

Participating the Decision Making Process in Educational Management (The Ministry of National Education Case)

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Abstract: Decision making is regarded as the most important process among the management processes. It is also expected to effect applications in educational management as well. On the other hand, parallel to the developments in educational sciences, educational management should be subjected to attendance too. In this study, the participation of employees and managers into the decision making process is tried to be determined, besides their perceptions on realization of it. A total of 23 questions were asked to the managers and the employees.

Key words: Decision making • participating decision • educational management • managers • employees

INTRODUCTION

Organizations are established to realize designated goals and to get rid of problems that can't be tackled individually [1]. They should be managed in accordance with the goals and scientific management process in order to survive. It is claimed by some authors that decision making, considered to be the most important process among the management processes and even to be the management itself. According to Bursalıoğlu management processes are basically decision making processes [2]. It can be inferred that decision making is the core of management.

Different kinds of decisions can be made within an organization and, as a process, it is applied for making changes in organization, preventing or analysing organizational conflict and influencing the members. It is the axis of management processes. It is vital for an organization to give right decisions. In order to make right and productive decisions, a manager should know and apply the decision models and stages.

Those stages are:

- Identifying problem and gathering information about it,
- Analysing information and interpretation,
- Formulazing the solution paths,
- Chosing the most effective alternative,
- Application and assessment.

The manager should attain maturity in stages and types of individual and group decisions to make a distinction between positive and negative factors in decision making [2].

Any judgement effects action can be considered as decision. The strength of the effect depends on the assessment through the discreet decisive solutions and chosing the most reasonable alternative. Having only one possible alternative for decision making, will make its rightness questionable. It is suggested that one should take the restrictions, namely strategic effects, into consideration while chosing the best alternative [2].

An individual may be steady, timid or on the contrary agile and courageous in character. He may behave agile or timid under different circumstances. It is possible to measure an individual's or a group of individuals different judgements of values and behaviour styles with benefit function [3].

Organizational structure should be constructed, not on manager's memory but on distribution of decisive authority. An organization lives on contemporary and repeating decisions which are under the brightness of the preceding ones. Organizational character is the mirror of those decisions. Frustrations and conflicts occurs within the organization are caused by the distinction between strength and authority of the decision [2]. In classical organizations, decision making occurs at the head of the organization and mostly a centralized approach is appreciated. On the other hand, in Likert's Four Systems

of Management Leadership Theory decision making occurs at every hierarchical stage of the organizations through group processes [4]. In a centralized approach plans and decisions related to the strategy of an organization are given in administrative center and then conveyed to the province offices. Thus, necessary activities can be put into action [5].

Making decision is to choose the path in the most rational path possible. The word possible is used deliberately because we, as human beings, will never have concrete knowledge about future [3].

The factors restricting decision making are; biological, psychological and sociological. The first one refers to the manager while the other two refer to organization and community. Those factors, to be more precise, are; failure in identifying the goals, mistake in determining rational measurement, heaviness of working conditions and rules, lack of information and having little time [6]. The factors restricting the rationality of decisions are caused by values, knowledge and skills of the manager.

Lots of decision making models have been developed to sustain problems at a minimum level in managerial process. Those models aim to help manager find a solution to promote the profits to the highest level by eliminating random acts. The most important models are discussed below [7]:

Model of probability and expected value: According to this model probability is the chance of an alternative's being true. The higher the chance of implementing an alternative, the higher the probability it has. Expected value, on the other hand, is the possible outcome which is supposed to be obtained by implementing the alternative. The alternative with high probability of occurrence and high expected value, will definitely be the first choice of a decision maker.

Decision tree: According to this model decision should be made by a gradual process. It involves the progress with eliminating negative choice-to-be in every step. The probability and expected value model mentioned above is used in every step of decision tree. This provides decision maker with anticipating and eliminating the unreliable and inconvenient alternatives through achieving the most profitable one.

Simulation: In this computer-based model an organization model is developed in which the alternatives are implemented imaginarily. Sometimes a subsystem of an

organization can be studied. Available information is applied to this model where the missing information is developed by assumptions. When this model of assumed information runs, the best alternative is supposed to be found.

Organization and decision making process are the same research fields theoretically. Organization is the arrangement of human behaviours in a determined direction [6]. On the other hand there are too many factors effecting decision making process and it is not always possible to have a concrete information about them [3].

No organization in today's world is exempted from change [8]. Thus, decision making is a total and established process which is consulted for the application of any kind of changes in an organization. In short, decision making and organizational change are linked to each other with cause-result chain. It is unquestionable that every change can be made through one or more decision making processes [6].

Most confronted decision making method is the one made on the former experiences and habits. Giving the same decisions under the same circumstances will make the managers get in the habit of it and provide them with swiftly made decisions. But, despite not being scientific, its rightness can be questioned [3]. One definition of decision is to reach a judgement to avoid a conflict and to bring it to the solution ground. According to this definition, decision making process is a tool for resolving conflicts. Those conflicts are caused by contrary values and expectations [6]. Another definition is the influence of each organizational member with each other to attain the goal. This point of view takes the role of informal communication into consideration within decision making process. Thus, decision making, becomes the outcome of manager's effect in corresponding formal and informal dimensions [2]. Two key concepts, "influence" and "power" are used to define participation in decision making process. "Influence" becomes more of an issue in influencing decision while "power" in realizing requirements for the decision [6].

Implementation of a decision can be considered within three dimensions [9]:

- The generality and abstractness of a decision. The more general and abstract a decision is, the more difficult its implementation gets. Concrete decisions are clearer and more distinct.
- The inner and outer fields of the organization that is effected by the decision. The bigger the field of

decision is, the more difficult supervising the implementation gets. Thus it becomes nearly impossible to determine the effectiveness of the decision.

- The validity of a decision. The longer the validity of decision is, the weaker the implementation gets. In order to reinforce the implementation, the decision should be reminded to all employees from time to time and they should supervised constantly.

The managers implement the decision through a solution process strengthen the effect of it. That's why the employees, who are to be effected by the decision, should participate in decision making process.

Every management process begins and ends with decision making. Even the connection between those processes are realized through decision making process. A manager's decision to plan an activity set an example of it. After planning he decides on teh coordination needs likely to occur between units and individuals. Furthermore, implementing a plan depends on making decision.

The level of attaining a designated organizational goal depends on right decisions. An improper decision causes a loss in workforce, productivity level and time. It might even bring the organization to an end. Educational organizations put their activities into action within the framework of educational strategies which are determined by representative political organs [10].

Therefore, in making decisions, depend on the sensitivity of the subject, the opinions and suggestions of experts and even all the employees should be taken into consideration from time to time. Educational organizations have open system attributes and they should be within close touch of corresponding society. Some educational decisions may not effect the organization only, but the whole community. Ministry of National Education has a centralized construction and all decisions are taken in the administrative center to be conveyed to inferior offices in the provinces. In Administrative Center the participation of the employees in decisions related to their missions and responsibilities remains unknown. It is expected that in democratic organizations members should participate in decisions which effect them.

Purpose and Scope: The purpose of this study is to define the participation of employees, working in Ministry of National Education and Office of The General Manager of Primary Education, in decision making process.

The stage and type of decisions are grouped as;

- The decisions related to goal and strategy of organization. (the decisions made by strategic managers)
- The decisions related to objectives of a particular unit or divisions. (the decisions made by tactical managers)
- Operational and functional decisions (the decisions made by operative directors and employees)

The questions and problems searched within the framework of general purpose of this study are:

- Do the people, who are effected to be by the decision in an organization, participate in decision making process regarding individuals and community?
- Having no participation in the management process causes failure in creating a democratic society.
- Participation in decision making process promotes the organizational loyalty. In order to achieve organizational unification and high motivation the employees should participate in decision making process.

Those groups within the scope of the research are:

I. Group (Managers): The General Manager Of Primary Education, Deputy General Manager Of Primary Education, Department Manager, Directors.

II. Group (Employees): Education expert, chief, typists and other personnel.

A 30-item-questionnaire is conducted to all personnel. The questionnaire is classified into two groups, namely managers and employees. The data obtained from the study is explained in percentages.

Importance: Research results will demonstrate the reasons of setbacks in decision making process. The problems will be discussed and the answers will be brought up on behalf of making right decisions.

METHODS

Basicly a one-to-five scale (1 = not at all, 5 = completely) was applied. But in order to determine the connection between two groups, the choices "not at all" and "seldom" are assessed together as "1", choice

Table 1: Opinions of managers and employees upon participating in decision

Questions	Agreement percentages for items (%)					
	Manager			Employee		
	Low	Medium	Much	Low	Medium	Much
1. Operations related to our office are determined through our decisions	19	52	29	75	19	6
2. Our decisions are appreciated	19	48	33	55	19	26
3. My subordinates and me decide together	29	24	47	59	30	11
4. My superior and me decide together	34	24	42	62	19	19
5. My superior decides on his/her own	38	47	15	27	25	48
6. My superiors decide	29	38	33	19	9	72
7. Decisions are made at operative level	80	10	10	94	-	6
8. Subdepartment Directors make decisions	52	33	15	48	41	11
9. Department Managers make decisions	38	47	15	22	50	28
10. Deputy General Managers make decisions	19	42	39	20	28	52
11. General manager makes decisions on his/her own	33	34	33	38	16	48
12. Decision making occurs mostly at strategic level	43	24	33	41	15	44
13. Decisions are based upon former habits	10	24	66	15	19	66
14. Strategic managers often disclaims decisions made	57	24	19	48	14	38
15. Decisions are made hasty in our office	33	38	29	44	28	28
16. Making a decision the experts are consulted	47	29	24	54	30	16
17. The people who are to effected by the decision may indicate their opinions	38	43	19	61	30	9
18. I participate in decisions related to mission distribution in my office	62	14	24	73	16	11
19. Decisions are made through group meetings	71	24	5	61	23	16
20. I participate in decision making process in case of reconstruction	57	19	24	67	16	27
21. Decisions are inscribed within the office	19	43	38	16	16	68
22. Decisions are determined verbally	38	48	14	55	33	12
23. The rightness of decisions is assessed	43	52	5	75	13	12

“medium” numerized as “2” and choices “much” and “completely” are get together as “3”. Frequences are summed up in accordance with those three groups and percentages are defined. The difference between group 1 and group 2 in terms of answers to the questions is inquired. Interpretations are made by comparing the percentages.

Findings and interpretations: Findings are shown below as a single table (Table 1). The aggrement level of employees and managers to the items are brought out separately. Aggrement proportion to the items defined by percentages and differences in between the opinions of managers and employees are interpreted.

The findings can be inferred from the table above are:

1. Managers perceptions on transactions being performed by their decisions are “medium”, while employees perceptions are “low”.
2. Managers perceptions of the appreciation of their decisions are “medium”, while employees perceptions are “low”.

3. Managers perceive that they give decisions with subordinates participation, while employees perceive the opposite.
4. Managers perceive that they are asked for opinions in decision making process by their superiors, while employees perceive the opposite.
5. Managers perceptions on superiors making decisions on their own are “medium”, while employees perception are “high”.
6. Both managers and employees perceive that people at operative level do not make decisions.
7. Both managers and employees perceive that directors do not make decisions.
8. Both managers and employees perceptions on department managers making decisions are “medium”.
9. Managers perceptions on deputy general managers giving decisions are “medium”, while employees perceptions are “high”.
10. Managers perceptions on general managers giving decisions are “medium”, while employees perceptions are “high”.

11. Managers perceptions on strategic managers giving decisions are “low”, while employees perceptions are “high”.
12. Strategic managers give decisions depending on their former experiences.
13. Both managers and employees have the perception that strategic managers do not renounce their decisions.
14. Both managers and employees perceive that decisions are not given hasty.
15. Both managers and employees perceive that the experts are not consulted within the decision process.
16. Both managers and employees perceive that they do not participate in decisions related to mission distribution.
17. Both managers and employees perceive that decision are not made through group meetings.
18. Both managers and employees perceive that they do not participate in decisions related to reconstruction.
19. Both managers and employees perceive that decisions are inscribed within the office
20. The managers perceptions on the verbal determination of decision are “medium”, while employees perceptions are “low”.
21. The managers perceptions on assessing the rightness of decision are “medium”, while employees perceptions are “low”.
22. Compared to other departments both managers and employees perceptions on participation of operational level personnel in decision making process are “low”.
6. Employees perceptions on decisive participation issue is “low”.
7. Decisions are seldom made by divisive directors.
8. Decisions are often made by department managers.
9. Decisions are mostly made by deputy general managers.
10. General managers usually don't give decisions on their own.
11. Decisions are not made beyond general managers mostly.
12. Decisions depend on former experiences and habits of managers.
13. Strategic managers almost never renounce a decision they have made.
14. Decisions are given hasty.
15. Making a decision, managers do not consult to experts.
16. The opinions of the people who are to be effected by a decision do not taken into consideration in the departments.
17. People do not participate in the decision related to mission distribution.
18. Decisions are not given with group meetings.
19. Subordinates do not participate in reconstructive decisions.
20. Decisions are inscribed generally.
21. Decision are seldom given verbally.
22. The rightness of the decisions are not assessed.
23. Compared to the other departments, employees participation to decisions is “low”.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions: In Ministry of National Education decisions regarding organizational goals and strategies are taken at strategic level. Lower level managers can not have the opportunity to take part in decision making process. This causes setbacks in bringing up “managers” of the future. The conclusions mainly are:

1. The decisions made by operative levels are exposed to change by higher level managers.
2. The level of employees participation to decision making process come out to be “low”.
3. Managers gives decisions mostly with their superiors.
4. Superiors seldom give decisions on their own.
5. Decisions are made by superiors together.
1. In General Manager Office of Primary Education, the periods in which the operations get more should be determined. The annual course diagram can be used for that.
2. The distribution of the operation and their types should be determined according to the days of the week.
3. In some department and divisions the division of labour should be done in lower hierarchial stages.
4. The decisions made in lower levels should be appreciated by superiors and should not be changed unless necessary. This may cause lack of self-confidence and hinders self-development.
5. Managers should make decisions with their subordinates participation. In giving the sense of *total quality management* to them, *life-long education* attitude should be followed.

6. It is suggested that the senior managers give up giving decisions on their own.
 7. Decision should not be made in accordance with former experiences and habits. It should be made according to contemporary developments.
 8. Senior managers should renounce decisions they've made if its rightness becomes questionable.
 9. In decision making process an expert of the subject should be consulted.
 10. The opinions of the employees should be taken into consideration in giving a decision.
 11. All of the employees should participate in decision regarding mission distribution. Thus their productivity will increase.
 12. The rightness of the decision should be assessed. That is a prerequisite of development.
 13. Employees should participate in decisions regarding reconstruction.
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