the job and not on the job itself. It therefore suggests selection of a leader based on personality, characteristics and quality and not training for leadership with belief on certain inborn qualities which make for good leadership.

This approach was criticized because:

Not all leaders possess all the traits and many non-leaders may possess most or all of them.

It gives no guide as to show much of any trait a person should have.

There is no uniformity of identified traits or significant relationship of traits with the actual instances of leadership. (Abba E.U, Anazodo R. O & Okoye J.C 2004)

Situational Approach: -

This leadership approach is based on the premise that leaders are chosen according to the tasks to be performed and the situational circumstances. The approach sees leadership as an interrelation existing between the leader, the follower and the environment. Situational approach concentrates on the importance of situation in choosing or studying of leadership. This is because variety of people with different personalities, character and from different background has emerged effective or ineffective in different situations. The emphasis of this approach is that leadership requires knowledge and

application of special skills or techniques that match the problem at hand. That is to say that knowledge of the task, understanding of the workers' need exploration of the environment and ability to maintain a balance is the master-piece of the situational approach to choice of leadership. It reflects very highly on the prevailing situation, bordering more on the fact that a leader must see that the needs of the organization and those of the workers are equally met, satisfying the inter relatedness.

Leadership Theories

Contingency Theory of Leadership Effectiveness:

This theory was developed by Fred Fielder (1967). He searched for situational variables that affect leadership roles such as: skills, behaviors, followers' performance and satisfaction. The theory focused on the relationship between leadership style and the honorableness of the situation in terms of the leader-member relationship, the degree of task structure and the leaders' position power obtained through formal authority. This theory maintains that situations are favorable to a leader when above three variables are high. It means that if the leader is wholesomely accepted, recognized and respected by the followers, the tasks are fully structured and clearly specified, adequate authority and power formally attached to the leader's position, consequently the situation remains favorable. On the other hand, the situation becomes very unfavorable when the three variables are low. Contingency Theory of Leadership Effectiveness maintains that favorable and unfavorable situations in relation to task, human relationships and leaders' level of authority determine effectiveness of leadership. The implication is that leaders

should adequately improve their situations in order to increase their effectiveness in leadership.

Path-Goal Leadership Theory:
The founders of this theory include: Martin Evans and Robert House (1970). The theory explained the effect of leader's behavior on the subordinate's motivation, satisfaction and performance. The Theory developed four major styles of leadership as follows: -
Directive leadership in which the subordinates know what is expected while the leader gives the necessary directions.
Supportive leadership whereby the leader is friendly, open and approachable therefore have concern for the subordinates.
Participatory leadership whereby the leader seeks and welcomes good suggestions from the subordinates and still takes prompt decisions.
Achievement oriented leadership skill in which the leader sets targets of challenging goals, shows confidence in subordinates' good performance and attainment of the set goals. Thus, the theory speculates that the above styles if harnessed in proper situations will yield effective leadership. Implication is that if the subordinates feel motivated and satisfied with the leader's behavior, it will increase their performance with the environment being supportive.

Charismatic Leadership Theory:
This theory developed by Robert House (1976) is one of such leadership effectiveness theory that has emerged in the recent years. He opined that a charismatic leader is characterized by self-confidence, confidence in subordinates, high expectations from subordinates; ideology, vision and use of examples,

therefore, followers exhibit extreme loyalty and confidence much in him as a charismatic leader, in emulation of his values and character, thereby deriving self-esteem from their relationship with him. This theory associates such leaders with persuasive skills, technical expertise, management skills, social sensitivity and all other charismatic attributes that can foster attitudinal, behavior and emotional changes in their followers.

Functions and Responsibilities of a Leader

Kech (1977) identified 14 leadership functions to be served by leaders as follows: -

Coordinator of group activities as an overseer of execution of policies.

Planner-deciding ways and means by which the group achieves its end.

Policy-maker- established group goals and policies

Expert- a source of readily available information and skills.

External group representative-official spokesperson for the group, the channel for both outgoing and incoming communication.

Controller of internal relations- determines specific aspects of the group structure.

Provider of rewards and punishment.

Arbitrator and Mediator- handles interpersonal conflicts.

Example- a model of behavior for members.

Symbol of the group-establishing the group as a distinct entity.

Substitute for individual responsibility-relieves individual members from responsibility of taking personal decision.

Ideologist- source of believes values and behaviors of the group.

Father-figure-- fosters positive emotional feelings of members. Leader as a scapegoat- serves as a target for aggression, and hostility of the group, accepting blames in the case of failure.

Thus, certain leadership functions have to be performed in order to meet the objectives of effective leadership in an organization. Generally, the responsibilities served at the leadership position hinge on the management functions associated with designing, planning, execution and development of the organization on continuing basis. It implies the leader's acceptance of appropriate responsibilities and effective discharge of those responsibilities when they have been accepted. As a viable representative of his organization, he should be able to influence powers and authorities to ensure that the goals of the organization are attained.

Problems of Leadership
Every administrative task is bewitched by lots of problems and leadership is not exempted

Leadership problems could come from the following

Lack of Communication: failure to communicate. Organization use types of communication: upward and downward communication. Upward communication is subordinate message to those above them. Downward communication is sending messages from upper management to subordinates. When any communication lacks, the leader is faced with problem in relation to the group performance.

Inability to provide feedback: feedback gives voice to the followers and the feeling of a sense of purpose and belongings, open door policy encourages subordinate to share their views, desires and concern. Without feedback, workers feel limited, restricted and disrespected, therefore its affect's ability of the leaders.

Ineffective Leadership Style: Use of wrong leadership style hinders success of the leader. A democratic or situational style hinders success of the leader. A democratic or situational style would empower free-thinking and problem solving amongst workers.

New Technology

Introducing new technology in schools requires training to update the knowledge and for better adaptation, otherwise it constitutes problem to the leadership.

Lack of cooperation from related agencies or divisions: The school is an open system that needs cooperation and support of its environment. It becomes a problem situation for the school leader, when the good relationship is lacking.

New form of regulation:
New rules, regulations or even policies tend to constitute problem to leadership if not adequately accompanied with enlightenment programmers, seminars workshops, etc. lack of understanding of new rules and regulations poses problems to leadership.

Environment of the Organization:
No organization can function effectively in an unconducive or antagonistic environment. This constitutes greater problem to school leadership

Other problems include: -

Lack of Accountability
Fear of Firing
Lack of Vision
Poor Execution

Solution to Problems of Leadership

Safety leadership in schools can be improved through the following ways:

Keep subordinate informed
Develop self-leadership style in line with the job, the worker and the situations. Update skills regularly to cope with technological advancement. Polish your skills.

Collaborate with the relevant agencies.
Maintain an adaptive function in relation to the environment. Keep abreast of changes in rules, regulations and policies and learn from experiences. Have a compelling vision, a visionary leader is always successful. Above all, don't be afraid to fail. When failure occurs, learn from past mistakes and constantly improve.

Decision-Making in Formal Organization
What is Decision-making?

Hornby (2000) A decision is conscious and deliberate resolves that binds individual or groups to taking actions in a specific way. It is a conscious choice between two or more alternatives. A decision is the result of thoughtful responses. All decisions are made relevant and appropriate within the organization. Decisions are made about the best alternative to select amongst others. It follows a period of consideration, planning and collection of facts leading to actions that are later evaluated in terms of goals of the organization. Thus, decision-making is defined as the act of determining a course of action following a more deliberate consideration of competing alternatives. Decision making emanates from the managers realization of a problem that needs to be solved. This places him on a problem-solving situation. A problem shows when organizational accomplishment is less than established objective. Decision making is highly rational-choosing the other alternative that will give satisfactory outcome. Making a decision is at the center of administrative process. It is an administrative function that cuts across tasks of the administrator, starting from his definition of the goals, activities, control of performance, and evaluation. Decision making is a crucial test of administrative effectiveness. Success of an administrator is judged by the soundness and appropriateness of his decisions. Decision is appropriate if it leads to effectiveness in achievement of school objectives. Decision – making is not an easy task. It is done in the presence of conflicting views and unclear situations. It is a process of generating and evaluating alternatives and making choice among those alternatives. More effort is involved both prior to and after the actual decision.

Types of Decision-Making

Decisions can be programmed or unprogrammed, according to Hixson et al (2008)

Programmed decisions are encountered and made beforehand. Such decisions are routine and clear-cut. There is a clear procedure or structure for arriving at the right decision, using simple rules, policies or numerical computation. Most important decisions are programmed.

Non-programmed decisions have no automatic procedure to follow because the problem is unstructured, leaving the decision maker uncertain about how to proceed. There is no predetermined structure on which to rely. Managers are often faced with the challenges of non-programmed decisions because of its complexity.

James (1994) listed types of decision to include the following: -

Creative Decisions: it is initiated by the administrator in an attempt to bring about a significant change in the system. It requires insight, imagination, initiative and courage. The execution requires tactful and careful planning to ensure acceptance by those affected by it.

Intermediary Decisions: This decision has to do with response to authoritative communication from a superior officer in form of request or command. It calls for tact to get acceptance of those affected by it in order to avoid riot or disorder. An example is a directive of change of school uniform, coming down from the School Board to the School

Principal. Extra care is required in execution or implementation; to also avoid the riot from students or even the frown by the school Board if not implemented.

Appellate Decisions: This arises out of conflicts or cases reported by subordinates in the organization. Examples include quarrels, disputes or similar problems brought up by heads of units. Such decisions are not delegated, they can be delayed but without danger to the organization.

Stages of Decision-Making/Decision-Making Process

The process of decision-making move through 6 stages, as outlined by Nigel (1998)

Identification of the problem: Recognize of decision requirement; that a problem exists. Diagnose the cause. Clear knowledge of the problem helps in taking proper action.

Collection of possible information: Ask questions, seek ideas, opinions, etc. Develop courses of action for solving the problem by combining ideas, opinions and new creative experiences as a way of devising unique solutions to the problem.

Formulation of alternative solutions. Determine values and adequacy of alternatives, weigh the consequences, consider effects on financial and other matters to know the one that will likely be the best. There can be a combination of one or more alternatives for a better result. Selection of one from amongst the available alternatives in terms of effectiveness in solving the problem.

Implementation of decision. The decision is now put into effect for accomplishment of set goal.

Evaluation. It is the assessment stage. Follow up to find out how well the alternative is working. Determine success or failure. If it is inappropriate, go back to the drawing board. It is a problem-solving cycle which takes you back to the first stage of redefining the problem; start afresh with more new information and redesigns to curb mistakes. Decision-making is a continues process.

Decision-Making Models

Some popular decision-making models explored by various authors include:

A. Rational Decision Model (Simon 1989)

This model fashioned a series of steps to be followed so as to increase chances of making logical decision that can as well be rational. It believes in maximum achievements of the desired goal within the best situational limits. It starts with the definition of the problem, diagnosis of the problem then down to hire of evaluation, follow-up and control. It emphasis how best to achieve a goal within the best maximum possible limits and maintains that the means justifies the ends. Example is seen when prizes of things are inflated, one decides to go on with a cheaper alternative that still achieve the same goal without obstructions. That is the rationality.

Its advantage is the high emphasis on reasoning as a means of curbing the risk of taking irrational decisions. It is considered efficient because of the value it achieves. Though people may

not follow the steps sequentially because of the volume of time allotted to it.

B. Incremental Model (Incrementalism)

This model was propounded by Lindblom (1974). It is based on the premise that administrative decisions usually involve continuation of past policies with some little modifications to suit the present condition. It therefore believes in focusing decision-making only on the divers from the new policies instead of evaluating a whole programme. Only important consequences are evaluated and continually adjusted to make the problem manageable. Thus incremental decision-making model is described as remedial, because it focuses on correcting imperfections. Most government decisions and budgeting are typical examples of Incrementalism because of the routine nature and to control changes.

Advantages of Incrementalism includes:

Avoidance of serious mistakes thereby remedies past errors very quickly.
Its concentration on the existing information allows choice of value
Its adjustment nature makes the problem more manageable.
It is easy to be implemented.

Criticism against Incrementalism is that it has a conservative attitude by not allowing innovation. All alternatives not discussed therefore, create no room for development. Yet Incrementalism is the most widely adopted for policy-making because the unstable and unpredictable

nature of the political system and its tenure make policy makers very anxious to accomplish set objectives before time

People are resistant to change and they tend to stick to old or existing methods. People hold on what tends to satisfy their group or ethnic interests.

A. Mixed Scanning Model

The model was originated by Etzioni (1986) who rejected the two former models of decision making because of their weaknesses. Mixed Scanning allows proper utilization of the rational model and the incremental model depending on prevalent situations. This is why mixed scanning is a combination of Rational and Incremental models so as to neutralize the weaknesses of the other. Mixed Scanning is regarded as more transforming than other models.

Advantages of Mixed Scanning Model include: -

1.It recognizes different capacities of decision-making and seeks to provide solution to their weaknesses.
2.It gives opportunity for scanning and probing, therefore helps easy adjustment to suit changing circumstances.

The negative side of Mixed Scanning Model is said to be abstract nature because of its failure to explain method in practice in order to make it operational.

A. Optimal Model

Dror (1971) propounded the Optimal Model because of inadequacies of existing models of decision-making. He viewed the uncertainties that surround decision-making environments and its factors, which all the models did not

bring into focus and sought to minimize the risk by providing extra-rational steps for effective decision-making which included: beliefs, proving knowledge from past experiences, creativity and intuitive judgment (sound feelings). The Optimal Model which is modified version of Rational Models has three stages such as:

1.Meta Policy Making which is processing the decision to be made in terms of its values, realities, problems, resources, and all other relevant issues and then determine whether to use any of the other models.

2.Policy making which is experimenting and mobilizing the findings into making the decision by establishing operational goals, alternative decisions with their costs and benefits and evaluating the best assumed alternative for the decision.

3.Post policy making is the stage of execution, monitoring and the feedback; done through motivating the implementation, identifying unexpected results, communicating effectively through all necessary channels for maximum result. The major emphasis of the Optimal Model is to be economical in decision-making in terms of time, personnel, equipment and other scarce resources.

Scientific Method in Decision-Making

Madu. I. Leo recognized 7 steps of scientific methods in decision-making viz:

1.Observing a problem environment when set goals are not achieved.

2.Analysis and defining the problem in clear statement to understand the real cause of it.

3.Develop a model by predicting the factors that have impact on solution to the problem.

4.Data collection – Appropriates data required can be generated from the organization's records, documents, experiments, interviews, expenses of others etc.

5.Testing the solution – The model is now manipulated as a test to determine the accuracy of the input so as to ensure achievement of the desired solution to the problem.

6.Analysis of result – Result must be analyzed and implications weighed in terms of costs, staff and other facilities ever before proper implementation.

7.Implementation – After proper interpretation of result and modifications, the implementation of the final stage takes place. Careful monitoring is highly necessary at this stage to ensure that the model works to fulfill the objective.

Group Methods involved in Decision-Making

Group decision-making is a process where group of related persons collectively make decisions, through discussions while reaching consensus. It allows for multiple perspective to be considered before taking the decision. This method was initiated by Chester Bernard Irving (1972)

1.Brain-Storming: Group of individuals come together to present wide range of alternatives to generate ideas. The ideas are recorded and improved upon so as to come up with innovative ideas.

2.Nominal Group Techniques (NGT): Individuals are brought together but will not be allowed to interact verbally in order to avoid personality domination. Ideas are generated independently in writing. The written document is presented

for discussion and evaluation. Ideas are ranked and the high ranked ideas are selected based on priority.

3.Delphi Technique: Questionnaires are used to obtain consensus amongst experts. Participants are separated and unknown to each other. Completed questionnaires are returned and the results are compiled for experts' validation until consensus emerges. This is used to obtain objective judgment especially where there is disagreement or politically associated matters in which time or cost of frequent meetings is not feasible.

Advantages of group decision making include:

1There is broader perspective for problem definition and analysis.
2.It helps to make high quality decisions.
3.It allows increased member participation and support for decision.

Disadvantages include:

1.Much time is consumed
2.It does not allow respect for individual experts.
3.It gives room to more risk decisions.
4.There is no clear focus for decision responsibility.

Improving the quality of Decisions

1.Administrators should not make decisions others should make.
2.Involve more people in the decision-making process; it can be either groups, communities or others who are relevant.
3.Decision-taking should be timely to enable those affected by it carry out their own part.

4.Decisions should not be taken prematurely. Questions are pertinent and relevant information should be collected on the problem before decision-making.

5.The problem should be analyzed to lead to decision.

6.All decisions need creative thinking on the part of the decision-maker.

7.Shared decision-making can be achieved through decentralization of authority based on positions in the hierarchy and delegation of duties follow accordingly. Most activities in an organization are pursued through the HOD who is in the better position to analyze problems and source alternation to the solution. Delegation of authority is good because of the professional nature of the institution. The main actors are mostly professionals in their domain and their competences are based on their specialized skills. They are best qualified to take decisions on what affects them in their discipline.

1.Moreover, to facilitate decision making across the school set-up, the school principal should use committees which may be formal, ad-hoc or temporal depending on terms of reference and duration.

Factors Affecting Decision-Making

Many authors which included Shukla (2003) wrote on common key factors influencing strategic decision making. Those factors are summarily groups into the following:

1.Routine jobs: Routine jobs are guided by policies, procedures, rules and regulations of the organization. These will basically govern the type of decisions taking.

2.None-routine jobs: unusual problems or situations may emerge in the course of performing a job. When this arises those at the upper level make a non-routine decision which may be impromptu and unprepared.

3.Time: Evaluating and analyzing the alternatives thoroughly before making decision is always limited by time. Time has been a crucial factor in decision-making process.

4.Experience: Limits of experience is a factor in decision-making. Conditions changes; the past may or may not be a good indicator of the prevalent condition. The fact that one may have an experience does not guarantee one's learning from it.

Other factors affecting decision making abilities include: attention, memory, thinking, emotion and sentiment, personality, culture, context, information available and level of education also constitute factors. Though the influence and degrees are varied.

Barriers to Effective Decision-Making

Decisions can be influenced by:

1.Psychological bias: - The decision-maker can be influenced by some conscious or unconscious psychological factors. This makes them far from being objective in their understanding of the problem at hand, collecting, analyzing, evaluation and application of information towards choice of alternatives to solution.

2.Perception: The way the decision maker perceives the problem determines his choice. Weighing the costs and benefits in terms of long-term or short is being affected by perception.

3.Time Frame: Some decisions can become affected, irrelevant or even disastrous when it takes too long to make them. Another aspect of this factor is time pressure. Some managers make decisions without consulting other relevant bodies because of time pressure. It reduces consensus and acceptance. Thereby the quality of decision is affected. Therefore there is need for timely and quality decision-making, obtaining useful information without delay.

4.Social realities: some important managerial decisions are affected by conflicts among interest groups. Such parties come with intensive social interactions of bargaining, lobbying, excessive politicizing thereby decreasing decision-making effectiveness in the organization.

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