

Decision Making Practices in the Universities of Pakistan (A Comparative Study)

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Abstract: Main purpose of this study was to compare the prevailing decision making practices in the universities of Pakistan. The decision making practice was compared on the following aspects: a. Decision Dictated by the chair, b. Decisions made by a majority vote c. Decisions taken on political grounds in public and private sector universities. It was found that both public and private sector have same procedure of decisions making and are made by a majority vote but have differences that decisions are dictated by the chair and are taken according to internal and external pressure. This practice was observed mostly in public sector universities.

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Key Words: Universities, Decision Making Practice, Internal and External Influence

Introduction:

Decision-making process is daily administrative activity happens at all levels in institutions. Decision should be made in order to execute activities and to achieve the objectives. Decision making process is most intellectual process, as different factors involved in it. Orasanu and Connolly (1993) define it as a series of cognitive operations performed consciously, Narayan and Corcoran-Perry (1997) consider decision making as the interaction between a problem that needs to be solved and a person who wishes to solve it within a specific environment. "Decision-making is usually defined as a process of identifying the problems and the possibilities for their solution (Daft, 1997), which includes the efforts before and after the decision is made". Every aspect of the organization may be affected by poor quality of decision (Muhammad, Isa, Othman, & Rahim, 2009) (Nik Muhammad et al 2009). Decision-making process starts with presence of problems or issues that must be solved in order to achieve the desired goals of organization. Identification and understanding of a problem considered as the basis for determining the next steps to be taken in decision making process. The process of decision making process begin with the identification and recognition of a problem with provide basis for the next step of decision making to think on the solution and alternate solution of the problem led to the decision making and to

execute/implement it and then to evaluate the results as it is successful or not. The process is:

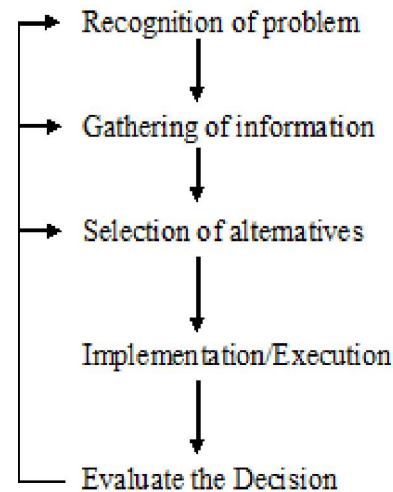


Figure 1: Decision Making Process

Masch, (2004) specified decision making process in four steps: "problem identification/recognition, searching and gathering of information, selection and evaluation of alternatives, execute/implement the selected decision and to evaluate the result on the bases of that decision". There are several steps that must be followed in order to arrive at a decision: one must realize that it is going to be necessary to make a

decision, determine the goals to be achieved, generate alternatives that lead to attaining the proposed goals, evaluate whether these alternatives meet one's expectations and, lastly, select the best alternative, the one that implies an efficient global result (Halpern, 1997).

There are many factors that could influence a decision. Ozer, (2005) stated they could be the personality of decision maker, the state of organization, internal and external situation in organization as well as availability of information. All these factors can be classifying as individual and organizational factor and as controllable and uncontrollable conditions. Factors which influence the decision making process can be the best "strategy" to improve timely, reliable, accuracy, effectively and accountability of the decisions.

However besides these, there are several other factors that could influence the decisions. Individual and organizational factors influencing the decision making process. Blackmore and Berardi (2006) stated about seven factors, which can influence decisions. They are a. decision makers (Individual or personal) b. decision situation (environment or condition), thinking in terms of a problem or an opportunity c. decision criteria (single or multi-criteria), d. time and people affected by the decision as well as decision support theories e. models, f. tools, g. strategy and techniques. Atmosudirjo (1987) argue that nature of organization and personal capabilities of decision-maker strongly influence decision making process. Decision maker, which covered their personality characteristic and individual differences, such as gender and age differences, past experience, cognitive biases and belief in personal relevance, could also be an influencing factor for decision-making (Bruin, Parker, & Fischhoff 2007; Sanz de Acedo & Cardelle- Elawar et al. 2007; Juliusson, Karlsson, & Gärling 2005; Stanovich & West 2008).

In universities decision making is the prime responsibility of top management level of authority. Therefore, these personalities must have skill in term of making and taking the decisions. They have to understand "the problem". For the purpose following questions should be formulated and answered.

What should to do? (What is the problem? Who are facing the problem? How to solve and what are the alternatives?)

Who will be the decision maker/s (decision will be taken individually or it will be group decision).

Why the decision should be taken? (purpose of decision making).

When to take decision? (Suitable time) and .

How to utilize the best strategy? (Which strategy should be used?) (Bovay 2002).

The success of any organization depends on the right decision at right time by right people.

It is considered that the prime job that lies at the heart of management and the basis of success depends largely on decision-making (Marvin, 1981; Jennings and Wattam, 1994 and Choudury, 2001).

There are always several critical areas concerning universities for which the governance of higher education involves authority. These areas are their mission, student's enrollment strength, access of students to different instructional discipline, recruitment and appointment of employees, degree requirements, quality of research and research culture promotion, freedom and instructional supervision, organization instructional structure and allocation of available resources.

Objectives of the Study:

The objectives of the study were:

1. To differentiate between public and private sector universities of Pakistan regarding decision making practices.

2. To compare public and private sector universities of Pakistan about that decision dictated by the chair.

3. To compare public and private sector universities of Pakistan about that Decision made by a majority vote.

4. To compare public and private sector universities of Pakistan about that Decision taken on political grounds

Hypothesis of the Study:

1. There is no significant difference between public and private sector universities of Pakistan regarding decision making practices.

2. There is no significant difference between public and private sector universities of Pakistan about that decision dictated by the chair.

3. There is no significant difference between public and private sector universities of Pakistan about that Decision made by a majority vote.

4. There is no significant difference between public and private sector universities of Pakistan about that Decision taken on political grounds.

Methodology:

The study aimed to compare the decision making practice in public and private sector universities of Pakistan. A sample of 320 respondents was randomly selected from selected four public and four private sector universities of Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa and Punjab. The respondents was asked about decision making practice in their universities that are decisions are made by the chair, are made by a majority vote and are influenced by internal or external pressure. The questionnaire was personally administered to the respondents. T-test was used as a statistical technique for analyzing the data.

Results:**Table 1: Comparative Views of Respondents of Public and Private Sector Universities Regarding the Bodies Decision Making.**

University	N	Mean	Std	t	df	p-value
Public	160	9.38	1.67	1.89	318	.06
Private	160	8.98	2.08			

Note: The result is significant if probability of occurrence (p-value) is equal to or less than 0.05 level

The table 1 above shows that the cal; value 1.89 < tab; value 1.97; with df 318 at $\alpha = 0.05$. Hence means that null hypothesis of no significant difference between the opinions of respondents of the public and private sector universities regarding bodies decision making is accepted. It is concluded that the respondents of public and private sector universities were of the similar opinions regarding the bodies' decision making.

Table 2. Comparative Views of Respondents of Public and Private Sector Universities Regarding the Decision are dictated by the Chair.

University	N	Mean	Std	t	df	p-value
Public	160	3.73	.822	4.64	318	.000
Private	160	3.24	1.05			

The table 2 above shows that the cal; value 4.64 > tab; value 1.97; with df 318 at $\alpha = 0.05$. Hence means that null hypothesis of no significant difference between the opinions of respondents of the public and private sector universities regarding decisions are dictated by the chair is rejected. It is concluded that the respondents of public and private sector universities were of different opinions regarding decisions are dictated by the chair.

Table 3. Comparative Views of Respondents of Public and Private Sector Universities Regarding the Decision are made by a majority vote.

University	N	Mean	Std	t	df	p-value
Public	160	2.51	.997	.223	318	.824
Private	160	2.54	1.262			

The table 3 shows that the cal; value.223 < tab; value 1.97; with df 318 at $\alpha = 0.05$. Hence means that null hypothesis of no significant difference between the opinions of respondents of the public and private sector universities regarding decisions are made by a majority vote is accepted. It is concluded that the respondents of public and private sector universities were of different opinions regarding decisions are made by a majority vote.

The table 4 shows that the cal; value 2.68 > tab; value 1.97; with df 318 at $\alpha = 0.05$. Hence means that null hypothesis of no significant difference between the opinions of respondents of the public and private sector universities regarding decisions are taken on political grounds is rejected. It is concluded that the respondents of public and private sector universities were of different opinions regarding decisions are made by a majority vote.

Table 4. Comparative Views of Respondents of Public and Private Sector Universities Regarding the Decision taken on political grounds

University	N	Mean	Std	t	df	p-value
Public	160	2.95	1.05	2.68	318	.008
Private	160	2.62	1.16			

Conclusion and Discussions:

Decision making is the worthy and integral element of management process. Decision-making influences organizational setup. 'Influences' are individuals or groups that hold common interests and endeavor to persuade/convince authorities that certain changes should occur. They may focus upon specific activities or processes that should occur in universities. From the findings of the study it is concluded that different factor affect the decision making process. Decision should be made by a majority vote and the influential and political person should not indulge in the university decision making as it can harm the academic environment. The person who is chairing the meeting should give equal chances of participation to the members and stakeholders. Clear differences were found in decision making practice in public and private sector universities. Public sector should cover its deficiencies in the sense and the results of the study are in line with Gore (1977) analyzed whether decisions are made at individual level or at a group level. He found that decisions were made at apex level without participation of academic staff. He recommended and reported that participation in decision-making becomes an important dimension, as it is believed that people at lower levels in the hierarchy are more familiar with the field problems. He pointed out that decentralization in decision-making increases the need for coordination at the higher levels.

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