

# **Improving the educational decision-making system – from the viewpoint of members of education faculties settled in Tehran and staff managers and specialists in the Ministry of Education**

**Ghahramani, Mohammad (Ph. D.)<sup>1</sup>**

## **Abstract**

**In this research educational decision-making system was studied based on five (internal and external) factors including: environment of decision-making (supra-systems), structure of decision-making, process of decision-making, implementing of decision-making, and evaluation and feedback of decision-making. Data was gathered by questionnaire from two groups, members of the Faculties of Education settled in Tehran and staff managers and specialists of the Ministry of Education. Findings show that the educational decision-making system has many imperfections with structural factors being the most important and implementation factors the least of them. Furthermore, the study samples emphasize decentralization of educational decision-making system.**

**Key words: educational decision-making, internal-system factors, external-system factors, supra-system**

---

1 - Faculty member, Department of Education, Shahid Beheshti University

## factors, ministry of education, decentralization of education

### Introduction

From amongst the organizations and foundations that effect the stable social development, educational organizations have a unique position and therefore, their role and importance is without doubt clear and already-proven.

The scientific documentaries and eyewitness shows that any kind of modification to social systems, including the system of education, demands more than anything else, revision and restructuring in the decision-making system.

The organizational behavior theory-makers have considered two theories for decision-making:

1. **The Classic Decision-Making Theory:** Based on this theory, manager is a person who acts in a completely understandable and trusting world and faces a fully described and clear problem. The manager is aware of all conditions for taking action and knows the result of each and then decides on a solution, which produces the best result in solving the problem.

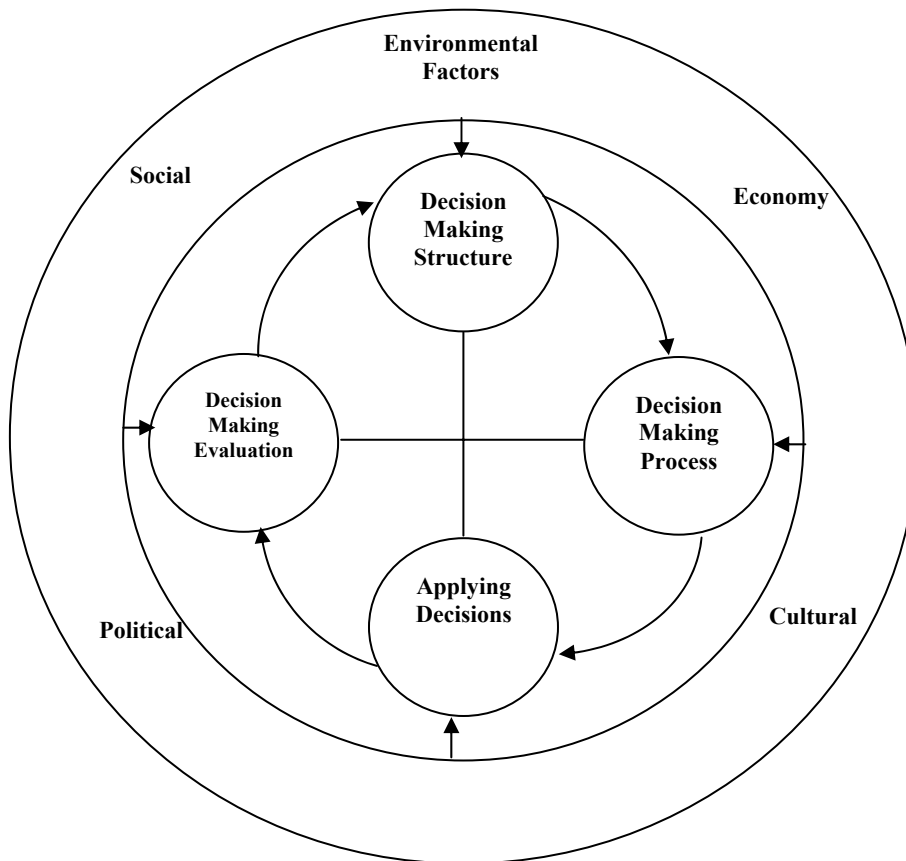
Scientists of the field of behavioral sciences approach the theory of classic decision-making cautiously. As a result it is argued that the behavioral theory of decision-making is a more precise description of how human-beings decide.

2. **Theory of Behavioral Decision-Making:** Human-being takes action only based on what he precepts at a specific situation. On top of this, these perceptions are often not complete. The behavioral decision-maker seems to face limited information rather than facing a completely trusting world and it seems that the manager acts with no full trust.

Herbert Simon names this model the contentment style. The major difference between the manager's ability for suitable decision-making based on the classic style and the satisfactory

decision-making (behavioral style) is in the existences of cognitive limits and their effect on our perceptions. These cognitive limits have high importance in the managers' daily life and therefore, clarify the high importance of insight and judgment (Shermerhorn, et. al., 1999, p. 269-268).

In this research in hand, the following conceptual model has been designed in order to evaluate and analyze the educational decision-making system. This model is the basis for the research questions, the designing of the questionnaire, and the analysis of the gathered-data:



**Diagramme 1- Analyzing the system of decision making in education**

## Research goals

Here are the research goals in point form.

- Identifying the deficiencies and shortages of decision-making in the education system;
- Categorization and analysis of deficiencies and shortages in the decision making system of the ministry of education divided into five elements of environmental, structural, process, operational, and evaluation & feed-back;
- Identification and providing of solutions in order to reduce deficiencies and shortages of the decision making system of the ministry of education

## Research questions

Here are the research questions in point form.

- What are the deficiencies and shortages of decision making system of the ministry of education divided into five categories of elements: environmental, structural, process, operational, and evaluation and feed-back?
- Is there significant difference between the deficiencies of decision making system of the ministry of education based on the mentioned five elements?
- Is there significant difference between the research cases' opinions about the deficiencies of the Education system decision-making, which is based on the modifying variables (work experience, level of education, scientific degree)?
- What solutions are available for modification and improvement of decision making system of the ministry of education?

## **Research method**

The method for conducting this research has been descriptive and of survey type.

### **Data-collection tools**

In order to collect the data and the necessary information for the research two methods have been used: the documental and the questionnaire. The questionnaire was used to collect the research cases' answers; and opinions in the field of research variables were gathered.

### **The statistical population and the research sample**

The statistical population of this research was consisted of two groups; the first group was consisted of members of the scientific departments of faculties of educational sciences in five universities, including Shahid-Beheshti University, Tehran University, Tarbiat-Mo'alleh University, Allame-Tabataba'i University, and Al-Zahra University. The second group was consisted of staff managers of the ministry of Education. Considering the statistical population mass, and based on "Morgan's" table for identifying the sample mass, 120 individuals were selected in total from the members of the population. This was through stratified sampling in a random way. The research questionnaire was distributed among them. After strong persistence a set of 90 completed and without-error questionnaires were collected and considered as the basis for the research work.

## **Research findings**

In this research, the findings related to the four questions will be provided. Still, before offering the findings, the answers given to three questionnaire questions will be mentioned. This is so that introductory and useful information can be gained. The following table will show the level of familiarity the cases have with the

education system problems, and demonstrates their level of participation in decision makings.

**Table 1 – The cases' level of familiarity with education system problems ad their amount of participation in decision-makings**

Questions	Groups	Weighted Mean
The amount of familiarity with problems of the system of education	Faculty Members	74
	Managers & Experts	79
	<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>
The amount of involving cases in decision-making in the system of education	Faculty Members	46
	Managers & Experts	56
	<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>

Also, the amount of effectiveness of the decisions made in various stages of education system decision-making has been stated as one general question from the research cases. The answers offered are shown in the following table.

**Table 2 – The amount of effectiveness of decisions made in various decision-making stages in the education system**

Decision-making level	Weighted Mean	
Ministry level	Members of the scientific committee	59
	Specialists and managers	57
Provincial level	Members of the scientific committee	64

	Specialists and managers	59
Municipal level (region)	Members of the scientific committee	61
	Specialists and managers	62
School level	Members of the scientific committee	70
	Specialists and managers	65
Class level	Members of the scientific committee	76
	Specialists and managers	73
Total	Members of the scientific committee	66
	Specialists and managers	63
<b>Total</b>		<b>65</b>

One of the most important findings of this research, is the identification of the proper level of decision-making in the field of the most important education system decision making axis.

When summing up the offered solutions for the modification of the decision making according to the answerers, the most important element for improving the education system decision making came to spotlight. These elements included: education and increase in knowledge, insight and management skills, and decision-making by managers and specialists. It should also be noted that besides increase in managers' knowledge and skill, attention to decentralization in the education system decision-making has had special priority. The noteworthy point is that from the answerers point of view, increase in authority in the lower levels of decision-making, should come with encouragement methods on one hand, and compilation of rules and regulations for monitoring over the managers functionality on the other hand.

Based on the research findings from the point of view of the the research cases, the education system decision making in its overall is full of deficiencies and shortages. With all this said, the most amount of problems and shortages are in the field of the decision-

making system structure. The least amount of problem is in the operational elements.

The research in general found decentralization of the education system decision-making essential and have suggested the placement of the semi-centralized decision-making structure.

### **Research suggestions**

1. Although the amount of familiarity and awareness of the research cases regarding the issues and problems of the education system was relatively high (76 percent), it is recommended to utilize communication and information distribution methods as it is essential for the specialists and the experts in the education system to be familiar with the system's bottle-necks and difficulties across the country. These methods and mechanisms include periodical conferences, meetings, and discussions and scientific and specialized investigations, report publishings, monthly journals, bulletin boards, design of websites and information networks, and more. By doing this, the issues and problems, the challenges, the priorities, and the educational needs can be known in an stable and organized way to the members of the scientific committee and the specialists.

2. According to the research cases, the specialists' and the educational experts' experiences and expertise are not used at a satisfactory level in the decision making process. Therefore, to go through the decision-making process, it is recommended that the responsible ranks in all areas of the education system involve the opinions and viewpoints by education experts from universities, scientific and research centers, and operational and central organizations in the education system. This becomes possible through holding meetings with them or at least through open-ended questions.

3. The collected data show that overall the amount of effectiveness of the decisions which are made in various levels of the education system decision making is at a rate of 65 percent. In addition to this, this same data has shown that the effectiveness of



these decisions has a reducing trend with the increase in the level of decision making. The exactness of these opinions, of course, can be put to analysis in special studies and case studies.

## References

Iran-nezhad, Mehdi & Sasan-gohar, Parviz (1375/1996). *Organization and Management From Theory to Practice*, Iran Banking Institute, Edition 3.

Hamidi-zadeh, Mohammad-Reza (1381/2002). *Intelligent and Creative Decision-Making*, Terme Publications.

Shojaee-Abbase, Mina (1382/2003). *Participation in Decision-Making and its Relationship with Occupational Motivation of the Employees in Various Units at Shahid-Beheshti University*, Master Degree Thesis of Educational Management – Shahid-Beheshti University.

Shermerhorn, John R.; James, Hunt; & Richard, Azborn (1378/1999). *Organizational Behavior Management*, Translated by Dr. Mehdi Iran-nezhad Parizi, Mohammad-Ali Babai, and Mohammad-Ali Sobhano-Ilahi, The Institute of Research and Education Management.

Shirazi, Ali (1373/1994). *Educational Management*, Mashad Jahad-e-Daneshgahi Publications.

Alaghe-band, Ali (1378/1999), *The Theoretical Foundations and Principles of Educational Management*, Ravan Publication, Tenth Edition.

Alaghe-band, Ali (1375/1996), *General Management*, Ravan Publication.

Hoy, Wayne K & Mixel, Sisil (1992). *Theory, Research, and Practice in Educational Management*. (Translated by Mir-Mohammad Seyyed Abbas-Zadeh, 1371). Oroomieh University Publications, Volume 1, Edition 1.

Yar-Mohammadian, Mohammad-Hosseini (1380/2001). *Feasibility Assessment and Offering of Methods for*

Decentralization of Education System and Entrusting the Necessary Power to the Levels Below from the Point of View of University Professors, Central Organizations Experts, and Educational Managers of the High School level of Province of Isfahan.

Jenning, David, & Watter, Stuart (1998). *Decision making: An integrated approach*. London: Pitman Publishing.

Lancaster, P. I., & Rudolph, C (1999). Difficulties in career decision making. *Journal of Career Assessment*.

Kemmerer, F. (1995). *Decentralization of schooling in developing nations*. New York: Pergamon Press.

Chan, D., & Mok, K. (2001). 'Educational reforms and coping strategies under the tidal wave in marketization. *Comparative Education*, Vol 31, N.1.