

The Effect of Principals' Decision-Making Styles on Teachers' Job Satisfaction

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to investigate the effect of principals' decision-making styles on their subordinate teachers' job satisfaction. The study was quantitative in nature and causal-comparative design was adopted. Of the sample of 500 teachers, 423 teachers participated in the study. A master questionnaire to measure demographics, principals' decision-making styles as perceived by the subordinate teachers and teachers' job satisfaction was developed by the researchers. The psychometric aspects of the research instrument were ensured before its administration for final data collection. From sampled degree colleges, data were collected through personal visits. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis and interpretation. The results of the study indicate that teachers' job satisfaction is a significant function of their principals' decision-making styles. At the end, certain recommendations were made.

Key Words: Decision-Making Styles, Job Satisfaction, Colleges, Principals, Teachers

Introduction

In an organization, the fundamental managerial function is decision making and the success or failure of an organization largely depends upon the quality of decisions made by the managers (Leonard, Scholl, and Kowalski, 1999; Robbins and Coulter, 2005; Yukl, 1994). Decision making is a process of making a choice among two or more alternative courses of action (Campling, Poole, Wiesner, & Schermerhorn, 2006; Daft, 1994) to achieve a desired result (Verma, 2005) or to resolve a specific problem (Kalra, 1997). Robbins and Coulter (2005) emphasize that decision-making is not mere an act of preferring a course of action from among alternatives rather it is a comprehensive process to resolve problem. Conclusively, we can say that decision making is a comprehensive process of deriving the best possible course of action to achieve an objective or resolve problem.

A decision-making style is a habitual or habit-based pattern which an individual utilizes while formulating decisions (Driver, 1979; Scott and Bruce, 1995). Harren (1979) describes that decision-making style is a typical manner of an individual to perceive and respond to decision-making task.

This study focused on four decision-making styles i.e., (a) autocratic: where managers do not consult any member of their organization and make final decision alone (Bogler, 2001); (b) consultative: where managers get advice from the members of their organization, take it into consideration and make final decision alone (Bogler, 2001); (c) democratic: where leader gives up the ownership and control of the

decision allowing the group in majority to decide the action (Sharma, 2009). In other words, democratic decision-making style reflects the wishes of the majority of group members involved in decision-making process (Mokoena, 2003), and (d) consensus: where the leader gives up total control of the decision; whole group of subordinates is involved in decision-making process and everyone must agree and “buy in” on the decision (Sharma, 2009). Garcia (1986) emphasizes that consensus not only offers good decisions but also enhance satisfaction and sense of ownership among the members of the faculty involved in the decision-making process.

The first formal definition of job satisfaction has been given by Hoppock. Hoppock (as cited in Winfrey, 2009) declares that “job satisfaction is any combination of psychological, physiological, and environmental circumstance that causes a person to truthfully say I am satisfied with my job” (p. 15). Hulin and Judge (2003) describe that job satisfaction is a multidimensional psychological response to one’s job. They further explain that “these responses have cognitive (evaluative), affective (or emotional), and behavioral components” (p. 255). According to Locke (1976) job satisfaction is a pleasurable or positive emotional state that develops as the consequence of one’s job appraisal or one’s job experience. Armstrong (2007) perceives it in terms of the attitudes and feelings that people exhibit regarding their work. However, according to Spector (2007), job satisfaction is the degree to which individuals like or dislike their jobs.

An intensive review of published literature reveals that there are different aspects in which job satisfaction is viewed by the theorists, scholars, and researchers. These are *intrinsic job satisfaction*, *extrinsic job satisfaction* (Brown, 2004; Hauber and Bruininks, 1986) and *Global job satisfaction* (Kand and Rekor, 2005). Intrinsic job satisfaction is a function of an employee’s attitude towards tasks of the job whereas extrinsic job satisfaction is a reflection of the attitude that develops as the result of factors which are related but external to tasks of the work and are controlled by the organization (Hauber and Bruininks, 1986). Finchman and Rhodes (as cited in Kand and Rekor, 2005) opine that global job satisfaction is overall feelings of an employee towards his/her job. However, in addition, employees may express feelings about specific aspects or facets of their jobs.

Many theorists have attempted to explain the phenomenon that governs employees’ feelings regarding their jobs (Berry, 1997) yet theories on job satisfaction are not well developed (Ghosh and Ghorpade, 1991). Most of the so-called job satisfaction theories are basically work motivation theories i.e., content theories and process theories. Content theories attempt to explain what makes the employees motivated and satisfied at workplace whereas process theories offer explanation of how employees get satisfied (Naoum, 2001).

There are several factors that influence employees’ job satisfaction at work place. According to Crossman and Harris (2006), the factors that can affect teachers’ job satisfaction can broadly be categorized as *environmental*, *psychological* or *demographic*. Armstrong (2007) describes that intrinsic and extrinsic motivating factors affect the level of employees’ job satisfaction. Similarly, Herzberg’s two factor theory presents good picture of two sets of factors (i.e., motivator factors and hygiene factors) that determine job satisfaction. This theory further offer that

presence of motivator factors creates satisfaction among employees and presence of hygiene factors reduces employees' dissatisfaction (Syptak, Marsland, and Ulmer, 1999). Certain factors that determine job satisfaction are: achievement, recognition for achievement, responsibility for task, interest in the job, advancement to higher level tasks and growth. Moreover, typical factors the presence of which reduces job dissatisfaction are: working conditions, quality of supervision, salary, status, security, company, job, company policies and administration, interpersonal relations (Value Based Management.Net (VBM.N), 2009). Purcell et al. (as cited in Armstrong, 2007) found that "career opportunities, job influence, teamwork and job challenge" were the key factors that affected job satisfaction. Summarizing few studies regarding job satisfaction, Winfrey (2009) identified four common job satisfaction themes i.e., working conditions, interaction with colleagues and students, professional autonomy, and opportunities for advancement.

Owing to the importance of teachers' job satisfaction at work place, several studies have focused on this variable (See, Cashwell 2009; Crossman and Harris, 2006; Ejimofor 2007; Ma and MacMillan 1999; Oliver 2007; Oshagbemi 1998; Winfrey, 2009). Also, researchers have investigated the effects/ relationships of decision-making styles on/ with assorted variables in different settings (See, Jacoby 2006; Mau 1995; Paivandy, Bullock, Reardon, and Kelly, 2008; Price, 1973; Tinsley, H.E.A., Tinsley, D. J., and Rushing, 2002). Nevertheless, research has not been conducted to investigate the effect/relationship of decision-making styles on/with job satisfaction. Specifically, such research has not been conducted in educational settings at any level in Pakistan. This gap invited the researchers to investigate the effect of principals' decision-making styles on their subordinate teachers' job satisfaction.

It is pertinent to mention here that the theoretical framework of the study has its roots in Herzberg's two factor theory and people-centered approach to decision-making. Hence, four decision-making styles (i.e., autocratic, consultative, democratic, and consensus) and two sets of factors (i.e., motivator factors and hygiene factors) are integral components of the theoretical framework that underpinned the study.

The research questions that were answered in this study are as follows:

1. What is the effect of college principals' decision-making styles on teachers' job satisfaction?
2. What is the effect of male college principals' decision-making styles on male college teachers' job satisfaction?
3. What is the effect of female college principals' decision-making styles on female college teachers' job satisfaction?

Material and Methods

The study was quantitative in nature and casual-comparative design was adopted. Population of the study was comprised of all the teachers of the public sector degree colleges working under the jurisdiction of Higher Education Department, Government of the Punjab. *Equal allocation stratified sampling technique* was used

to figure out the sample of the study. In the first step, 50 degree colleges (25 male + 25 female) were selected randomly and in the second step, 10 teachers from each sampled degree college were selected using a table of random numbers. Hence, final sample of the study was comprised of 500 teachers (250 male + 250 female) which was quite representative of the population.

Keeping in view the context in which the study was to be carried out, a questionnaire to measure principals' decision-making styles and teachers' job satisfaction was developed by the researchers. Two pilot studies of the questionnaire were conducted. The purpose of the first pilot study was to improve the questionnaire by restructuring or deleting ambiguous statements. After restructuring and improving the questionnaire, a second pilot study was carried out. The purpose of second pilot study was to investigate psychometric aspects of the questionnaire i.e., validity and reliability. Hence, a 'Master Questionnaire' of the study was finalized.

The 'Master Questionnaire' was consisted of three parts: (a) Part-I—pertaining to demographics (i.e., age, gender, job status, education and experience); (b) Part-II—pertaining to the principals' decision-making styles as perceived by their subordinate teachers (i.e., autocratic, consultative, democratic, and consensus), and (c) Part-III—pertaining to teachers' job satisfaction. To make job satisfaction scale meaningful in relation to the purpose of the study and to minimize the effects of extraneous variables only those aspects of job satisfaction were included which could be considered manipulate-able by the decision-making behaviours of the principals. The scale used to measure demographics was nominal while that of used to measure principals' decision-making styles and teachers' job satisfaction were interval (5 point Likert scale).

To be an instrument useful, it must satisfy certain psychometric quality aspects. In this regard, content validity and construct validity of the instrument were ensured through experts' judgment and factor analysis, respectively. During factor analysis, only those items were retained on instrument which consistently remained loaded on single factor for 'Maximum Likelihood Extraction Method' with a cut-off value of .40 while other items were dropped. Reliability was calculated in terms of Cronbach's alpha (α) for the job satisfaction scale and was found .92.

Data were collected through personal visits to ensure maximum return rate. Of the 500 distributed questionnaires, only 423 could be recollected and were available for data analysis. Data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 14.0 for Windows Evaluation Version. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis and interpretation.

Results and Discussion

Majority of teachers in the public sector degree colleges is young and lies in the age group 21-30 years (51.3%); is serving on contract (65.2%); holds a highest degree of M.A. / M.Sc. (92.0%); and has 0-5 year experience.

To investigate the effect of college principals' decision-making styles on their subordinate teachers' job satisfaction, one-way ANOVA was applied. Levene's Test of Homogeneity of Variances was not statistically significant ($F(3, 419) = .709, p =$

.547) indicating that there was insufficient evidence of violation of the assumption of homogeneity of variances. Means and standard deviations of the job satisfaction scores for four decision-making styles are given below in table 1.

Table1
Means and Standard Deviations of Job Satisfaction Scores for Decision-Making Styles (Entire Sample)

Decision-Making Style	Means	SD	N
Autocratic	58.888	9.936	125
Consultative	55.386	10.976	119
Democratic	63.503	9.143	159
Consensus	75.600	6.201	20

Results of one-way ANOVA indicates that there was statistically significant main effect of principals' decision-making styles on their subordinate teachers' job satisfaction ($F(3, 419) = 32.595, p < .001$). A summary of the results of one-way ANOVA is presented below in table 2.

Table 2
Summary of One-Way ANOVA for Decision-Making Styles—Entire Sample

Source	SS	df	SM	F	Sig.
Between Groups	9428.352	3	3142.784	32.595	.000
Within Groups	40399.199	419	96.418		
Total	49827.551	422			

Note. Criterion: Job Satisfaction; $R^2 = .189$ (Adjusted $R^2 = .183$).

Tukey HSD test was applied to explore which particular decision-making styles differ from each other in terms of job satisfaction. The test confirmed that teachers working under consensus decision-making style showed significantly more job satisfaction ($M = 75.600$) as compared to the teachers working under autocratic ($M = 58.888$), consultative ($M = 55.386$) and democratic ($M = 63.503$) decision-making style. Below, table 3 indicates statistically significant multiple comparisons, produced using Tukey HSD test, between decision-making styles for job satisfaction.

Table 3
Pair wise Comparisons of Decision-Making Styles—Entire Sample

Pair wise Comparisons	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval
Consensus > Autocratic	16.712*	10.612- 22.812
Consensus > Consultative	20.213*	14.093 – 26.334
Consensus > Democratic	12.096*	6.088 – 18.106
Democratic > Autocratic	4.615*	1.588 – 7.643
Democratic > Consultative	8.116*	5.047 – 11.187
Autocratic > Consultative	3.501*	0.259 – 6.745

Note. Criterion: Job Satisfaction; * The mean difference is significant at .05 level.

To investigate the effect of male college principals' decision-making styles on their subordinate teachers' job satisfaction, a Kruskal—Wallis one-way ANOVA was applied because data were not normally distributed and hence parametric assumption was violated. Dancey and Reidy (2004) wrote that “The Kruskal—Wallis

is used when your data do not meet the assumptions required for the parametric ANOVA” (p. 542). Levene’s Test of Homogeneity of Variances was statistically significant ($F(3, 215) = 4.123, p = .007$) indicating that there was sufficient evidence of violation of the assumption of homogeneity of variances. Mean ranks of the job satisfaction scores for four decision-making styles are given below in table 4.

Table 4
Mean Ranks of Job Satisfaction Scores and Sample Size for Decision-Making Styles—(Male Sample)

Decision-Making Style	Mean Ranks	N
Autocratic	102.05	62
Consultative	51.71	80
Democratic	128.58	63
Consensus	166.14	14

Results of Kruskal—Wallis one-way ANOVA indicates that there were statistically significant differences among the decision-making styles in terms of teachers’ job satisfaction ($X^2 = 24.315, p < .001$).

To investigate where the differences lie, pair wise comparisons of decision-making styles were made using Mann-Whitney test. Due to multiple testing, Achieved Significance Level (ASL) was calculated and was found .008. This means any $ASL > .008$ may be due to sampling error (Dancey & Reidy 2004). Below, table 5 indicates statistically significant multiple comparisons, produced using Mann—Whitney test, between decision-making styles.

Table 5
Pair wise Comparisons of Decision-Making Styles—Male Sample

Pair-wise Comparisons	Mean Rank Difference	U-value	z-value	p-value
Consensus > Autocratic	53.71 – 35.06 = 18.65	221.00	-2.871	.004
Consensus > Consultative	72.43 – 43.14 = 29.29	211.00	-3.731	.000
Consensus > Democratic	55.00 – 35.44 = 20.56	217.00	-2.981	.003
Democratic > Consultative	86.94 – 60.23 = 26.71	1578.50	-3.856	.000

Note. Criterion: Job Satisfaction; $ASL = .008$

To investigate the effect of female college principals’ decision-making styles on their subordinate teachers’ job satisfaction, one-way ANOVA was applied. Levene’s Test of Homogeneity of Variances was not statistically significant ($F(3, 200) = 1.087, p = .356$) indicating that there was insufficient evidence of violation of the assumption of homogeneity of variances. Means and standard deviations of job satisfaction scores for decision-making styles are given below in table 6.

Table 6
Means and Standard Deviations of Job Satisfaction Scores for Decision-Making Styles (Female Sample)

Decision-Making Style	Means	SD	N
Autocratic	60.2063	9.797	63
Consultative	59.7949	10.923	39

Democratic	63.9375	8.9948	96
Consensus	64.0000	102762	6

Results of one-way ANOVA indicates that there was statistically significant main effect of female college principals' decision-making styles on their subordinate teachers' job satisfaction ($F(3, 200) = 2.781, p < .05$). A summary of the results of one-way ANOVA is presented below in table 7.

Table 7
Summary of One-Way ANOVA for Decision-Making Styles—Female Sample

Source	SS	df	SM	F	Sig.
Between Groups	776.694	3	258.898	2.781	.042
Within Groups	18618.301	200	93.092		
Total	19394.995	203			

Note. Criterion: Job Satisfaction; $R^2 = .040$ (Adjusted $R^2 = .026$).

Fisher's LSD test was applied to explore which particular decision-making styles differ from each other in terms of job satisfaction. The test confirms that teachers working under democratic decision-making style showed significantly more job satisfaction ($M = 63.9375$) as compared to the teachers working under autocratic ($M = 60.2063$) and consultative ($M = 59.7949$) decision-making style. Below, table 8 indicates statistically significant multiple comparisons, produced using LSD test, between decision-making styles.

Table 8
Pair wise Comparisons of Decision-Making Styles—Female Sample

Pair wise Comparisons	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval
Democratic > Autocratic	3.73115*	0.6463 – 6.8160
Democratic > Consultative	4.14263*	0.5299 – 7.7554

Note. Criterion: Job Satisfaction; * The mean difference is significant at .05 level.

Conclusion

One of the results of the study indicates that teachers' job satisfaction is a significant function of principals' decision-making styles. This finding is consistent with the findings of previously conducted studies (*See, Bogler, 2001; Ingersoll, 2001*). In addition, the finding is also congruent with the understanding of Maier (1998) who has described that employees derive their job satisfaction from the decisions made and the way decisions are made by the managers in their organizations. This implies that the way principals make decisions in their colleges influence their subordinates' teachers job satisfaction.

The results of this study also confirmed that principals' consensus decision-making style was the most effective style in producing job satisfaction among teachers and the second most effective style was democratic style. These findings are also consistent with the literature that participative decision making is positively related to job satisfaction (Rossmiller, 1992) and help to enhance teachers' job satisfaction and consequently their performance (Judge & Klinger, 2007). This implies that increasing teachers' participation in decision-making process, discussing

problems with them, listening to their suggestions, and preferring to make decisions which reflect the wishes of all teachers if possible or the majority of the teachers enhance teachers' job satisfaction.

Another finding confirmed that autocratic decision-making style produced more job satisfaction than consultative decision-making style. This finding is contradictory to the finding of Rice and Schneider (1994) which indicate that less involvement of the teachers in decision making correlates with less job satisfaction. However, this contradictory finding is justifiable. Although, consultative decision-making style is less dictatorial and more participative as compared to autocratic decision-making style yet one possible strong reason behind this finding might be that when teachers are asked for suggestions or opinions during decision making and their opinions are not considered by the principals while reaching at final decisions, it produces frustration among teachers and consequently leads toward less job satisfaction.

The results regarding public sector male colleges are closely similar to the results discussed above. However, the results are surprisingly different in the case of public sector female colleges where democratic decision-making style was found to be the most effective style in producing job satisfaction as compared to consensus. This finding is not only inconsistent with the finding of this study discussed above but also is contradictory with the literature which negates the notion that more involvement of teachers in decision making produces more job satisfaction (Bogler, 2001). This contradictory finding demands further investigation.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, following recommendations are made for the college principals to enhance their subordinate teachers' job satisfaction as well as for future research:

1. Principals should avoid autocratic behaviour, by ensuring participation of teachers, while making important decisions in their colleges.
2. Principals should reach unanimous decisions, if possible. However, if consensus is not possible, due to certain constraints, then at least they should make decisions which reflect the wishes of majority of the teachers.
3. As majority of the teachers is young, principals should prefer to take into consideration the suggestions of young teachers.
4. This study used quantitative research methods only. However, a study using mixed method is recommended to provide more insightful responses.
5. Results of this study revealed that decision-making styles accounted for variation in job satisfaction to a very less magnitude indicating that there might be other variables that may have a bigger effect on job satisfaction. This recommends, if possible on the part of the researchers, more

variables that are expected to have strong relationships with job satisfaction be included in future studies.

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