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Leadership Style in Decision Making among Primary School Heads: Intuitive and Rationale Decision-Making Style

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Abstract

This research article explores the significance of decision-making in education, highlighting the central role it plays in both individual and organizational success. Decision-making is examined in the context of primary school headteachers, comparing public and private school settings. The study identifies intuitive and rationale decision-making styles. The research findings reveal a substantial contrast in decision-making styles between public and private school headteachers, particularly in rational and intuitive decision-making approaches. Notably, gender and geographical factors affect decision-making styles. Female headteachers and those in urban settings tend to adopt more intuitive decision-making styles. Recommendations include empowering public-school heads, particularly in rural areas, to make decisions based on realistic assessments. Additionally, awareness programs and refresher courses are suggested to enhance decision-making skills for primary school heads.

Keywords: *Decision-Making Approaches, Intuitive Decision-Making, Rational Decision-Making.*

1. Introduction

Decision-making is a pivotal life skill that holds great importance for everyone. It's a challenging task, and it presents a significant challenge for educators, administrators, and leaders alike. The ability to make sound decisions is a crucial skill in leadership that can drive both individuals and teams towards success. People often make both wise choices leading to success and foolish ones resulting in failure. Their lives, especially in a professional context, could be greatly improved if they grasped and learned about the various options available to them.

As per the research of Bonatti, Kuchukhidze, and Zamarian (2009), decisions can be seen as a mental process involving the selection of one option from a range of alternatives. The selected option is the ultimate outcome of any decision-making process, and it leads to a particular concept or action. Decision-making is, in essence, the vital process of choosing the best performance. It is the art of

determining the most favorable solution from among the available alternatives. This is further defined by Ahmed, Malik, and Ahmed (2019), who break down for setting choice criteria, assigning importance to criteria, exploring alternatives, choosing the most viable option while considering others, and evaluating the effectiveness of the decision.

Each person possesses a unique thinking style and pattern recognition ability, which significantly influences their decision-making patterns. This holds true in academic institutions where leaders and visionaries guide the direction. Academic administrators must be adept at making the right choices at the right time and establishing real-world quality standards within educational institutions, as highlighted by Greenberg (2016). Moreover, the decision-making process in any business is not isolated; it is influenced by a variety of internal and external factors that affect firms directly or indirectly. Managers must possess an awareness of the impact and role of these factors in the decision-making process, as noted by Delmonte (2022).

Decision-making stands as a significant and subjective facet of the management process, representing how an individual identifies, perceives, and ultimately chooses a solution for problem-solving. As outlined by Colakkadioglu (2013), the primary aim of decision-making is to bring about changes in schools or administrations in order to address or resolve issues that affect the personnel, thus rendering it one of the most crucial managerial responsibilities.

To achieve the desired outcomes, it necessitates the selection of the most rational course of action from among various perspectives and alternatives associated with a particular situation, resulting in a well-informed judgment, as indicated by Iqbal, Akhtar, & Saleem (2020). Decision-making remains a fundamental managerial task in all organizational settings, including educational institutions, as it is imperative for employees in administrative roles to make informed judgments in order to fulfill their daily responsibilities, as highlighted by Khan, Aajiz, & Ali (2018). However, it's essential to delve into how these individuals behave when making decisions, particularly in the context of organizational changes, as discussed by Rachman (2021).

Within any organization, the decision-making process holds the utmost significance. When we consider educational institutions and school leadership, the skill of decision-making becomes absolutely essential. School leaders serve as the backbone of educational establishments, and their decisions are instrumental in the betterment of the school. Throughout the process, a variety of tools, strategies, and insights may be employed. In making any decision, one should adhere to a series of stages, including setting the decision's objective, gathering information, establishing criteria for evaluating options, engaging in brainstorming and analyzing various alternatives, and conducting a thorough evaluation. According to Sehra, Sumeet, Brar, & Kaur (2012), decision-making involves systematically addressing critical organizational issues such as curriculum development and delivery, classroom monitoring, teacher performance evaluation, and providing constructive feedback to educators.

Decisions involve choosing from two or more available pieces of information. Decision-making is embedded within the broader problem-solving process, where the goal is to select the most suitable solutions to complex problems. The decision-making process can follow either a responsive or rational approach. In the context of participatory administration, as described by Singh & Kaur (2016), decision-making holds a cutting-edge position, given that it relies on mutual discussion and debate, making it more widely accepted than authoritarian leadership.

The decision-making process of school headteachers holds immense significance. While some studies have explored decision-making styles among headteachers at both national and international levels, most have focused on those in elementary and secondary schools. There's been a noticeable lack of research on the decision-making styles of primary school headteachers, which calls for further investigation. Hence, the researcher has undertaken a study on the decision-making styles of primary school headteachers.

Primary school principals have the critical responsibility of managing all the aspects to shape students' behaviors and enhance their overall personality development. Academic administration constitutes a primary role for these headteachers. According to Hussain (2011), headteachers are entrusted with the tasks of management, organization, role allocation, and the efficient utilization of school resources to enhance the performance of teaching and non-teaching staff. They bear the responsibility of effective school management by wielding the authority, power, and duties delegated to them, as pointed out by Spicer and Smith (2005).

In terms of knowledge management strategies encompassing method, culture, technology, and measurement, there aren't substantial distinctions between public and private schools, as indicated by Mazhar and Akhtar (2016). However, there is a noticeable divergence in knowledge management practices between primary and secondary schools, particularly concerning leadership. Private schools exhibit more robust performance management practices in the domain of knowledge management leadership.

Khan (2015) has highlighted those various studies such as those conducted by the Pakistan Study Centre at the University of Peshawar and the Pakistan Institute of Management, have explored decision-making in Pakistan's context, albeit to a limited extent. Therefore, this research aims to compare decision-making methods across public and private school headteachers. Every school headteacher plays important role with their choices guided by the school's best interests and aimed at paving the way forward. Decision-making and the advisory process are both evolving procedures, each with its own advantages and drawbacks, collectively contributing to the overall development of schools, according to Khaki (2006).

The impact of teaching staff on making schools more conducive to teaching and learning has prompted numerous studies worldwide, emphasizing the undeniable importance of headteachers' engagement in enhancing schools. The ability of a school head to accomplish their objectives significantly affects their capacity to devise and implement the necessary decision-making strategies in a constrained context. School leadership involves much more than just taking care of students; it also requires adept decision-making in various situations, as stated by Khaki (2006).

The competence and capability of school leaders to make decisions significantly influence the nation's future. Successful decision-making requires headteachers to possess a clear vision for making informed choices. Therefore, decision-making is a characteristic that should be carefully considered within this context, as it defines the qualities of exceptional educators and their ability to handle challenges effectively. Various leadership styles, including independent, authoritative, and laissez-faire, are employed by school leaders, as noted by Ahmad and Dilshad (2016). Additionally, heads of educational institutions bear the responsibility not only for teaching the next generation but also for fulfilling a range of crucial duties to achieve predefined goals, according to Ali, Arshad, and Rasool (2019).

Decision-making styles are often classified into oppressive, advisory, democratic, and consensus categories, as per Verma (2009). These styles aim to define, categorize, systematize, and standardize diverse subject matter, making them crucial objectives in decision-making, according to Dymond, Bailey, Willner, and Parry (2010). Furthermore, a leader's managerial skills have been found to have a significant impact on organizational effectiveness, as highlighted by Muraina and Babatunde (2014).

Effective decision-making planning is a vital aspect and showcases individual and cognitive capabilities. As Chuu (2014) suggests, without proper planning, decision-making is unlikely to yield successful results. The planning of decisions must be conducted in an intellectual and straightforward manner to facilitate effective decision-making. Planning contributes to the overall decision-making process, ensuring the attainment of optimal individual and organizational outcomes, given the significant role that actions can play in shaping the future and advancing personal experiences and organizations.

School headteachers play a crucial role in fulfilling their institutions' objectives as executives. Their knowledge is employed in structuring the organization within a specific context and the required decision-making framework. While simple problems can be addressed with average problem-solving skills, complex ones necessitate a higher level of ability. Decision-making hinges on a blend of an individual's managerial qualities, behavioral patterns, and attributes. These individual styles are of paramount importance in the complex and extensive spectrum of decision-making, underlining the necessity for educators to comprehend the key features of decision-making styles.

Table 1

Contrast between Public and Private School Principals in Terms of Rational Decision-Making

	School	Head teachers	Mean	Std. Div.	*t*	*P*
Rational Decision-Making	Public	142	3.985	.650	.742	.007
	Private	180	3.282	.565		

Table 1 provides a comparative perspective on the adoption of rational decision-making styles by primary school headteachers in both public and private school settings. It is evident that public school headteachers (M = 3.985, S.D. = 0.650) demonstrated a higher level of consensus regarding the utilization of rational decision-making styles in school administration. Conversely, private primary school headteachers (M = 3.282, S.D. = 0.565) also exhibited a notable agreement with the use of rational decision-making styles. Between these two sets of headteachers, there is a statistically significant difference in mean scores (p = 0.007). Therefore, when it comes to using logical decision-making approaches, there is a notable difference between the decision-making styles of head teachers in public and private schools. Consequently, the null hypothesis, stating "There is no significant difference between public and private school heads in the use of rational decision-making styles at the primary level," has been rejected.

Table 2
Contrast between Public and Private Male School' Principals in Terms of Rational Decision-Making

	School	Head teachers	Mean	Std. Div.	*t*	*P*
Rational Decision-Making	Public	55	3.737	.475	.542	.065
	Private	71	3.682	.655		

Table 2 offers a comparative insight into the adoption of rational decision-making styles among male primary school headteachers in both public and private school environments. It is worth noting that male public school headteachers (M = 3.737, S.D. = 0.475) displayed a relatively high level of consensus regarding the utilization of rational decision-making styles in school administration. Similarly, male private primary school headteachers (M = 3.682, S.D. = 0.655) also demonstrated a substantial agreement in favor of employing rational decision-making styles.

However, the analysis reveals that the disparity in mean scores between male public and private school headteachers is not statistically significant (p = 0.065). Consequently, there is no significant distinction between the decision-making styles of male public and private school headteachers concerning the use of rational decision-making styles. So, null hypothesis "There is no significant difference between public and private school heads in the use of rational decision-making styles at the primary level," is accepted in the context of male headteachers.

Table 3
Contrast between Public and Private Female School' Principals in Terms of Rational Decision-Making

	School	Head teachers	Mean	Std. Div.	*T*	*P*
Rational Decision-Making	Public	87	3.937	.459	.822	.024
	Private	109	3.375	.491		

Table 3 presents a comparative perspective on the adoption of rational decision-making styles among female primary school headteachers in both public and private school contexts. Notably, female public-school headteachers (M = 3.937, S.D. = 0.459) exhibited a notably high level of consensus regarding the use of rational decision-making styles in school administration. Likewise, female private primary school headteachers (M = 3.375, S.D. = 0.491) also indicated a substantial agreement with the utilization of rational decision-making styles.

However, the analysis reveals that the difference in mean scores between female public and private school headteachers is statistically significant (p = 0.024). Therefore, there is a significant difference in the application of rational decision-making approaches between female head teachers of public and private schools. Consequently, hypothesis "There is no significant difference between public and private school heads in the use of rational decision-making styles at the primary level," is rejected in the context of female headteachers.

Table 4

Contrast between Public and Private Rural School' Principals in Terms of Rational Decision-Making

	School	Head teachers	Mean	Std. Div.	*t*	*P*
Rational Decision-Making	Public	77	3.452	.471	.810	.251
	Private	73	3.332	.617		

Table 4 provides a comparative analysis of the adoption of rational decision-making styles among primary school headteachers in public and private schools. Notably, rural public-school headteachers (M = 3.452, S.D. = 0.471) demonstrated a substantial level of consensus regarding the use of rational decision-making styles in school administration. Similarly, rural private primary school headteachers (M = 3.332, S.D. = 0.617) also indicated a notable agreement with the adoption of rational decision-making styles.

However, the analysis reveals that the difference in mean scores between rural public and private school headteachers is not statistically significant (p = 0.251). Consequently, there is insignificant differentiation between rural public and private school headteachers when it comes to the utilization of rational decision-making styles. As a result, the null hypothesis, asserting that "There is no significant difference between public and private school heads in the use of rational decision-making styles at the primary level," is accepted in the context of rural primary school headteachers.

Table 5

Contrast between Public and Private Urban School' Principals in Terms of Rational Decision-Making

	School	Head teachers	Mean	Std. Div.	*t*	*P*
Rational Decision-Making	Public	65	3.978	.434	.661	.007

	Private	107	3.335	.512		

Table 5 provides a comparative perspective on the adoption of rational decision-making styles among urban primary school headteachers in both public and private school settings. Remarkably, urban public-school headteachers (M = 3.978, S.D. = 0.434) displayed a notable level of consensus regarding the use of rational decision-making styles in school administration. Similarly, urban private primary school headteachers (M = 3.335, S.D. = 0.512) also demonstrated a substantial agreement with the application of rational decision-making styles.

However, the analysis reveals that the difference in mean scores between urban public and private school headteachers is statistically significant (p = 0.007). Hence, there exists a significant disparity between urban public and private school headteachers with respect to the utilization of rational decision-making styles. Consequently, the null hypothesis, which posited that "There is no significant difference between public and private school heads in the use of rational decision-making styles at the primary level," is rejected in the context of urban primary school headteachers.

Table 6

Contrast between Public and Private School' Principals in Terms of Intuitive Decision-Making

	School	Head teachers	Mean	Std. Div.	*t*	*P*
Intuitive Decision-Making	Public	142	3.239	.817	.811	.009
	Private	180	3.982	.465		

Table 6 provides a comparative perspective on the adoption of intuitive decision-making styles by headteachers in public and private schools at the primary level. It is evident that public school headteachers (M = 3.239, S.D. = 0.817) displayed a moderate level of consensus regarding the utilization of intuitive decision-making styles. In contrast, private school headteachers (M = 3.982, S.D. = 0.465) exhibited a high level of agreement with the application of intuitive decision-making styles.

The analysis reveals that the difference in mean scores between public and private schools is statistically significant (p = 0.009). This indicates a notable and statistically meaningful disparity in the intuitive decision-making styles between public and private school headteachers. Consequently, the hypothesis "There is no significant difference between public and private school heads in the use of intuitive decision-making styles at the primary level," is rejected.

Table 7

Contrast between Public and Private Male School' Principals in Terms of Intuitive Decision-Making

	School	Head teachers	Mean	Std. Div.	*t*	*P*
Intuitive Decision-Making	Public	55	3.615	.452	.562	.093
	Private	71	3.771	.761		

Table 7 presents a comparative analysis of the intuitive decision-making style among male headteachers in public and private primary schools. Notably, male public school headteachers (M = 3.615, S.D. = 0.452) demonstrated a high level of consensus regarding the use of intuitive decision-making styles. Similarly, male private school headteachers (M = 3.771, S.D. = 0.761) also exhibited a significant agreement with the application of intuitive decision-making styles.

However, the analysis reveals that the difference in mean scores between male public and private school headteachers is not statistically significant (p = 0.093). This indicates no statistically notable difference in the intuitive style between male headteachers in public and private primary schools. As a result, the null hypothesis, asserting that "There is no significant difference between public and private school heads in the use of intuitive decision-making styles at the primary level," is accepted concerning male headteachers in both public and private primary schools.

Table 8

Contrast between Public and Private Female School' Principals in Terms of Intuitive Decision-Making

	School	Head teachers	Mean	Std. Div.	*t*	*P*
Intuitive Decision-Making	Public	87	3.737	.549	.832	.006
	Private	109	4.132	.812		

Table 8 provides a comparative analysis of the intuitive decision-making style among headteachers in public and private primary schools. Specifically, female public-school headteachers (M = 3.737, S.D. = 0.549) demonstrated a high level of consensus regarding the utilization of intuitive decision-making styles. On the other hand, female private school headteachers (M = 4.132, S.D. = 0.812) indicated a very high agreement with the use of intuitive decision-making styles.

The analysis indicates that there is a high difference between female headteachers in public and private schools (p = 0.006). This highlights a statistically meaningful distinction in the intuitive decision-making styles between female headteachers in public and private primary schools. Consequently, the null hypothesis, which posited that "There is no significant difference between public and private

school heads in the use of intuitive decision-making style at the primary level," is rejected in the context of female primary school headteachers.

Table 9

Contrast between Public and Private Rural School' Principals in Terms of Intuitive Decision-Making

	School	Head teachers	Mean	Std. Div.	*t*	*P*
Intuitive Decision-Making	Public	77	3.217	.674	.657	.015
	Private	73	3.982	.716		

Table 9 provides a comparative analysis of the intuitive decision-making style among rural headteachers in public and private primary schools. Specifically, rural public-school headteachers (M = 3.217, S.D. = 0.674) demonstrated a moderate level of consensus regarding the utilization of intuitive decision-making styles. Conversely, rural private school headteachers (M = 3.982, S.D. = 0.716) exhibited a high degree of agreement with the application of intuitive decision-making styles.

The analysis reveals big difference between rural public and rural private schools (p = 0.009). This indicates a statistically significant distinction in the intuitive decision-making styles between rural headteachers in public and private primary schools. Consequently, the null hypothesis, which postulated that "There is no significant difference between public and private school heads in the use of intuitive decision-making style at the primary level," is rejected regarding rural primary school headteachers.

Table 10

Contrast between Public and Private Urban School' Principals in Terms of Intuitive Decision-Making

	School	Head teachers	Mean	Std. Div.	*t*	*P*
Intuitive Decision-Making	Public	65	3.241	.581	.861	.253
	Private	107	3.191	.615		

Table 10 offers a comparative analysis of the intuitive decision-making style among urban headteachers in public and private primary schools. Notably, urban public-school headteachers (M =

3.241, S.D. = 0.581) demonstrated a moderate level of consensus regarding the utilization of intuitive decision-making styles. Similarly, urban private school headteachers (M = 3.191, S.D. = 0.615) also indicated a moderate level of agreement with the application of intuitive decision-making styles.

However, the analysis reveals that the difference in mean scores between public and private schools is not statistically significant (p = 0.253). This suggests no statistically significant distinction between urban headteachers in public and private primary schools. Consequently, the null hypothesis, which postulated that "There is no significant difference between public and private school heads in the use of intuitive decision-making style at the primary level," is accepted in the context of urban headteachers in primary schools.

Principal conclusions: To summarize, the results indicate that, when considering rational decision-making style, there is a notable distinction between the decision-making philosophies of heads of public and private schools. But when head teachers are taken into account, there isn't much of a difference in the way male heads of public and private schools utilize reason to make decisions when it comes to making decisions. However, when it comes to using logical decision-making, there is a noticeable difference in the decision-making styles of female heads of public and private schools.

Furthermore, the data shows that when it comes to using rational decision-making, there are no appreciable differences in the decision-making styles of rural heads of public and private schools. Nonetheless, an important difference between public and private school decision-making styles is observed when looking at urban school heads with regard to the use of rational decision-making.

There is a statistically significant difference between heads of public and private schools in terms of intuitive decision-making style. Nevertheless, when headteachers are broken down by gender, this statistically significant difference disappears, with male heads of public schools not differing statistically significantly from those of private schools in terms of their intuitive decision-making style.

Additionally, the data reveals a statistically significant difference between female heads of private and public schools in terms of their intuitive decision-making style. Likewise, there is a noticeable disparity in the intuitive decision-making approach of rural public and private school administrators. Nonetheless, there isn't a statistically significant distinction between metropolitan public and private school directors' intuitive decision-making styles.

The study's conclusions and findings lead to the following recommendations being put forth:

1. Empower and instill confidence in public school heads who tend to rely on defensive decision-making styles. This will enable them to make decisions based on a more realistic and practical foundation.

2. Implement awareness programs and refresher courses for primary school heads in both public and private institutions, particularly those in rural areas. These initiatives are essential to enhance their decision-making skills in school administration.

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