



Institutional Policy and Management: Types and Barriers to Effective Decision-Making

Robinson Anyabelem Ejekwu¹
Department of Educational Management
Faculty of Education
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Nigeria

Abstract

The paper examines “the types and barriers of effective decision making in institutional policy and management”. The paper also x-rays the meaning and concept of decision making. The paper as well looked at two major categories of decision making and types of decision making. The paper as well examined the barriers of decision making. The paper looked at why we make decisions, as well as the decision making in educational sector, conditions of decision making in education, decision-making skills in education and the effects of decision making. The paper also looked at the barriers of decision making. The paper further examined the management and implementation of decision making in an organization, it concluded and made some recommendation that management of institution should always bring in expertise that will help to advise them on decision making before they carry out any decision and many more.

Keywords: Barriers, Effect, Decision-Making, Management, Policy.

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INTRODUCTION

For every organization to function effectively there must be decision on how things must be done and for the organization to make progress, there must be constant meeting within the leaders to spot out there problems, and map out ways to solve the problems on ground. It is very clear that decisions are products of thinking and reasoning process resulting in consensus of the minds. This consensus could be a judgment or an agreement derived from logical perceived relevant information. Therefore, decisions are process oriented. The process could either be extra consensus or inter consensus depending on the simplicity and/or complexity of the decision

process in question. If the decision originates from any individual, it is said to be intra in nature, but if it comes from two or more persons, then it is said to be inter perspective from any view, no individual, organization, community, or industry can survive without the judicious application of decision making process. the educational sector cannot be an exception.

The constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) on the national policy on education, health, agriculture, employment, and population, including the various gazettes are embodiments of articulated decision aimed at solving the identified problems of the nation. Decision could originate from the executive, governors, chairman, leaders of organization, etc in form of directives, orders or memorandum, which are not negotiable and must be complied with. Decision-making could also be products of collective participatory democratic processes using the entire staff, members of the community, adhoc, selected leader, professionals and technical experts, etc. The suitable decision will invariably depend on the extent of the coalition, conflict, interests, and the complications arising from the unresolved difference (Johnson, 2013). Therefore, it is agreed that decision making goes allow side with the type of leadership that is unground and what they want to achieve for the organization. Igwe (1982) in Okoroma (2016) opined that decision making is a purposive act intending to achieve a desired outcome which is usually envisaged by decision maker. Also envisaged in decision making is the relationship between the action and the outcome.

Okoroma (2016) opined that the main duty of a leader or administrator is that of decision making. Since resources are generally scarce, the manager has to be able to make choices between the alternative used to which they are applied. In making such choice or decision, the economy must be considered, resources need to be used in such way that the best or optimum results are obtained. The overall interest of the majority must always be protected. The difference between successful and unsuccessful organization is in this decisional ability. Similarly, the ability to make good decision on the use of resources available to nation or individual has largely accounted for the disparity in levels of economic development in various nation, state, organization or individual in the world. This is because, the self-development of individual or organization is effected by the equality of decision they make bad decision on the use of resource will certainly produce bad results, it is a case of garbage in and garbage out.

MEANING AND CONCEPT OF DECISION MAKING

Decision making in an organization is a process theory which human, materials, financial and time resources are accounted or committed toward the achievement of the intended goals and objectives of the organization.

Olowonefa and Kalu, (2016), in Education, it is a process through which resources, information, ideas, objectives and knowledge are brought together for action in order to achieve educational goals and objectives. Furthermore, decision making can be seen as a “conscious choice from among a well-defined set of often competing alternatives” (Knezevich, 2007, cited in Okowonefa & Kalu, 2016). In every educational decision, the administrator should address what is the subject of the decision, who must be involved in making the decision and how the decision should be made. This is because, every decision making process produces a final choice (whether an action or opinion/position) as its output. Some decision however, proves to be more than a simple choice among alternative, many management decisions are part of a process that entails a series of sub-decision (Sadaghiyani, 2011, cited in Ololube, 2017). One common way of approaching decisions of differing complexities is to see the decision making process as one of

the problem solving or opportunity finding. The essence of the problem solving process, therefore, is to bridge the distance.

STEPS IN THE PROBLEM SOLVING PROCESS

- Problem identification and diagnosis;
- Alternative generation and choice;
- Implementation; and
- Monitoring results

Problem identification and diagnosis: This is based on information, at this point; the task of administrator or managers to properly analyze the available information is one area that must be handled with carry by the administrator or managers. This is because there are factors to be considered when analyzing a problem and this includes:

- Performance, what should the results be relative to, what they actually are?
- The cause of the problem is the one that exactly explains all the facts.
- Problem can be seen as department from the right course of the performance standards.

Alternative generation and choice: Once a problem and its associated causes are identified and defined, it is important to generate alternation solution. A good manager or administrator is expected to be creative and satisfying in decision-making. This is because creativity is the ability to generate new or novel ideas (Rowe, 2007).

Implementation: After taking a stand, the stand taking must be implemented. This usually involves committing resources to a course of action. The poor implementation of a good choice may lead to failure. According to Ibara (2010), cited in Ololube (2017), the decision making process involves not only making but also implementing decision.

Monitoring results. It is clean that implementation is not the final step in the process. an effective decision need to be monitored and controlled and the result need to be judged in terms of the objectives for which the decision was made. it is only when decision making is monitored and the results translated into achievement, that a decision can be considered complete and successful (Ibara, 2010).

TWO MAJOR CATEGORIES OF DECISION MAKING

Normative decision-making: Norms are the standards which prescribe the range of acceptable behavior within a social system. Norms influences the range of choice and govern the selection and application of means to achieve the goals. Normative decision making deals with the quality of the decision as an act and tends to be subjective in focus. The assumption of normative approach is that the planner knows the value system, therefore, the normative decision should be the best possible choice among other alternative that deviate from norm. The comprehensive rational model of decision making follows the normative approach.

Behavioural decision-making: A behavioural decision making deals with what actually occurs and location of the actor in the system. In other words, it deals with what we actually do as opposed to what we should do. It tends to be objective in focus. The assumption in behavioural decision-making is that the knowledge is not perfect and decision makers operate in an environment that they perceive according to their own knowledge and experience, such as environment, decision tend to be based on result of past decision and outcome. Future decision are adapted to the socio-political culture in which they are made (Ibara, 2010).

TYPE OF DECISION MAKING

The different types of decision making have been identified by different authors like (Igwe, 2000; Okoroma, 2016; Nwankwala, 2016; Ololube, 2017) and they are as follows:

- Programmed and non-programmed decision;
- Organizational and personal decision;
- Individual and group decision;
- Major and minor decisions;
- Tractical (policy) and operational decisions;
- Authoritative;
- Consultative;
- Delegative;
- Facilitative;
- Delayed and quick decision;
- Strategic decision

Programmed and non-programmed decision: Programmed decision are those type of decision that are lead down rules and procedures for handling them. They are not high risk decision and as such can easily be delegated managers and school administrators (principals and headmasters are know to make this types of decision. Programmed decisions are also called routine decision. They are decisions that are taken every now and then.

Unprogrammed decision: These are uncommon and unique decisions. They are always new and are high risks in nature. There are no lead down programmes, rules and regulations for handling the problem that can lead to such decision due to the newness. Un-programmed decision may entail greater expenses an example of an un-programmed decision that can be taken by a school administrator or manager of a firm, it is a decision to construct a new classroom, opening of a new breach of the comparing or workshop. The making of un-programmed decision demand that administrators and managers should rely healing on their program solving abilities creativity, intuition and tolerance. In fact, ability of managers and school administrator to make good un-programmed decision portrays their effectiveness in managing school, community, industry affairs. On the other hand, the above managers who are unable to make unprogrammed decision obviously showcase their ineffectiveness (Nwankwola, 2016).

Organizational and personal decision: This is where an individual takes decision as an executive in the official capacity, it is referred to as organizational decision. Meanwhile, when an

individual takes a decision as the executive in his personal capacity (such decision that affects his personal life), it is referred to as personal decision, sometime these decision may have negative effect on the function of the organization. For instance, if the execution moves out of the organization, the authority of taking organizational decision may be represented by another. Meanwhile, the personal decision cannot.

Strategic decision: This type of decision is very important because it affects the objective, organizational goals, and other important policy matters. These decisions usually involve huge investments or fund. It is non-repetitive in nature and are taken after careful analysis and evaluation of many alternative. This decision is taken at the higher level of managements, for example, Ministry of Education, Senate Meeting, University Board of Director, etc.

Individual and group decision: Individual decisions are decisions taken by a single person, on what he or she will do or will not do, in other words, it means taking stands in particular matter. While the group decision are decision made by a group of people or individual constituted in the form of standing commitment for this type of decision is to include a maximum number of individuals in the process of decision making (Sadaghiyani, 2011).

Major and minor decision: Decisions are also classified into major and minor. For example, purchasing of new factory premises is an example of major decision because it is taken by top management staff of an organization. While buying of office stationary is an example of a minor decision, this is because, the decision to buy this stationary can be taken by office of the superintendent.

Tactical (policy) and operation decision: Policy decisions are decision that certain to various policy matters of the organization. These are usually taken by the top management, usually with long-term impact on the functionary decision. This is mostly taken by industry. For example, decision pertain location of plant, tone of production and channels of distribution. Meanwhile, operating decision on the other hand has to do with day to day activity carried out by a business person. This type of decision can be carried out by a middle or lower level managers in an organization. To further differentiate between these two decision, here are specific examples, decision pertaining payment of allowances to employee is an example of policy decision. However, if the allowance is to be given to the employees, calculation of the allowance is an operating decision.

Authoritative: These are decision made in response to the authoritative from a superior officer (Ibara, 2010, cited in Ololube, 2017). The authoritative type of decision making is a decision making process in which the manager or leader is the solve decision maker. In this decision, subordinate are bound to follow these decision regardless of whether it is beneficial to the organization goals or not-and it does not follow if the manager or leader has all the information and expertise required to make a quick or appropriate decision. But it is important to note, that the leader or manager is a good decision maker because he/she is responsible for the consequences outcome of the decision (Enyi, 2014).

Consultative Decision: This type of decision is made in consultation with subordinates. A wise manager or leader is one who consults subordinates when he or she thinks they have expertise to offer.

Delegative Decision: In delegative decision making, the manager or leader delegates the responsibility of making decision to one or more subordinates. This type of decision making is usually adopted by a manager or leader who is quite confident of the capabilities of his or her subordinates.

Facilitative Decision: This is where managers or leaders work hand in hand with the subordinates to arrive at a decision. The subordinates are believed to be expertise as well as have access to the information required to make decision. This approach can be useful when the risk of wrong decision is very low as it is a great way of involving and encouraging subordinates in the operation of the organization.

WHY WE MAKE DECISION

Individual, industry, organization, community, nations, etc. make decision to enable them solve their problems and identify them easily. In an attempt to solve the identified problem, appropriate steps may be taken to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in its operational modalities. Having said this, it is clear that there are steps to follow in decision making, they include:

- Clear understanding of the aim to be served by the decision.
- Gathering of all facts, opinions and ideas relevant to the problem.
- Analyzing and interpreting the data collected.

In the various steps involved, decision making process as identified by different scholars (Heintz & Koontz, 2005), confirm the assertion that the decision making is a complete cycle of events by which an organization makes and implements organizational programmes. Having acknowledged the above, below are why most individual, organization make decisions.

Commitment will be very stronger. Employees are most committed when they believe decision are made using a logical, information and fair process with their interest represented. On the other hand, if employees believe the people and process were careful and thorough, they will support decision even when the decision turn out to be stupid.

Employee satisfaction and engagement will improve. Employee satisfaction and engagement hinge on how easily and effectively employees can contribute and whether the organization operates in such a way that commitment is created. Since, how you make decision directly affects both, it will also affect employee satisfaction and engagement.

Employee will be able to let go and focus. When you don't trust that the people around you are making smart decision, it is natural to want to be involved so you can try to help prevent disaster or at least will see it coming and avoid it. At this time, everyone has too much to do. By creating

clarity, of purpose, process, and roles, people learn to trust the system and let go. One that happens, they can get back to their top priorities and amp up their ability to focus (Oke, 2010).

Delegation will be easier and more effective. One of the biggest problem with delegation is that delegating almost anything includes delegating decision. If you treat decision as one muddled step, your only choice will be to do things yourself or throw the task over the wall and hope for the best. However, if all parties have shared process and clarity about the steps of making decision, it is easy to delegate a task and arrange for check-ins at appropriate steps.

DECISION MAKING IN EDUCATIONAL SECTOR

Decision making in the school system is the duties of the school administrator. It is the responsibility of the principals/headmasters to draw the programme of school activities and make decision as to when and how to implement them as to achieve the school objectives (Nwankwoala, 2016). Graffiths (1958) cited Nwankwoala, (2016), on making his own part categorized decision-making into four in educational system:

- Intermediary decision
- Appellate decision
- Generic decision
- Unique decision

Intermediary Decision

This type of decision does not originate with the principals or headmaster. It is normally delegated to him/her by a superior in educational hierarchy. For example, a decision could be a directive from the school's board to the principal or headmaster not to allow any student owing school fees and or any other fees to seat for exams. Because of this, in most cases, you see principal or headmaster say words like "I am directed", or "I am instructed to" this is used in the course of convening this type of decision in schools always. And some of this decision can be frustrating to the school principal or headmaster, especially when the effect of the decision is uncertain or will create negative impact on the superior.

Appellate Decision

It is regarded as appellate when they are taken in respect of case brought by subordinates. These types of decisions are the ones made to settle conflicts brought by teachers, students and other members of the school staff. Appellate decisions are also requests from the principals or headmaster to the superior body (state educational management boards), for certain action to be taken in school. It is in form of report of incidents that happened in schools that require an urgent attention of the superior body.

This is another type of decision that the educational administrator can make as opined by Graffith's cited in Nwankwoala categorization. These types of decision are made with regards to significantly improve some aspects of education like; the curricular, programmes, and admission, policies for this decision to be effectively make; the educational administration must have insights, imagination, vision, initiation and courage.

Generic Decision

This types of decision, comes as a result of a general group of educational problems that occur regularly. It may be intermediary and appellate in nature. They confront school principals and headmaster at the time such decisions are needed. When a principal or headmaster implements policy mandated by the school boards, monitors absenteeism among teachers, settles student's teachers, students-students, teachers-teachers conflicts and interprets disciplinary procedures.

Unique Decision

These are innovation decisions that require going beyond laid down procedures in order to arrive at a solution. In this type of decision, the problems are exceptional and are not solved by a generic principle or rules. Principles and headmasters can embark on unique decision in such problems like trying to provide for an important part of the curriculum that is missing and others rare events (Nwankwoala, 2016).

CONDITIONS OF DECISION MAKING IN EDUCATIONAL SECTOR

There are three main conditions under which educational administrator or managers make decision and they are conditions of certainty, uncertainty and risk:

- **Certainty:** Under this condition, a school administrator or managers has enough information and sufficient time to make decisions. Base on this, he has complete knowledge of the outcome of his or her decision in advance. He also has the knowledge of the probable outcome of each alternative.
- **Uncertainty:** In this type of condition, the principals or headmaster does not have the sufficient information to make decision and does not know the exact probability attach to available alternatives. And he or she is not sure of the anticipated outcome/results or consequences of the decision.
- **Risk:** This is the condition whereby the decision makers do not have the knowledge of possible outcome of each alternative. Nevertheless, because decision must to be made, under this condition, the decision makers are at risk and he or she does not have choice than the risk (Cherry, 2012).

DECISION MAKING SKILLS IN EDUCATIONAL SECTOR

For the fact that administrators and managers of schools are always faced with circumstance whereby they must make or take decision in issues, it is very important that they posses certain skills that would enable them make effective decision. Abobot, (1974) cited in Nwankwala, (2016) there are five of such skills and they are as follows:

- Skills in differentiating among types of decision;
- Skill in determining the amount and type of information needed to reach a decision;
- Skill in determining the appropriate involvement of other people in reaching decision;
- Skills in establishing priorities for action; and
- Skill in anticipating both intended and unintended consequences of decision.

THE PROCESS OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

For school management to achieve its aim, it involves planning, organizing, directing, and controlling employee efforts for the purpose of accomplishing the school management set goals (Wali, 2010):

Organizing: This involves establishment of effective human behavior in relationship with among selected, option, persons and workplaces so that the group/environment works together effectively. It is where we are bringing together physical and human resources and establishing productive relationships between them for the achievement of specific goal and it can also be referred to as integration and co-ordination of individual efforts to achieve goals (Agi & Adiele, 2009).

Directing: This is seen as teaching people what to do and foreseeing that they do it to the best of their ability. Directing is seeing to means instructing, guiding and inspiring, people in an organization to achieve its goals, and it is seen as moving into action or motivating individuals to act in pursuit of the objectives of the organization or institution (Nwachukwu, 2006).

Controlling: In education, management consists of verifying whether everything is occurring according to the adopted plans. Instructions are issued and principles are established during this process. Controlling identifies weakness and errors in order to rectify them and prevent their recurrence. Having effective control systems offers advantages to organization to achieve the set goals and objective, and it ensures that resources are used efficiently (Jones & George, 2006).

Planning: It is clear to every man that planning is part of our every daily activities. Planning is an explicit statement of intention that identities both objectives and the activities needed to achieve them. According to Nikan (2010), “planning is deciding the best alternative among others to perform different managerial operation in order to achieve the predetermined goals”.

EFFECTS OF DECISION MAKING

- Both internal and external factors affect the degree of participation in decision making by members of an organization. Internal factors are factors that are internal to the organization or to the staff itself while external factors, on the other hand, may mean factors or circumstances that are external to the organization or to the staff itself. These will determine the willingness or extent of participation that a staff of the organizations will settle for (Peretomode, 1992).
- It encourages staff to function at their best. Based on this, it is necessary in decision that affects them in some courses in the organization.
- Disciplining and effective relationship among staff of an organization. For example, in the cause of school administration, the school can find themselves uncertain about the cause and effect relationship and/or outcome preferences, rendering their decision making even more difficult. Decision by school administrators can involve a wide range of issues including curriculum planning, motivation of staff, students discipline, facilities, services management, school community relations, and conflicts resolutions. In order to

effectively address issues like this, good number of management staff should be considered like head of department, etc.

- It directs: The day to day running of an organization. After decisions are made, all members of the organization involved and affected need to support the implementation of the decision. Some often do not support the implementation because they neither understand the decision nor participated in it. Because of this, they don't contribute to the day to day running of the organization.
- It helps people in the organization to make fewer mistakes. This is because there are laid done principles on how things should be done in an organization, when a staff considers this, he or she will not do things the way he thinks he should do them. This is because some staff in an organization do things the way it will favour them and not the way it will favour the organization (www.jenniferdiebel.com5370manhattan).

BARRIERS TO DECISION MAKING

Some organization, community individual and industry seem to be able to make big decision on the sport without proper consultation on their members or expertise in the area which they want to take decision. This has resulted to a lot of barriers like:

- Bad idea;
- Power and politic;
- Inadequate information;
- Time pressure/environmental factors in decision making;
- Expecting ease;
- Personal bias;
- Fear of failure; and
- Lack of support.

Power and politics: Managers of school, industry, community leaders many make poor decisions, irrespective of established policies as a result of political influence on issues like student admission, staff employment, student and staff disciplinary action, appointment in sub-committee. Power in this context is the ability to influence others because of formal position or through other means.

Person bias: School administrator, managers of industry, community leaders etc who feel very strong about an issues may not be able to consider alternative without bias. For example, a manager who dislikes a particular staff or ethnic group may refuse to hire a person from this group or make a law that will affect that individual criterion that will not favour that ethic group (Ibara, 2010).

Bad idea: Sometimes an organization, community, nation or state may not find peace because the people in position have not taken a good decision that will promote peace in the organization or society they find self, all this is due to bad ideas.

Inadequate information: It is very clear that so many organizations, industries, community leaders, nations, etc. take decision without getting more information on what they are about to

decide on. Often, it is information, rather than time that is the issues. For example, if an organization wants to employ more staff, or an individual is seeking for an employment from a particular organization, all they need is to make acquire about the organization or the individual that they are about to employ or work for. At this point, it is not the time you spend, but the information you get, if it is the right or wrong type of information before you take your final decision on it (Usman, 2013).

Time pressure/environmental factors in decision making: Deadlines set by an organization could cause quick or hurried decision as the limit the time available to properly consider the options before them and make more inquires to enable them take a good decision. While the environmental factor in decision making is the level of risk involved, the degree of uncertain and the conflicts to be encountered in decision making can affect the quality of decision in an organization. (www.jenniferdiebel.com5370manhattan).

Expecting ease: The belief that some managers have, that decision making is easy might also assist or help our ability to think well about the choice of decision that we are about to take. Organizations need to think carefully and make some they proceed safety.

Fear of failure: Administrators of school, managers of industry, leaders of community and many more, have getting all kinds of fear about failure, such as financial ruin, relationship loss, public shame, self-hatred, loss of identity and so on and so format, as we approach decision that would put us at risk of whatever we fear from failure. So many managers of organization have fear of taking some risky decisions because of what the staff will say if the decision turns out wrong, what their customers we say and their reactions to it. It is clear that business is all about risk talking. Therefore, any manager who has the fear of failure cannot take any good decision (Epelle, 2009).

Lack of support: For every organization to take a very good decision or take a stand on a particular matter. They would need the supports of the staff and for the management to take some big decisions it requires greater support and resources. For example, if an organization decides to retire from a particular job or production, that the organization is into, for this to be achieved, all the managers needs here is the support of the staff, by given their strong reason why they need to do what they have decided to do (Agi & Adiele, 2009).

MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISION MAKING

Management of decision taking is very important in organization; for an organization to take the right decision, it must have the right information, therefore, management information system is highly needed to provide information and process it to support organizational activities; the competitive strategy and management function. The system information technology, manual procedures, models for analysis, planning, control and data bases. The managers of industry or organization are persons responsible for using available resources to achieve an organization goal. Resources include people, materials and money (Ebet, 1999). Therefore, for an organization to manage decision effectively, all the above mentioned functions are needed by the manager to ensure the success of the decision taken by the organization.

Implementation of decision making is very important, because after choosing an alternative, the choice of decision must be implemented, which usually involves committing resources to a course of action. When a good decision is poorly implemented it may lead to failure. Therefore, for every good decision to be achieved effectively there must be proper implementation and it is clear that implementation without proper monitoring will as well result to failure of the organization irrespective of the type of decision made. As a result of proper management and implementation, that the results translate into achievement that the decision can be considered complete and successful (Hoy & Miskel, 2004).

SUGGESTION

As an organization, industry, community, state, nation or individual, it is important to take decisions on matters that matters that one is expected to come up later with the decision or stand of the organization it will make member or staff to be conscious of what they do. With this, below are suggestions that I feel should make an organization more forward and they includes:

- Organizations should make decisions that will make them locate their problems and issues that require attention.
- They should design a means of developing methods of determining possible course of actions in there organization.
- They should always bring in experts that will help to always advise them on decision making before they come out with any decision.
- The staff of the organization or members of the community should be considered in making decision that affects them.
- A term or committee should be set to monitor the implementation of the decision taking to make sure people work in line with it and many more.

CONCLUSION

As society is changing from time to time, so is decision making in the organization sector is expected to change to enable the school and the society meet up the expected goals. For every individual to be respected in his or her environment, he or she is expected to live up to expectation by coming up with a positive decision that will make people around his environment respect him or her, every organization should remember that the success of any organization or nation lies to a large extent on the ability to make right decision and should not forget that so many organization or society that have so many problems is because of resultant effect of wrong and unnecessary decision that was taking.

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ⁱⁱ **Robinson Anyabelem Ejekwu** is a post graduate student in the Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Nigeria